

# The Pivot before the Pivot

Nina Silove

U.S. Strategy to Preserve the Power  
Balance in Asia

“The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced in October 2011, when she presented the Barack Obama administration’s strategy toward the Asia Pacific.<sup>1</sup> As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were winding down, the United States would “accelerate efforts” to “pivot” its focus toward Asia.<sup>2</sup> In the United States, the pivot to Asia policy has been much derided for having never occurred.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the administration itself retreated from the use of the term “pivot” and replaced it with the term “rebalance” in an attempt to tamp down expectations of a major reordering of U.S. priorities.<sup>4</sup> Chinese critics—and also some in the West—have decried the pivot

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1. Hillary Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century,” *Foreign Policy*, October 11, 2011, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas\\_pacific\\_century](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century).

2. *Ibid.*

3. For criticism of the pivot, see, for example, Aaron L. Friedberg, “Bucking Beijing: An Alternative U.S. China Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 5 (September/October 2012), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2012-08-18/bucking-beijing>; Elizabeth C. Economy et al., “What Happened to the Asia Pivot in 2013?” (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, December 20, 2013), <http://www.cfr.org/china/happened-asia-pivot-2013/p32108>; John Feffer, “The Myth of the United States’ Pivot to Asia,” *Mother Jones*, January 28, 2014, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/01/united-states-pivot-to-asia-obama-pacific-policy?page=2>; “Another Pivot to Asia,” editorial, *Bloomberg View*, April 22, 2014, <http://www.bloombergvie.com/articles/2014-04-22/another-pivot-to-asia>; and Kori Schake, “Beijing Memo: What America’s Halfhearted ‘Pivot’ to Asia Must Look Like from Afar,” *Foreign Policy*, September 15, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/15/beijing-memo-what-americas-halfhearted-pivot-to-asia-must-look-like-from-afar/>.

4. U.S. Department of Defense, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 2012), [http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Strategic\\_Guidance.pdf](http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf).

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for the opposite reason: as an aggressive policy aimed at containing China's rise.<sup>5</sup> From the perspective of U.S. critics, the pivot is "less than the sum of its parts,"<sup>6</sup> or "all talk and no walk."<sup>7</sup> From the perspective of Chinese critics, the pivot is a bellicose strategy aimed at slowing the accretion of Chinese power. Neither perspective accurately describes U.S. strategy toward the Asia Pacific because both obscure three key points: (1) the pivot to Asia was already well under way prior to its declaration; (2) the substance of the pivot, properly dated and measured, was far more substantial than recognized by critics; and (3) China's rise was accepted as a premise of U.S. strategy, which did not aim to contain it.

This article argues that the United States pursued a strategy of reorientation toward Asia from the mid-2000s onward. The Obama administration's pivot to Asia was both a belated labeling as well as an extension of that little-recognized reorientation strategy. The aim of the reorientation was to dissuade China from making a bid for hegemony and thereby preserve the existing power balance in the region, in which the United States held the superior position.<sup>8</sup> The means to this end included regularizing, expanding, and elevating U.S. diplomatic engagement with China and balancing against China's rise both internally and externally.<sup>9</sup> The expanded engagement element of the strategy culminated in the launch of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in 2009, which was a uniquely intensive dialogue unrivaled by equivalent diplomatic mechanisms between the United States and any other state.<sup>10</sup> The internal balancing element of the strategy consisted of a military

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5. Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Leadership and Elite Responses to the U.S. Pacific Pivot," *China Leadership Monitor*, Summer 2012, p. 9. Note, however, that Swaine finds that nonauthoritative (i.e., less official) Chinese sources are more critical of the pivot than more official Chinese sources. For an English-language version of the containment argument, see Lanxin Xiang, "China and the 'Pivot,'" *Survival*, Vol. 54, No. 5 (October/November 2012), pp. 113–128. For a view from the West, see Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 95–96.

6. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Re-balancing the Rebalance: Resourcing U.S. Diplomatic Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region*, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., 2014, Committee Print S. Prt. 113–24, p. 8.

7. Alex N. Wong and Lanhee J. Chen, "Has Obama Given Up on the Asia Pivot?" *Foreign Policy*, October 2, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/10/02/nonessential/>; and Michael Auslin, "America Doesn't Need a Pivot to Asia," *Wall Street Journal*, August 27, 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10000872396390444506004577614941100974630>.

8. On the existing power balance, see Michael Beckley, "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure," *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011/12), pp. 41–78; and Yuen Foong Khong, "Primacy or World Order? The United States and China's Rise—A Review Essay," *International Security*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Winter 2013/14), pp. 155–157.

9. Kenneth N. Waltz defines external balancing as states relying on the capabilities of allies, whereas he defines internal balancing as states relying on their own capabilities. See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 168.

10. Jeffrey A. Bader, *Obama and China's Rise: An Insider's Account of America's Asia Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2012), p. 22.

buildup designed to enhance the capacity of the United States to operate in the Asia Pacific. The external balancing element constituted a historic shift away from the hub-and-spokes model of asymmetric bilateral alliances that had characterized the security architecture of the region since the end of the Korean War.<sup>11</sup> In its place, the United States worked toward constructing a federated network model in which the United States would lead a web of more powerful allies and partners with stronger links to one another.

U.S. strategy toward Asia has been widely misunderstood by scholars and analysts for several reasons. First, as described below, the George W. Bush administration made a deliberate decision to keep the strategy muted to avoid antagonizing China. The belated announcement of the pivot was one important cause of the widespread criticism in the United States that the pivot lacked substance. Second, the details of the strategy as developed and implemented by the Bush administration were either classified or published in obscure locations and have remained largely unknown to the academy and the public. Third, one of the central elements of the strategy—the external balancing element—did not take the traditional form of forging a new alliance structure in Asia. As a result, this element of the strategy has been overlooked. For example, Robert Ross’s otherwise accurate account of U.S. strategy in Asia, published in 2013, omits any reference to external balancing.<sup>12</sup> Instead, according to Ross, in U.S. strategy toward Asia, allies were to be “reassured” by U.S. strength and act as hosts for forward-deployed U.S. forces.<sup>13</sup> This account fails to recognize that the United States had a deliberate strategy of external balancing by means other than the construction of a multilateral alliance, most notably by increasing the military capabilities of allies and partners and building greater multilateral interoperability among them.

The primary aim of this article is to elucidate and classify U.S. strategy in response to China’s rise and thereby clarify some common misunderstandings about that strategy. The focus of this article is, therefore, on strategy and outputs—that is, what the United States tried to achieve—as distinct from outcomes, which are the effect of U.S. strategy on the bilateral relationship.<sup>14</sup> Much of the existing literature on U.S.-China relations focuses on outcomes,

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11. On the hub-and-spokes model, see Kent E. Calder, “Securing Security through Prosperity: The San Francisco System in Comparative Perspective,” *Pacific Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (March 2004), pp. 135–157.

12. Robert S. Ross, “U.S. Grand Strategy, the Rise of China, and U.S. National Security Strategy for East Asia,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer 2013), pp. 20–40.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

14. The distinction between “outputs” and “outcomes” is borrowed from the field of public policy, where “outputs” refers to the policies, and “outcomes” refers to the results of the policies. See, for example, James F. Hollifield, “Immigration Policy in France and Germany: Outputs versus Out-

which is understandable given the outsized effect that the relationship has on the international system. Scholars have argued that outcomes in the bilateral relationship have been or will be affected by a range of material and ideational factors at the individual, state, and systemic levels.<sup>15</sup> The purpose of the present research is not to explain outcomes, but to revise the recent history of U.S. strategy toward Asia for the purpose of informing the policy debate in the United States and other states about how to manage China's rise. This research informs that policy debate, which began in the mid-1990s and is likely to continue well into the future, in two important respects.

First, the decades-long focus on the question of whether the United States should engage or contain China has obscured the more important policy questions that are revealed by the reorientation strategy.<sup>16</sup> The overwhelming focus on engagement and containment is evidenced by the persistent tendency of commentators to coin new portmanteau labels to describe and prescribe U.S. strategy toward China, such as "conditional engagement," "constructive engagement," "coercive engagement," "comprehensive engagement," and "constraintment," a trend that was identified by Peter Van Ness in the late 1990s and that has continued ever since, with "conengagement" emerging in popular use.<sup>17</sup> These new labels are promoted as though doing so were a *de novo* exercise requiring no review of, or comparison with, existing proposals, demonstrating an unproductive circularity to the debate. The reorientation strategy reveals that the debate about engagement and containment is primarily a debate about means that avoids the central, prior question about ends. In the reorientation, engagement and balancing—as distinct from containment—were not

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comes," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 485, No. 1 (May 1986), pp. 113–128.

15. See, for example, Rosemary Foot and Andrew Walter, *China, the United States, and Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Aaron Friedberg, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?" *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 7–45; Fiona S. Cunningham and M. Taylor Fravel, "Assuring Assured Retaliation: China's Nuclear Posture and U.S.-China Strategic Stability," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Fall 2015), pp. 7–50; John J. Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to U.S. Power in Asia," *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3 (2010), pp. 381–396; and Dale Copeland, "Economic Interdependence and the Future of U.S.-China Relations," in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 323–352.

16. For a foundational article in this debate, see David Shambaugh, "Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Responses," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Fall 1996), pp. 180–209. For recent contributions, see John J. Mearsheimer, "Can China Rise Peacefully?" *National Interest*, October 25, 2014, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204>; and Michael D. Swaine, *America's Challenge: Engaging a Rising China in the Twenty-first Century* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011).

17. Peter Van Ness, "The Impasse in U.S. Policy toward China," *China Journal*, July 1997, p. 147. On conengagement, see Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), chap. 4.

the goals of U.S. strategy. Rather, they were symbiotic means to enhance the overall power of the United States and its allies and partners in the Asia Pacific, and thereby maintain the existing power balance in the region. In this context, the question of whether the United States should engage or contain China should be secondary to the central question of whether the United States should continue to aim to preserve its superior power position in the Asia Pacific. From this question about the goal of U.S. strategy follow two questions about means: What would achievement of that goal (or another) require? And, could that goal (or another) be pursued without provoking conflict with China?

These policy questions are addressed as a by-product in analyses of whether the United States should accommodate some of China's territorial claims, but such analyses do not take a firm position on the effect that accommodation would have on the overall regional power balance.<sup>18</sup> These questions are also related to the debate between scholars who advocate a U.S. grand strategy of "restraint" or "offshore balancing" and those who advocate "deep engagement."<sup>19</sup> The details of the reorientation strategy, however, crosscut that debate. For example, the reorientation involved drawing down the number of U.S. troops based in South Korea and Japan—a move that offshore balancers support—while strengthening U.S. military, diplomatic, and economic engagement with Asia, which is associated with deep engagement. Thus, although the policy questions arising from the reorientation strategy are not wholly new, they do require specific and detailed attention.<sup>20</sup>

Second, the account of U.S. strategy discussed here provides an important baseline for U.S. policymakers charged with the task of evaluating China's responses to U.S. actions and formulating future U.S. strategy accordingly. The lack of consensus about whether the United States instituted a robust re-

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18. See Robert S. Ross, "China's Naval Nationalism: Sources, Prospects, and the U.S. Response," *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Fall 2009), p. 78; and Charles L. Glaser, "A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation," *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Spring 2015), p. 83.

19. For a sample of the debate about deep engagement versus restraint or offshore balancing, see Posen, *Restraint*; Christopher Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America's Future Grand Strategy," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Summer 1997), pp. 86–124; Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth, "Don't Come Home, America: The Case against Retrenchment," *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Winter 2012/13), pp. 7–51; and Campbell Craig, Benjamin H. Friedman, Brendan Rittenhouse Green, and Justin Logan; and Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth, "Correspondence: Debating American Engagement—The Future of U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Fall 2013), pp. 181–199.

20. For two notable exceptions that do address these questions directly, see Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*; and Hugh White, *The China Choice: Why America Should Share Power* (Collingwood, Australia: Black, 2012).

sponse to China's rise leaves policymakers with an underrecognized analytical quandary about how to evaluate the state of the bilateral relationship. If policymakers believe that the United States pursued an anemic strategy in Asia, for example, China's actions may appear more bellicose than if they are understood to be a reaction to a more substantial reorientation strategy.<sup>21</sup> The first step in strategy is to follow the maxim "know thyself." Without a baseline, it is difficult to properly interpret China's behavior.<sup>22</sup>

This revised account of U.S. strategy in Asia is not only relevant to the China policy debate in the United States; it is also of great importance how China and other states perceive U.S. strategy. The U.S.-China dynamic has a singularly important effect on a wide range of international issues, which are significantly affected by both the reality and perception of U.S. strategy in response to China's rise. Most immediately, perceptions of U.S. strategy affect the prospects for cooperation on bilateral issues between the United States and China. Beyond the bilateral relationship, U.S. strategy is an important driver of the defense postures of many states in Asia.<sup>23</sup> Further afield still, the U.S.-China dynamic—and perceptions of it—affect the dynamics of and responses to international issues such as the negotiation of global climate change agreements. This article provides new insights into the reality of U.S. strategy and reveals fundamental misperceptions that are widely held by observers in the United States, China, and many other interested and affected states.

The method used to elucidate and classify U.S. strategy is that of developing a historical narrative. This is not a political science theory-testing endeavor, although the narrative presented in this article has value as a source of data to scholars concerned with using the U.S.-China case to test theory.<sup>24</sup> Further, the purpose of this article is not to provide a policy assessment of the relative ef-

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21. For an example of Obama administration officials who viewed the Bush administration strategy in Asia to have been one of retrenchment, see Michèle Flournoy and Janine Davidson, "Obama's New Global Posture," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (July/August 2012), pp. 53–63.

22. Using U.S. strategy as a baseline would add an important dimension to existing scholarship on Chinese assertiveness. See Alastair Iain Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Spring 2013), pp. 7–48.

23. This is demonstrated in Adam P. Liff and G. John Ikenberry, "Racing toward Tragedy? China's Rise, Military Competition in the Asia Pacific, and the Security Dilemma," *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Fall 2014), pp. 52–91.

24. For example, the data are relevant to power transition theory. The application of that theory requires elaboration of what observations would be expected in the incipient phase of a potential power transition, which remains the state of the U.S.-China case. On power transition theory, see A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958); and Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a debate about the current power balance between the United States and China, see Beckley, "China's Century?"; and Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin; and Michael Beckley, "Correspondence: Debating China's Rise and U.S. Decline," *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Winter 2012/13), pp. 172–181. For an application of power transition theory to the U.S.-China case, see M. Taylor Fravel, "International Rela-

ficacy of the Bush versus Obama administration's Asia strategies. It is a common practice to structure analyses of U.S. strategy on an administration-by-administration basis. By relaxing that structure, it becomes possible to discern trends that might otherwise be overlooked. In this case, the reorientation strategy was consistent and additive from 2004 onward, beginning in one administration and continuing into another. Furthermore, from the perspective of informing future policy, "what happened" matters more than "who did what." Continuities and discontinuities between administrations are noted, but the focus is not on tallying which administration "pivoted" more or better.

The historical account presented here is based on the author's access to the personal archive of former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.<sup>25</sup> The archive contains a rich history of the planning documents relevant to the original shift in focus toward Asia, including progressive drafts of strategic plans and extensive correspondence among the senior officials responsible for drafting them. To supplement and triangulate these primary sources, this article also draws upon more than fifty in-depth interviews with senior government officials from the Bush and Obama administrations, as well as an extensive range of public official and secondary sources.

In the course of detailing the reorientation strategy, the article considers whether the strategy can be properly classified as containment. There has been debate among historians about the definition of containment and its application to the strategies implemented by U.S. administrations during the Cold War.<sup>26</sup> One cleavage in that debate centers on what George Kennan, who is credited with coining "containment," meant by the term and how that compared with the strategy of the Harry Truman administration toward the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup> Given this historical debate, it may be expected that the definition of the term "containment" remains contested. Among contemporary scholars of international relations, this not the case. John Mearsheimer describes the goal of containment as "slow[ing] the growth of an adversary's power."<sup>28</sup>

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tions Theory and China's Rise: Assessing China's Potential for Territorial Expansion," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (December 2010), pp. 505–532.

25. A small portion of these documents has been made public at <http://www.rumsfeld.com>. The author had no personal or professional association with Rumsfeld.

26. For the seminal work on this subject, see John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

27. See *ibid.*, chap. 2. For Kennan's original article on containment, see "X" (George F. Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (July 1947), pp. 566–582. For Kennan's later perspectives on containment, see George F. Kennan, "Letter to John Lewis Gaddis," November 21, 1981, George F. Kennan Papers: 1861–2014 (mostly 1950–2000), Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey, <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/MC076/c00184.pdf>; and George F. Kennan, "Containment: Then and Now," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (Spring 1987), pp. 885–890.

28. John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), p. 402.

This goal is restated in similar terms by Robert Art, who uses the formulation of “weakening” the target state.<sup>29</sup> Francis Gavin identifies the goal of containment as “to check and over time reduce the [target state’s] military power and geopolitical reach.”<sup>30</sup> In yet another example, Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert Ross define containment as aimed at “hinder[ing] the accretion of relative power.”<sup>31</sup> In later work, Johnston reports that the term has a similar definition when used by critics in China, for whom containment means “preventing the rise of China.”<sup>32</sup> Aaron Friedberg notes the same when he observes that critics in China believe the aim of U.S. strategy to be to “weaken” or “block the rise” of China.<sup>33</sup>

The means of a strategy of containment are, according to Art, the enforcement of a military stalemate and economic denial.<sup>34</sup> The enforcement of a stalemate is typically pursued by the creation of a multilateral alliance that geographically encircles the target state, although for less powerful adversaries a stalemate may be enforced through the use of limited military operations such as the no-fly zone in the case of Iraq.<sup>35</sup> Economic denial refers to the use of “measures that interfere with the targeted state’s trade [ . . . ] [which can] range from highly focused embargoes on selected strategic goods to full-scale economic warfare.”<sup>36</sup> Containment is also associated with countering the target state’s global influence.<sup>37</sup>

By Art’s count, using this general definition of containment, the United States has instituted a containment strategy nine times since the end of World War II, against the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Libya.<sup>38</sup> If the United States had implemented a containment strategy against China, it should be possible to observe that the reorientation aimed at slowing China’s rise by means of encircling China geographically, isolating China diplomatically and economically, and countering the expansion in China’s extra-regional influence.

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29. Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 113.

30. Francis J. Gavin, “Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation,” *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Summer 2015), p. 13.

31. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, “Preface,” in Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. xiv.

32. Johnston, “How New and Assertive Is China’s New Assertiveness?” p. 8 n. 5.

33. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*, p. 137.

34. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, p. 113.

35. On encirclement, see Mearsheimer, “Can China Rise Peacefully?” The no-fly zone in Iraq is mentioned as an example of containment in Frank P. Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War: Counterfactual Theory, Logic, and Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

36. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, p. 113.

37. Robert J. Art, “The United States and the Rise of China: Implications for the Long Haul,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 125, No. 3 (Fall 2010), p. 362.

38. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, p. 114.



The first section of this article identifies the origins of the idea of reorienting toward Asia and dates those origins to early 2001. The Bush administration spoke in terms of a “shift” toward Asia, whereas the Obama administration used the term “pivot” and then “rebalance.” As such, these terms are used respectively to refer to the policies of each administration, and the term “re-orientation” is used to capture the policies of both administrations. All of these terms refer to elevating the Asia Pacific in the order of U.S. priorities relative to other regions. The second and third sections detail how that idea was translated into a military strategy and then an interagency strategy over the 2001–04 period. The fourth section discusses the implementation of the reorientation beginning in 2004 and continuing up until and including the measures associated with the pivot announcement. The article concludes that the United States implemented a significant relative reallocation of U.S. resources toward the Asia Pacific in an effort to match—as distinct from check—China’s growth by increasing the combined power of the United States and its allies and partners in Asia.

### *The Original Idea: A Long-Term Shift in Focus toward Asia, 2001*

The management of potentially adversarial great power relations was the clear strategic priority for the George W. Bush administration upon entering office, but it was not until 2004 that the administration settled on a strategy to address that priority in the Asia Pacific. The emphasis on great power relations stemmed from multiple dove-tailing sources. Bush himself evinced an early personal interest in this subject, which informed his selection of Condoleezza Rice, an expert on the Soviet Union, as a foreign policy adviser during the campaign, and was shared by the incoming secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld.<sup>39</sup> The focus on the potential for great power competition was additionally fueled by the work of Andrew Marshall, who had held the position of director of the Office of Net Assessment (ONA) at the Department of Defense (DoD) since the Richard Nixon administration. Several of the speechwriters who were responsible for formulating Bush’s key foreign policy statements had worked with or had close connections to Marshall.<sup>40</sup> One speechwriter,

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39. See Maureen Dowd, “Freudian Face-Off,” *New York Times*, June 16, 1999; Elaine Sciolino, “Bush’s Foreign Policy Tutor: An Academic in the Public Eye,” *New York Times*, June 16, 2000; and Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), p. 305.

40. This included Richard Armitage, who became deputy secretary of state, and John Hillen, who became assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs. See John Barry, “The Pentagon’s Guru,” *Newsweek*, May 20, 2001, <http://www.newsweek.com/pentagons-guru-152619>; and James Dao, “New Technology Enlisted to Save Aircraft Carrier,” *New York Times*, May 20, 2001.

John Hillen, had worked at ONA and credited Marshall with many of the ideas in Bush's speeches.<sup>41</sup>

Marshall was well known within DoD for emphasizing the likely effects of new military technologies—such as long-range precision-strike capabilities and advances in information and communications technology—on the future of warfare. Among other concerns, this focus had led him to conclude that China's military modernization posed a threat to U.S. power projection capabilities in the Asia Pacific. As Marshall explains, "We [at ONA] were trying to point out that aircraft carriers were going to become increasingly vulnerable over time [. . .]. It was a consequence of the precision strike warfare regime. We were raising this idea of a precision warfare regime in the mid-1980s, and then increasingly in the early to mid-1990s. A lot of the concern was not tied to just a particular country. It was only in the mid-1990s that we became aware of the Chinese-specific program [that would make aircraft carriers vulnerable]."<sup>42</sup>

Bush's defense policy campaign speech focused on themes that flowed from Marshall's work on precision warfare. The speech described "a revolution in the technology of war" and pledged to "skip a generation of technology" and "replace existing programs with new technologies and strategies."<sup>43</sup> Bush referred to this process as "transformation," a label that came to be used frequently by the administration to describe its defense policy. He pledged to conduct a major defense review upon assuming office. Rumsfeld took the speech as "explicit guidance" and initiated a review of DoD when he took office as secretary of defense.<sup>44</sup> He asked Marshall, with whom he worked in his first term as secretary of defense during the Gerald Ford administration, to lead what came to be known as the Defense Strategy Review (DSR).<sup>45</sup>

The DSR started as a seven-page document drafted by Marshall and expanded into a thirty-two-page strategy after consultations with civilian and military officials in DoD, and regular correspondence between Rumsfeld and Marshall. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell were also each briefed on the review.<sup>46</sup> The DSR is a little-known process because it was an internal review conducted on a classified basis. Unlike the Defense Planning

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41. Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, "Notes from the Pentagon," *Inside the Ring* blog, April 6, 2001, <http://www.gertzfile.com/gertzfile/ring040601.html>.

42. Author interview with Andrew W. Marshall, the Pentagon, Virginia, April 9, 2012.

43. George W. Bush, "A Period of Consequences," speech at the Citadel, South Carolina, September 23, 1999, [http://www3.citadel.edu/pao/addresses/pres\\_bush.html](http://www3.citadel.edu/pao/addresses/pres_bush.html).

44. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, p. 294.

45. Rumsfeld describes this decision in *ibid.*, p. 293.

46. Memo from Donald Rumsfeld to President George W. Bush, cc. Vice President Richard B. Cheney and the Honorable Condoleezza Rice, "Predicting the Future," April 12, 2001, a personal archive of Donald Rumsfeld (Rumsfeld Archive); and Memo from Donald Rumsfeld to Steve Herbits, "Meeting w/Powell," March 28, 2001, Rumsfeld Archive.

Guidance 1992, which has received a great deal of attention from scholars and analysts, very little of the DSR was leaked to the press and, until now, the document has not been quoted publicly.<sup>47</sup> It was, however, an important post-Cold War planning document and served as the precursor of the reorientation to Asia.

The DSR opened by observing that “[t]he current global security situation is very favorable to the U.S. and our allies, and to the world in general.”<sup>48</sup> U.S. national interests were identified as being “to preserve (and if possible improve) the favorable conditions we find ourselves in” and to have “a peaceful century.”<sup>49</sup> The primary factor underlying those favorable conditions was U.S. military superiority. The strategy listed a number of unfavorable trends that might erode the United States’ military advantage. These trends included the potential weakening of U.S. alliances as a result of the end of the Cold War;<sup>50</sup> the development of “antiaccess” (subsequently called “antiaccess/area denial” or “A2/AD”)<sup>51</sup> capabilities that could inhibit the United States’ advantage in global power projection;<sup>52</sup> the potential for states and nonstate actors to target the United States with intercontinental ballistic missiles, sea-based missiles, or weapons of mass destruction;<sup>53</sup> and the military power potential in Asia.<sup>54</sup> With respect to these trends, China’s rise was, in the words of Marshall’s deputy, Andrew May, the key case of “concern,” and “the DSR was always about reorienting toward Asia.”<sup>55</sup> In a memo to Rumsfeld about implementing the strategy in 2002, Marshall described the DSR as a “long-term shift in focus” toward Asia.<sup>56</sup>

The DSR introduced the phrase “dissuade by actively discouraging the generation of threatening forces and ambitions” as one of four defense policy

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47. On the Defense Planning Guidance 2002, see Patrick E. Tyler, “Pentagon Imagines New Enemies to Fight in Post-Cold-War Era,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1992. For reports on the DSR, see Michael R. Gordon, “Pentagon Review Puts Emphasis on Long-Range Arms in Pacific,” *New York Times*, May 17, 2001; and Dao, “New Technology Enlisted to Save Aircraft Carriers.” The quotes from these articles do not appear to come from the DSR documents directly.

48. “Defense Strategy Review [thirty-two-page version],” 2001, Rumsfeld Archive.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 11.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

51. On A2/AD strategies, see Andrew Krepinevich, Barry Watts, and Robert Work, “Meeting the Anti-Access and Area-Denial Challenge” (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2003).

52. “Defense Strategy Review [thirty-two-page version],” p. 2.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

55. Author interview with Andrew May, the Pentagon, Virginia, November 7, 2013.

56. Memo from Andrew Marshall to Secretary of Defense, “Near Term Actions to Begin Shift of Focus towards Asia,” Rumsfeld Papers (online only), May 2, 2002, <http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/2518/2002-05-02%20from%20Andy%20Marshall%20re%20Near%20Term%20Actions%20to%20Begin%20Shift%20of%20Focus%20Towards%20Asia.pdf>.

goals for the United States, the other three being “to reassure” the American people, allies, and other countries, “to deter the use of force,” and “to decisively defeat” adversaries in the event of war.<sup>57</sup> The concept of dissuasion was an innovation because the other three were already established as long-standing U.S. goals.<sup>58</sup> Although the concept of dissuasion was not part of Marshall’s original vision,<sup>59</sup> it encapsulated much of the strategy in the DSR.<sup>60</sup> The goal of dissuasion was to discourage potential competitors—and China was the proximate candidate—from developing capabilities that countered the U.S. military advantage. This goal was distinct from the goal of deterring the use of force, which aimed to discourage the offensive use of military capabilities. It can be inferred that the goal of dissuasion had a logical corollary, which was that the successful maintenance of the U.S. military advantage in Asia would preserve the existing power balance in the region, in which the United States enjoyed the superior position. This inference is supported by the DSR’s opening observations about the need to preserve the then-current strategic environment and the emphasis of the DSR, detailed below, on preserving and expanding U.S. military superiority.

The DSR identified three means of advancing the goal of dissuasion: (1) the maintenance or extension of U.S. superiority in a select portfolio of specific “advantage” areas; (2) the preservation of strong alliances; and (3) improvement in “the suitability of [U.S.] capabilities to the Asian theater broadly understood.”<sup>61</sup> Of these means, approximately thirteen of the DSR’s thirty-two pages were devoted to explicating the first, as compared with the approximately half page each devoted to the second and third. The primary substance of the strategy was not, therefore, a geographic relocation of U.S. forces to the Asia Pacific region, but rather investment in weapons systems.

A “candidate” portfolio for investment was contained and discussed in detail in the DSR. The advantage areas included in the portfolio were aerial warfare, sea control, space operations, and unmanned systems. In addition, the DSR noted that the United States had an advantage in military training that should be maintained or expanded.<sup>62</sup> Maintaining an unassailable lead in these areas would advance the goal of dissuading states—specifically China—

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57. “Defense Strategy Review [thirty-two-page version],” p. 11.

58. This point is made in Andrew F. Krepinevich and Robert C. Martinage, “Dissuasion Strategy” (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2008), p. 2.

59. This term was not coined by Marshall. It was added to the DSR by Rumsfeld. Author interview with Marshall. See also Memo from Donald H. Rumsfeld to President George W. Bush, cc. Vice President Richard B. Cheney, the Honorable Colin Powell, and the Honorable Condoleezza Rice, “Some Thoughts on Language,” March 12, 2001, Rumsfeld Archive.

60. This interpretation was validated by Andrew May. Author interview with May.

61. “Defense Strategy Review [thirty-two-page version],” pp. 13–14.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

from competing with the United States by, in the words of May, raising “the costs of competing such that countries might simply abandon the notion of challenging us in these areas—or, if they did choose to compete, would be taking the U.S. on in an area in which we had established strengths and could expect to compete very efficiently and effectively.”<sup>63</sup>

The DSR clearly identified China’s rise as the most serious imminent challenge to U.S. interests. Despite this, the strategy did not adopt the goal of containment: to slow the growth in China’s power. The whole strategy was premised on the assumption that China was likely to continue to grow. There was no suggestion that the United States would seek to curtail that growth or welcome an economic slowdown. The DSR projected that China’s gross domestic product value would represent 13 percent of the world economy in 2025 (a figure that was reached in 2010, following the 2008 financial crisis).<sup>64</sup> Rather than being a desired outcome of U.S. strategy, the only potential causes of a downturn mentioned in the DSR were problems internal to the Chinese economy.<sup>65</sup> The DSR further evidenced no interest on the part of the United States in undermining the Communist Party regime. A twenty-one-page draft of the DSR noted that “the vulnerability of [the regime] in China” was one among a number of “[u]npredictable discontinuities [that] may affect [the] security environment more severely than predicted trends.”<sup>66</sup> For the United States, unpredictability is not a desired feature of a strategic environment. Despite the DSR’s concern about China’s growing military power, the strategy did not aim to reduce the percentage of China’s budget devoted to military spending. Instead, it sought to channel that spending in directions that were less threatening to the U.S. presence and capacity to operate in the Asia Pacific. In short, the DSR did not aim to halt or curtail China’s economic or military growth per se, nor did it demonstrate an interest in reducing the political power of the Chinese regime. The goal of containment was, therefore, absent from the foundational document of the reorientation strategy.

The DSR was intended to form the military component of a broader national strategy. To that end, Rumsfeld planned to release an unclassified version of the document.<sup>67</sup> He sent a memo to Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Stephen Cambone asking him to prepare an unclassified form of the DSR for publication and to reply within twenty-four hours.<sup>68</sup> The

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63. Andrew May, “ONA History Paper,” 2009, unpublished, cited with permission from the author, p. 3.

64. Eurostat, *The EU in the World 2013* (Luxembourg: European Union, 2012), p. 18.

65. “Defense Strategy Review [thirty-two-page version],” p. 10.

66. “Defense Strategy Review [twenty-one-page version],” 2001, Rumsfeld Archive, p. 6.

67. Author telephone interview with Donald H. Rumsfeld, April 11, 2014.

68. Memo from Donald Rumsfeld to Steve Cambone, “Marshall Paper,” September 11, 2001, Rumsfeld Archive.

memo was sent at 8.08 A.M. on September 11, 2001, one and a half hours before the al-Qaida attack on the Pentagon. Cambone never replied, and the DSR was never released to the public. The basic elements of the strategy can, however, be found in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) report, which was released on September 30, 2001, but had been substantially prepared prior to the September 11 attacks. In a truncated form, the DSR was thus enshrined in U.S. declaratory policy in the QDR.

The QDR articulated the goal of dissuasion in terms of “dissuading future military competition.”<sup>69</sup> The means of achieving this goal were expressed as the exertion of “influence through the conduct of [U.S.] research, development, test, and demonstration programs” and the maintenance or enhancement of “advantages in key areas of military capability.”<sup>70</sup> The QDR identified six operational goals as “the focus” for DoD’s “transformation efforts.”<sup>71</sup> The list reflected the DSR’s candidate portfolio but did not match it exactly, and included countering A2/AD capabilities and investment in precision-strike capabilities, information technology, and space systems.<sup>72</sup> These operational goals were later described by Thomas Mahnken, who became deputy assistant secretary of defense for policy planning in 2006 and took the lead in drafting the subsequent QDR, as being “really—albeit not exclusively—about China.”<sup>73</sup>

Given that the September 11 attacks literally interrupted the process of publishing the DSR, it is tempting to argue that the DSR offers a neat counterfactual about what U.S. strategy would have been if not for those attacks. The case does not present such a clear counterfactual because it was only the means element of the strategy—the investment in a portfolio of advantage areas—that was diverted by the attacks. The DSR articulated a goal that not only survived the attacks, but became explicitly a primary goal in U.S. grand strategy from thenceforth. That was the goal of dissuading China from competing with the United States in the Asia Pacific. After the September 11 attacks, this goal was pursued energetically through a new set of means: a historic undertaking to revise the U.S. global force posture.

### *A New Means of Reorienting: The Global Force Posture Review*

Counterintuitively, the Bush administration’s plan to shift toward Asia in the DSR did not focus on reorienting U.S. force posture toward the region. The

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69. Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Quadrennial Defense Review Report” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2001), p. 11, <http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf>.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

72. *Ibid.*

73. Author interview with Thomas G. Mahnken, Washington, D.C., August 26, 2010.

half-page of the DSR that was devoted to an improvement in “the suitability of our capabilities to the Asian theater broadly understood” recommended a “shift of emphasis” toward “programs, systems, and personnel” suited to operating in the Asia Pacific.<sup>74</sup> As Marshall recalls it, “Force posture change was not a particular push in the Defense Strategy Review.”<sup>75</sup>

During the first half of 2001, Andrew Hoehn, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy, raised with Rumsfeld the idea of revising the U.S. overseas force posture. This suggestion did not make its way into the DSR, even though Marshall thought it was “a very good idea.”<sup>76</sup> After the September 11 attacks, Hoehn’s idea converged with the ideas in the DSR about shifting focus toward Asia.<sup>77</sup> This convergence prompted what became a major multiyear process that was called officially the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy, and informally, the Global Posture Review (GPR) (2004).<sup>78</sup> Given that the DSR strategy of investing in a portfolio of advantage areas had stalled, the GPR sought—as a primary not sole aim—to dissuade China from challenging the existing power balance by revising the U.S. force posture in the region.

The Bush administration’s public statements at the time of announcing the GPR in 2004 justified the strategy on a number of general grounds, including the need to update the overseas posture given the end of the Cold War and the rise of terrorism, and to reduce double deployments (when forward-deployed troops are redeployed, leaving their dependents alone on overseas bases).<sup>79</sup> Although the GPR undoubtedly had these aims, in the final analysis, the GPR is best understood as a reorientation of U.S. force posture toward the Asia Pacific. Hoehn—whom Rumsfeld called the “mastermind” of the GPR—states that in the “overall balance” of the review, “that is an accurate conclusion.”<sup>80</sup> Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith explains, “It is fair to say, based on Andy Marshall’s paper [the DSR], that the term ‘pivot to Asia’ could accurately be applied to the Global Force Posture Review. That is what it was.”<sup>81</sup> Rumsfeld describes the review as being aimed at “shifting our weight from Western

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74. “Defense Strategy Review [thirty-two-page version],” p. 14.

75. Author interview with Marshall.

76. *Ibid.*

77. Author interview with Andrew R. Hoehn, Arlington, Virginia, October 5, 2011.

78. All subsequent references to the GPR in this article refer to the 2004 GPR.

79. U.S. Department of Defense, “Report to Congress: Strengthening U.S. Global Defense Posture” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2004), [http://www.dmhawaii.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/global\\_posture.pdf](http://www.dmhawaii.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/global_posture.pdf).

80. Author interview with Hoehn, October 5, 2011. Rumsfeld’s “mastermind” label comes from Donald H. Rumsfeld, testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, *The Global Posture Review of United States Military Forces Stationed Overseas: Hearing before the Senate Committee on Armed Services*, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., September 23, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005).

81. Author interview with Douglas J. Feith, Washington, D.C., July 11, 2012.

Europe toward Asia and the Pacific.”<sup>82</sup> That this was Rumsfeld’s intention at the time is reflected in a memo he wrote to Cambone in April 2002, entitled “Shifting Forces,” in which he asked Cambone to address “the question of how we might shift the total numbers of forces to have less in Europe and more in Asia” in the process of formulating the Defense Planning Guidance.<sup>83</sup>

Whereas the emphasis of the DSR was on dissuading China from investing in military technology, the GPR focused on using an enhanced force posture to dissuade China from developing hegemonic ambitions. Dissuading China was not, Hoehn emphasizes, the sole aim of the planned posture changes in the Asia Pacific, which were also aimed at countering the threats posed by terrorism and North Korea, but it was a central goal of the GPR.<sup>84</sup> Like the DSR, the GPR did not elaborate on the end state that the goal of dissuading China would bring about. It can be inferred, however, that a key characteristic of that end state would be the maintenance of a power balance in which the United States continued to occupy the superior position. Hoehn explains the goals of the GPR in terms that support this inference. “The message” that the strategy aimed to communicate to China, according to Hoehn, was that China must “work within the security structure that exists, and not try to break it.” The means of communicating this message was to be a force posture that demonstrated “that you cannot easily keep the United States or U.S. forces out of the region, that the U.S. will be able to operate, and therefore that it is a factor that would have to be contended with in any kind of security calculation that China or others would have.”<sup>85</sup>

One reason why the GPR—the original military pivot to Asia—received so little attention was that the Bush administration made a deliberate decision to keep it muted. Rumsfeld explains this decision by comparing the statements about the GPR to the Obama administration’s announcement of the pivot in 2011. In Rumsfeld’s view, the decision by the Obama administration to make an “announcement that that is what they are doing was a mistake.” The intention of the GPR planners was to make changes in the U.S. force posture, but to do so relatively quietly, “in ways that were not jarring in the sense that they would weaken the confidence of our friends and allies, or unduly agitate China into thinking that we were thinking preemptively about them.”<sup>86</sup> Consistent with Rumsfeld’s recollection, the public statements about the GPR at

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82. Author interview with Donald H. Rumsfeld, St. Michaels, Maryland, April 13, 2012.

83. Memo from Donald H. Rumsfeld to Steve Cambone, “Shifting Forces,” April 1, 2002, Rumsfeld Archive.

84. Author interview with Hoehn, October 5, 2011.

85. Author telephone interview with Andrew R. Hoehn, May 22, 2013.

86. Author interview with Donald H. Rumsfeld, Washington, D.C., April 12, 2012.



the time of its announcement were understated and few in number. For example, in a rare press briefing on the GPR in 2004, a State Department official described the review in the following terms: “[T]he storyline from a historical perspective, is that [U.S. force posture] is no longer aimed at Russia. [ . . . ] And the storyline of the Global Defense Posture Review in Asia is that the U.S. is better able to carry out its commitments than ever before, as a consequence of technological advances, military advances, and lessons learned, and the quality of our cooperation with countries throughout the region, and we very much expect [ . . . ] to make that a reality for many years to come.”<sup>87</sup> The GPR planned a pivot to Asia, but it was never announced as such.

### *Pivoting in the Interagency, 2001–04*

The reorientation strategy was not confined to the military sphere. As DoD was finalizing the GPR, the Bush administration undertook a six-month interagency process in late 2003–04 to produce a regional strategy for the Asia Pacific. It was led by Michael Green, the director (and later senior director) of Asia affairs on the National Security Council (NSC) staff, and included officials responsible for Asia from each of the relevant agencies of the executive, including Treasury, Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the State Department. The Asia strategy was informally synchronized with the GPR. In the words of Hoehn, who led the GPR, the processes of drafting the Asia strategy and the GPR were “very complementary and parallel efforts.”<sup>88</sup> Green reports that he had input into the GPR to “align” it “with our interagency drafting exercise.”<sup>89</sup> The interagency strategy was approved by the Deputies Committee and can be considered a codification of the consensus that the administration had reached on the Asia Pacific by 2004.

Like the GPR, the Asia strategy planned for a long-term shift in focus toward Asia. The drafters aimed to look beyond the “war on terror” to secure the United States for the long term, which meant, in the view of the drafters of the document, reorienting toward the Asia Pacific. According to Green, the as-

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87. U.S. Departments of State and Defense, “U.S. Global Force Posture Review” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State Foreign Press Center, August 16, 2004), <http://2002-2009-fpc.state.gov/35246.htm>. Using similarly understated and general phrasing, Adm. Thomas Fargo, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, told the Senate Committee on Armed Services in 2004: “Overall, the realignment of forces should signal to our friends and others that the U.S. has long-term interests in the Asia-Pacific region and is adjusting our force structure to reflect those enduring interests.” Fargo, testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, *The Global Posture Review of United States Military Forces Stationed Overseas*, p. 87.

88. Author telephone interview with Hoehn, May 22, 2013.

89. Michael J. Green, correspondence with author, September 25, 2013.

assessment underlying the strategy was that Iraq was like an “immediate cancer that had to be taken out.” While fighting that cancer, the United States needed to “keep working on its heart and muscles and exercising for the long haul in Asia.”<sup>90</sup>

The primary “strategic challenge” identified in the Asia strategy was China’s rise.<sup>91</sup> In the process of identifying the appropriate aim of the United States in response to this challenge, the drafters of the strategy discussed the goal of dissuasion. They did not, however, use this term in the document. Instead, the strategy identified as its goal to “shape” China’s decisions, which was the more “polite word,” as Green explains. Green elaborates on the concept of shaping in the following terms: “China is going to make its own decisions of course, but you need to demonstrate the consequences, the pros and cons, to shape their thinking, and the key to that was getting Asia right.”<sup>92</sup> Shaping was thus a positive statement of the GPR’s goal of dissuading China from developing hegemonic ambitions in the region.<sup>93</sup> This goal was later reflected in a landmark declaratory pronouncement by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, who warned China explicitly against “maneuver[ing] toward a predominance of power.” Zoellick urged China to, quoting a Chinese policy adviser, “transcend the traditional ways for great powers to emerge,” which was a reference to the pursuit of hegemony.<sup>94</sup> Instead, China was encouraged to become a “responsible stakeholder” and “strengthen the international system that has enabled its success.”<sup>95</sup>

The means of the Asia strategy were to be “external balancing” and “engagement.”<sup>96</sup> The engagement element of the strategy reflected the resolution of contention that had arisen early in the Bush administration about the management of diplomatic relations with China. The issue was not about whether the United States should engage with China, but rather about the extent and tone of diplomatic relations, and how conditional that engagement should be. In general, Rumsfeld and initially Rice were in favor of adopting a more conditional approach that, in Rumsfeld’s view, would involve not only “coopera-

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90. Author interview with Michael J. Green, Washington, D.C., September 1, 2010.

91. Author interview with Michael J. Green, Washington, D.C., September 6, 2011.

92. Author interview with Michael J. Green, Washington, D.C., August 16, 2010.

93. Ibid. Hoehn also frequently uses the word “shaping” to describe the goal of the GPR. Author telephone interview with Hoehn, May 22, 2013.

94. Robert B. Zoellick, “Whither China? From Membership to Responsibility,” remarks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, September 21, 2005, [https://www.ncuscr.org/sites/default/files/migration/Zoellick\\_remarks\\_notes06\\_winter\\_spring.pdf](https://www.ncuscr.org/sites/default/files/migration/Zoellick_remarks_notes06_winter_spring.pdf). For the source of Zoellick’s quote, see Zheng Bijian, “China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’ to Great-Power Status,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (September/October 2005), p. 22.

95. Zoellick, “Whither China?”

96. Author interview with Green, August 16, 2010.

tion” but also “demonstrating firmness.”<sup>97</sup> Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage were in favor of a broader, more conciliatory diplomatic engagement.<sup>98</sup> Powell describes this as being a “tension” that existed between his view that “we should work with China, cooperate with China, seek a better relationship with China” because it is “not going to be an enemy,” and the view of the Pentagon, whose leadership, in Powell’s opinion, viewed China as a “potential aggressor.”<sup>99</sup> This early tension came to a head over the issue of how to manage the April 2001 “EP-3” crisis, during which China detained the crew of a U.S. EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft that had made an emergency landing on Chinese territory. Powell and Rumsfeld offered Bush differing recommendations about how to manage the crisis.<sup>100</sup> Bush delegated the lead on managing the crisis to the State Department. His decision to do so was widely viewed within the administration as a victory for the State Department’s stance on diplomatic engagement with China.<sup>101</sup> The Asia strategy confirmed that the administration’s operative position was the pursuit of expanded engagement with China.

On the issue of external balancing, the Asia strategy constituted a statement of a consensus position that had been reached within the administration in relation to alliance relationships. The State Department and DoD approached alliances in Asia with different emphases at the outset of the administration. DoD identified as one of the four strategic goals in the 2001 QDR “to assure allies and friends of the United States’ steadiness of purpose and its capacity to fulfill its security commitments.”<sup>102</sup> In this conceptualization of U.S. alliance relationships, the United States was to remain an asymmetrical provider of security and the credibility of the U.S. commitment would be based on its capacity to provide that security. According to this model of alliance relationships, any balancing by the United States against China’s rise would take the form primarily of internal balancing. The initial approach of the State Department and the NSC staff to U.S. allies in Asia was different. This approach was reflective of a widely read bipartisan report coauthored by Armitage and former Clinton administration official Joseph Nye in 2000.<sup>103</sup> The report identified

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97. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, pp. 312–315; James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 281; and Condoleezza Rice, “Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (January/February 2000), pp. 45–62.

98. Author interview with Richard L. Armitage, Arlington, Virginia, September 28, 2011.

99. Author telephone interview with Colin L. Powell, July 12, 2012.

100. *Ibid.*

101. Author interview with Green, August 16, 2010. For Rumsfeld’s interpretation of this incident, see Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, pp. 312–315.

102. Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Quadrennial Defense Review Report,” p. 20.

103. Institute for National Strategic Studies, “The United States and Japan: Advancing toward a

Japan as the “keystone” to U.S. security in Asia and called on Japan to become “a more equal alliance partner.”<sup>104</sup> In this model of alliance relationships, U.S. efforts to balance against China would emphasize external balancing to a greater extent.

Hoehn, who was the primary author of the QDR 2001, confirms that these two different conceptualizations of the role of allies in Asia existed at the outset of the Bush administration but cautions against reading too much into the concept of assurance in the QDR. According to Hoehn, the alliance strategy in the QDR might have been more carefully phrased had there been more time to work on the document, which was substantially written before the September 11 attacks, but finalized in a hurry after them. He acknowledges, however, that there was an evolution in DoD’s thinking on alliances over the course of the first term of the administration. Hoehn explains, “I think there was a maturing in terms of the role of allies and partners, new and old, in terms of what we are seeking and [ . . . ] that is beyond assurance. It is [ . . . ] helping partners build capacity [ . . . ] to deal with new problems.”<sup>105</sup> This maturation within DoD meant that the Asia strategy reflected a consensus across the administration about increasing the emphasis on external balancing in Asia. External balancing was not intended to be a replacement for internal balancing, but, as Rumsfeld puts it, the administration sought to create “a blend between them,” with the aim of increasing the combined strength of the United States and its allies and partners in the Asia Pacific.<sup>106</sup>

The plan to balance externally was focused foremost on the U.S.-Japan alliance. According to Green, however, the drafters of the Asia strategy “included and infused the whole discussion with India.” A premise of the strategy was that “India’s role in East Asia was going to be a critical part of our strategy and that [the United States] needed to think about India in that context.” There were two reasons for not including India directly in the Asia strategy. The first was bureaucratic. The Bush administration had reorganized the NSC to combine the East Asia and the South Asia offices, but these offices remained separate in the State Department and DoD. The second reason for not including India explicitly in the strategy was, according to Green, that “we didn’t need to [ . . . ] [because] we already had a well-established India strategy.”<sup>107</sup> That India strategy, which brought about the July 2005 U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement, is widely credited to have been the brainchild of the U.S. ambassa-

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Mature Partnership [‘The “Nye-Armitage” Report’]” (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2000).

104. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

105. Author interview with Hoehn, October 5, 2011.

106. Author interview with Rumsfeld, April 13, 2012.

107. Author interview with Green, September 6, 2011.

dor to India, Robert Blackwill, and his senior adviser, Ashley Tellis.<sup>108</sup> In a post hoc article, Tellis explained that a stronger relationship with India would help to consolidate U.S. primacy by, among other means, balancing against a rising China.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, Blackwill subsequently described the opening to India as related to managing China's rise, in addition to other issues such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In Blackwill's words, with reference to the United States and India, "[T]here are, in my opinion, no two countries which share equally the challenge of trying to shape the rise of China."<sup>110</sup>

The Asia strategy and the GPR alike identified building interoperability among the United States and its allies and partners as an important means of dissuasion.<sup>111</sup> Green reports that he and some of the others involved in drafting the Asia strategy thought in terms of creating "not a NATO per se, but a federated set of capabilities and interoperability that [would] enhance dissuasion without creating a security dilemma or two blocs in the region." They "conceived that this would help dissuade China from using force in the region by demonstrating the latent potential for closer security ties among China's neighbors if provoked."<sup>112</sup> This plan to create a federated network signaled a historic shift in U.S. strategy toward the region. Prior to 2004, the primary feature of the region's security architecture was the hub-and-spokes arrangement of U.S. bilateral alliance relationships. The network model sought to connect the spokes to one another by creating a web of defense relationships and interoperability among them, federated under the United States. The Obama administration later described this shift in almost identical terms, when it explained that it was "moving beyond the "hub and spokes" model of the past, toward a more networked architecture of cooperation among our allies and partners—including through expanded trilateral cooperation frameworks [ . . . ]."<sup>113</sup>

Alongside the claim made by critics in China that the United States aimed to

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108. Author telephone interview with Robert B. Zoellick, April 24, 2013.

109. Ashley J. Tellis, "The Evolution of U.S.-Indian Ties: Missile Defense in an Emerging Strategic Relationship," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Spring 2006), p. 127.

110. "U.S. and India Getting Closer Than Ever," *Voice of America*, October 28, 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/content/a-13-2005-07-22-voa46-66932297/377355.html>.

111. Interoperability was emphasized in Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States, "Report to the President and U.S. Congress" (Arlington, Va.: Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States, May 9, 2005), pp. 9–10, app. O. With regard to the Obama administration, this aspect of the strategy is noted in Mark E. Manyin et al., *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" toward Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2012), pp. 11–12.

112. Michael J. Green, correspondence with author, March 22, 2012.

113. White House, "Advancing the Rebalance to Asia and the Pacific" (Washington, D.C.: White House, November 16, 2015), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/16/fact-sheet-advancing-rebalance-asia-and-pacific>.

contain China is the charge that the pivot constituted encirclement.<sup>114</sup> The existence of an explicit plan to develop a federated network in the Asia Pacific provides ostensible support for this charge. It would be a mistake, however, to equate encirclement with containment. Containment is a strategy that consists of multiple means devoted to the end of slowing the growth of an adversary's power. The geographical encirclement of a state is one means to that end, but it does not necessarily aim at that goal nor is the existence of encirclement alone sufficient to constitute a containment strategy. Encirclement may be a means toward other ends or a by-product of other means.

If the federated network were an element of a containment strategy, then it should have been accompanied by economic denial and diplomatic isolation. Yet membership in the network did not require forsaking economic or diplomatic relations with China. On the contrary, the construction of the federated network was accompanied by a substantial expansion of U.S. diplomatic and economic engagement with China, as detailed below. These observations—which would be anomalous if the reorientation strategy were a containment strategy—are consistent with classifying the federated network as an element of a balancing strategy aimed at preserving the existing power balance in Asia by increasing the combined power of the United States and its allies and partners.

Containment is not the only strategy available to a hegemon in response to a rising power. A power balance can also be preserved in the face of a rising power by increasing the power of the hegemonic state through internal balancing and/or by increasing the power of the alliance led by the hegemon, among other strategies. Although the distinction between containment and balancing may seem slight, the two strategies mandate different approaches toward the rising power. In a containment strategy, the power balance is preserved by undertaking efforts to suppress the growth of the rising power, which requires adopting a directly hostile posture toward the rising state across all domains of statecraft. In a balancing strategy, the hegemon does not adopt a position of direct hostility toward the rising power because it does not aim to thwart the rising power's growth. Rather, it aims to match the rate of growth of the rising power to maintain the power balance.

### *The Implementation of the Pivot to Asia, 2004–14*

By 2004, the Bush administration had planned a military-diplomatic reorientation toward Asia. The goal of the reorientation was described either as dissua-

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114. Bonnie Glaser and Brittany Billingsley, "U.S. Pivot to Asia Leaves China Off Balance," *Comparative Connections*, January 2012, [http://csis.org/files/publication/1103qus\\_china.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/1103qus_china.pdf).

sion or shaping, which were positive and negative ways to frame the same goal: to prevent China from challenging the United States for superiority in Asia. The reorientation was to consist of several elements. The first was internal balancing: revisions to the U.S. force posture and doctrinal innovations to enhance U.S. capabilities in Asia. The second was external balancing: the construction of a strong, federated network of allies and partners in the region. The third was expanded diplomatic engagement with China. Some of these elements of U.S. strategy were new; others were extensions of existing policies. Each of these elements was, however, notably advanced, and each accelerated from 2004 onward to produce a substantive U.S. reorientation toward Asia.

#### INTERNAL BALANCING

The pivot to Asia has been most commonly criticized in the United States for heralding an insubstantial reallocation of U.S. military assets to Asia. This section addresses that criticism by providing details of U.S. internal balancing efforts, which consisted of an expansion of bases on U.S. territories adjacent to Asia in Guam, Alaska, and Hawaii; a reallocation of naval assets to Asia; and later, innovations in U.S. military doctrine.

The GPR planned to expand Anderson Air Force Base in Guam to house a Global Strike Task Force including fighters; bombers; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets; aerial refueling tankers; and a Global Hawk (unmanned aerial vehicle) detachment.<sup>115</sup> From 2004 onward, units of B-52, B-1, and B-2 bombers were on cycles of four-month rotations that provided a continual presence of six bombers on Guam.<sup>116</sup> F-22s started regular but not continuous rotations to Guam in January 2009.<sup>117</sup> The first Global Hawk ar-

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115. Department of the Air Force, "Final Environmental Impact Statement: Establishment and Operation of an Intelligence, Reconnaissance, and Strike Capability, Anderson Air Force Base, Guam" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Air Force, 2006), [http://www.agriculturedefensecoalition.org/sites/default/files/file/us\\_air\\_force/214A\\_2006\\_US\\_Air\\_Force\\_Final\\_EIS\\_Establishment\\_Operation\\_Intelligence\\_Surveillance\\_Reconnaissance\\_Strike\\_Capability\\_Andersen\\_AFB\\_Guam\\_Vol\\_1\\_NOV\\_2006.pdf](http://www.agriculturedefensecoalition.org/sites/default/files/file/us_air_force/214A_2006_US_Air_Force_Final_EIS_Establishment_Operation_Intelligence_Surveillance_Reconnaissance_Strike_Capability_Andersen_AFB_Guam_Vol_1_NOV_2006.pdf).

116. "Continuous Presence Historical Data," email attachment to author from Lt. Col. Harry R. Dyson, Commander 36th Ops Support Squadron, U.S. Air Force, pursuant to an approved request for Air Force Book Support, October 23, 2013.

117. Ryan Whitney, "Raptors Back on Guam," *Air Force Magazine*, January 21, 2009, <http://www.airforcemag.com/DRArchive/Pages/2009/January%202009/January%2021%202009/RaptorsBackonGuam.aspx>; Bryan C. Sualog, "Air Force Brings 12 F-22 Raptors to Guam," *Pacific Daily News*, May 18, 2009; and Holloman Air Force Base 49th Fighter Wing Public Affairs, "F-22s Set to Deploy to Japan, Guam" (Holloman Air Force Base, N.M.: Holloman Air Force Base 49th Fighter Wing Public Affairs, May 20, 2010), <http://www.holloman.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123205680>. F-22 rotations were suspended in 2011 and 2012, years in which there were problems with the F-22 program as a whole. See W.J. Hennigan, "Sky-High OVERRUNS, Safety Ills Plague Jet," *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 2011; and W.J. Hennigan, "F-22 Raptor Oxygen Problems May Be Worse Than Previously Disclosed," *Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 2012.

rived on Guam in September 2010,<sup>118</sup> and three Global Hawks were based on Guam by 2012.<sup>119</sup> Four KC-135 tankers were regularly rotated to Guam from 2007 onward.<sup>120</sup>

The GPR also planned to sustain an extant U.S. Navy plan to increase the nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN) force homeported on Guam from two to three, as well as to use Guam as a base to increase the “on-station time/persistent presence” of SSNs and guided missile submarines (SSGNs) in the region.<sup>121</sup> The third of the three SSNs was homeported in Apra Harbor by 2007. This meant that approximately 60 percent of the SSN fleet was assigned to the Pacific by 2009.<sup>122</sup> A fourth SSN was homeported in Guam in 2014.<sup>123</sup> Upgrades to the Alpha and Bravo wharfs in Apra Harbor were completed in 2008, which provided Guam with the capacity to host SSGNs.<sup>124</sup> From then on, the USS *Ohio* (SSGN-727) and USS *Michigan* (SSGN-728) spent considerable time forward deployed to Guam.<sup>125</sup> The significant expansion in Guam’s capacity to host submarines was highlighted in June 2012, when Guam hosted five SSNs and one SSGN simultaneously.<sup>126</sup> The GPR further proposed the “[p]otential relocation of III MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force] from Okinawa to Guam,” although the relocation was delayed to 2020 for domestic political reasons in Japan.<sup>127</sup>

The buildup on Guam was to be augmented by enhancing U.S. capabilities in Alaska and Hawaii. The GPR planners recognized that Guam would be increasingly vulnerable as China developed its missile forces over time and that it was important not to have “all your eggs in one basket.”<sup>128</sup> Consequently, the GPR proposed to collocate Stryker brigades with high-speed ves-

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118. Marc V. Schanz, “Guam Welcomes First Global Hawk,” *Air Force Magazine*, September 17, 2010, <http://www.airforcemag.com/DRArchive/Pages/2010/September%202010/September%2017%202010/GuamWelcomesFirstGlobalHawk.aspx>.

119. Shirley A. Kan, *Guam: U.S. Defense Deployments* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2012), p. 3.

120. Richard Halloran, “Guam, All Over Again,” *Air Force Magazine*, January 2008, <http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Documents/2008/January%202008/0108guam.pdf>.

121. Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States, “Report to the President and U.S. Congress,” p. J5.

122. Kan, *Guam*, p. 2.

123. Submarine Force Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, “Fourth Attack Sub to be Homeported in Guam” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Navy, February 2, 2014), [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=79065](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=79065).

124. Kyra Hawn, “New Wharf Hosts Navy’s First SSGN on Guam” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Navy, January 15, 2008), [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=34327](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=34327).

125. *Ibid.*

126. Kan, *Guam*, p. 2; and David R. Krigbaum, “Guam Welcomes Submarines” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Navy, June 8, 2012), [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=67687](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=67687).

127. Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States, “Report to the President and U.S. Congress,” p. H11.

128. Author interview with Hoehn, October 5, 2011.



sels and C-17 airlifters in Alaska and Hawaii.<sup>129</sup> In 2004, the 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, based in Hawaii, began its conversion into the Army's fifth Stryker Brigade Combat Team.<sup>130</sup> In 2006, the 204th Airlift Squadron in Hawaii replaced its C-130s with eight new C-17s.<sup>131</sup> The 1st Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division in Alaska had already begun the process of converting into a Stryker brigade in 2002 prior to the completion of the GPR.<sup>132</sup> After the GPR, the brigade was linked with C-17s when the new 249th Airlift Squadron was established in Alaska in 2007.<sup>133</sup> The Navy also decided in 2007 to base an additional aircraft carrier for the Pacific in San Diego.<sup>134</sup> This decision was implemented when USS *Carl Vinson* arrived in San Diego in April 2010.<sup>135</sup>

The Obama administration added to the Bush administration's internal balancing strategy in two respects, both of which were introduced with more fanfare, although the administration refrained from linking these moves to China explicitly. The first was the announcement by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta in June 2012 that the United States would deploy 60 percent of its Navy fleet to the Pacific by 2020.<sup>136</sup> As noted above, the Navy had already based an additional aircraft carrier in the Pacific in 2010 and assigned 60 percent of its SSN fleet to the Pacific by 2009. What was new in Panetta's speech was, therefore, a reallocation of cruisers and destroyers plus the rotation of up to four littoral combat ships (LCSs) to Singapore, amounting to a 5 percent additional shift in naval resources to the Pacific.<sup>137</sup>

The second addition to the internal balancing element of the reorientation strategy by the Obama administration was the AirSea Battle operational con-

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129. Fargo, testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, *The Global Posture Review of United States Military Forces Stationed Overseas*.

130. U.S. Army, "2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team" (Honolulu, Hawaii: U.S. Army, n.d.), [http://www.25idl.army.mil/UNIT\\_2BDE/UNIT\\_INFORMATION/2SBCT\\_HISTORY.pdf](http://www.25idl.army.mil/UNIT_2BDE/UNIT_INFORMATION/2SBCT_HISTORY.pdf).

131. Air National Guard, "154th Wing" (Honolulu: Air National Guard, n.d.), <http://www.154wg.ang.af.mil/units/>; and Boeing, "Boeing Delivers 'Spirit of Hawaii—Ke Aloha,' First USAF C-17 in Pacific Region," news release (Seattle, Wash.: Boeing, 2006), <http://boeing.mediaroom.com/2006-02-07-Boeing-Delivers-Spirit-of-Hawaii-Ke-Aloha-First-USAF-C-17-in-Pacific-Region>.

132. First Stryker Brigade Combat Team, "Unit History" (Fort Wainwright, Ala.: U.S. Army, n.d.), [http://www.wainwright.army.mil/1\\_25\\_SBCT/history.html](http://www.wainwright.army.mil/1_25_SBCT/history.html).

133. Eric Hamilton, "Alaska's Newest Airlifter: Globemaster III Arrives" (Anchorage, Alaska: 176th Wing Air National Guard Public Affairs, July 14, 2007), <http://www.176wg.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123094264>.

134. Halloran, "Guam, All Over Again."

135. Commander, 3rd Fleet Public Affairs, "Carl Vinson Arrives at New Home Port" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Navy, April 12, 2010), [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=52541](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=52541).

136. Leon E. Panetta, "The U.S. Rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific," speech to the International Institute for Security Studies (the "Shangri-La Dialogue") (Singapore: International Institute for Strategic Studies, June 2, 2012), <http://www.iiss.org/en/events/shangri%20la%20dialogue/archive/sld12-43d9/first-plenary-session-2749/leon-panetta-d67b>.

137. Gidget Fuentes, "U.S. Plans for Larger Presence in Pacific," *Navy Times*, April 21, 2012, <http://www.navytimes.com/article/20120421/NEWS/204210313/U-S-plans-larger-presence-Pacific>.

cept, which was introduced publicly in the 2010 QDR. Like Obama's pivot to Asia, AirSea Battle was criticised for lacking substance. In support of this claim, critics pointed to the tendency in DoD to define AirSea Battle by emphasizing what it was not (that it was not a strategy, nor a war plan against China), the small size and output of the office that was established in DoD to promote the concept, and later the effort to "find a role" for the Army in AirSea Battle associated with the renaming of the concept to Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons (JAM-GC) in January 2015.<sup>138</sup>

The substance of AirSea Battle is easily identified when AirSea Battle is understood as a public manifestation of the reorientation strategy detailed in this article, dating back to the 2001 DSR. The concept of AirSea Battle had been developed by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), a Washington think tank, which released detailed reports on the subject in 2010.<sup>139</sup> CSBA's president, Andrew Krepinevich, had been Andrew Marshall's military assistant at ONA in the 1990s.<sup>140</sup> While at ONA he worked on three assessments about what later became known as A2/AD strategies.<sup>141</sup> These reports informed the DSR, one of the primary aims of which was to counter the A2/AD challenge to U.S. power projection capabilities. AirSea Battle had the same aim: to counter "adversaries equipped with sophisticated anti-access and area denial capabilities."<sup>142</sup> AirSea Battle thus owed its strategic lineage to the DSR.

In this context, AirSea Battle can be understood to consist of several elements. First, AirSea Battle was to shift the relative allocation of resources between the services away from the Army and toward the Air Force and the Navy. This was well understood within DoD—despite the inclusion of "land" as one of the five AirSea Battle "domains" in the QDR—because AirSea Battle focused on operating at long ranges in an aerospace and maritime theater. It is

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138. See, for example, Colin Clark, "Air-Sea Battle: What's It All About, or Not," *Breaking Defense*, November 10, 2011, <http://breakingdefense.com/2011/11/air-sea-battle-whats-it-all-about-or-not/>; and Sydney Freedberg, "Glimpse inside Air-Sea Battle: Nukes, Cyber at Its Heart," *Breaking Defense*, July 9, 2013, <http://breakingdefense.com/2013/07/glimpse-inside-air-sea-battle-nukes-cyber-at-its-heart/>. On the name change, see Paul McLeary, "New U.S. Concept Melds Air, Sea, and Land," *Defense News*, January 24, 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/warfare/2015/01/24/air-sea-battle-china-army-navy/22229023/>.

139. Andrew F. Krepinevich, "Why AirSea Battle?" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010); and Jan Van Tol et al., "AirSea Battle: A Point of Departure Operational Concept" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010).

140. Greg Jaffe, "U.S. Model for a Future War Fans Tensions with China and inside Pentagon," *Washington Post*, August 1, 2012.

141. *Ibid.*

142. U.S. Department of Defense, "Quadrennial Defense Review Report" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2010), p. 32, [http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR\\_as\\_of\\_12Feb10\\_1000.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf).

also evidenced by the subsequent efforts to find a role for the Army in AirSea Battle.<sup>143</sup> Relatedly, AirSea Battle was intended to promote greater jointness between the Air Force and the Navy inspired by the AirLand Battle doctrine of the 1980s.<sup>144</sup>

Second, AirSea Battle promoted an effective shift in the focus of military training toward the Asia Pacific. Although official statements insisted that AirSea Battle was not focused on China, in 2010 China remained the state with by far the most advanced A2/AD strategy. Unlike the 2010 QDR, the CSBA literature on AirSea Battle was explicit about the target of the concept. AirSea Battle, according to a report by Krepinevich published just prior to the release of the 2010 QDR, was foremost about responding to the “spread of advanced military technologies and their exploitation by other militaries, especially China’s People’s Liberation Army and to a far lesser extent Iran’s military and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.”<sup>145</sup> In shying away from mentioning China, the QDR was “a little bit politically correct to avoid antagonizing China” in the opinion of former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman, who was a member of the Congressional Independent Review Panel for the 2010 QDR.<sup>146</sup>

Third, although the official documents detailing AirSea Battle did not translate the concept into specific programs, in general terms the concept was associated with an increased emphasis on space, cyber, and electronic warfare capabilities, which would be used in the initial phases of a conflict to “blind” the adversary by targeting command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets; stealthy manned and unmanned long-range vehicles to locate mobile targets; attack submarines with long-range conventional missiles and stealthy long-range bombers to attack targets “in depth” (i.e., deep into China’s territory); and antisubmarine warfare.<sup>147</sup> These emphases echoed and expanded the portfolio for priority investment proposed in the 2001 DSR, which, as mentioned, included sea control, space operations, and unmanned systems.

AirSea Battle had an effect on training, budgeting, and programming. Adm. Jonathan Greenert, chief of naval operations, and Gen. Mark Welsh,

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143. McLeary, “New U.S. Concept Melds Air, Sea, and Land.”

144. Jointness and interoperability were emphasized in Air-Sea Battle Office, “Air-Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenges” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, May 2013), pp. 4–5.

145. Krepinevich, “Why AirSea Battle?” p. vii.

146. Author interview with Eric S. Edelman, Washington, D.C., September 2, 2010.

147. On these points generally, see Air-Sea Battle Office, “Air-Sea Battle”; and Aaron L. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate over U.S. Military Strategy in Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 82–84.

chief of staff of the Air Force, report that each of the services' war games in 2012 "included objectives that explored Air-Sea Battle as a way to meet anti-access challenges" and that the focus on AirSea Battle "increased with each successive game."<sup>148</sup> The unclassified reports of exercises in that year verify these claims.<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, the concept informed the Air Force and the Navy's Program Objective Memoranda, which plan how each service will invest in programs over a six-year period.<sup>150</sup> Consistent with AirSea Battle, some relative prioritization of the Air Force and the Navy can be observed in the DoD base budget.<sup>151</sup> The budgets of all services declined in the period following the 2010 QDR as a result of the Budget Control Act of 2011, a set of measures commonly referred to as "sequestration."<sup>152</sup> They declined, however, at dissimilar rates, with the greatest decline experienced by the Army (34 percent including war-related funding, 18 percent excluding war-related funding), followed by the Air Force (18 percent or 15 percent) and the Navy (13 percent or 10 percent), amounting to a relative shift in the proportion of funding away from the Army toward the Air Force and the Navy.<sup>153</sup>

If understood in the context of its history dating back at least to the 2001 DSR, therefore, AirSea Battle was far more substantive than critics claimed. There is, however, truth to the criticism that the renaming of AirSea Battle to JAM-GC weakened the initiative, at least insofar as AirSea Battle was a manifestation of the longer-term reorientation strategy described here.<sup>154</sup> As with the revival of important tenets of the DSR in the GPR, however, the strategic thinking that animated AirSea Battle is likely to manifest in yet other forms

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148. Jonathan Greenert and Mark Welsh, "Breaking the Kill Chain," *Foreign Policy*, May 16, 2013, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/16/breaking\\_the\\_kill\\_chain\\_air\\_sea\\_battle](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/16/breaking_the_kill_chain_air_sea_battle).

149. See "Expeditionary Warrior 12 Final Report" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Marine Corps, July 23, 2012), [http://defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/Marine\\_Corps\\_War\\_Game.pdf](http://defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/Marine_Corps_War_Game.pdf); Robert W. Cone, "Unified Quest Army Future Game," *Small Wars Journal* blog, May 16, 2012, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/unified-quest-army-future-game>; and Marc V. Schanz, "AirSea Battle's Battle," *Air Force Magazine*, April 2013, <http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2013/April%202013/0413battle.aspx>.

150. James M. Holmes, "Air-Sea Battle: Concept and Implementation" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Air Force, 2012), [http://www.ndiagulfcoast.com/events/archive/38th\\_symposium/HolmesSymp12.pdf](http://www.ndiagulfcoast.com/events/archive/38th_symposium/HolmesSymp12.pdf).

151. Todd Harrison, "Analysis of the FY 2015 Defense Budget" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2014), p. 18; and Todd Harrison, "Chaos and Uncertainty: The FY 2014 Defense Budget and Beyond" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, October, 2013), p. 22.

152. Some assessment of the effect of sequestration on the pivot is provided in Hugo Meijer, "The Reconfiguration of American Primacy in World Politics: Prospects and Challenges for the U.S. Rebalance in Asia," in Meijer, ed., *Origins and Evolution of the U.S. Rebalance toward Asia: Diplomatic, Military, and Economic Dimensions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 10–12.

153. Harrison, "Chaos and Uncertainty," p. 22.

154. J. Randy Forbes, "RIP Air-Sea Battle?" *National Interest*, January 29, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/rip-air-sea-battle-12147>.

that will further promote a reorientation toward Asia. The successor to AirSea Battle may not be JAM-GC, but rather the Defense Innovation Initiative, commonly known as the search for a “Third Offset Strategy,” announced by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in November 2014.<sup>155</sup>

The Third Offset Strategy initiative echoed both the DSR and AirSea Battle in important respects, although officials avoided referencing AirSea Battle in the context of the Third Offset Strategy, probably because of the widespread criticism of AirSea Battle. In explaining the initiative, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work—who had held senior positions at CSBA in the 2000s—echoed Marshall’s Competitive Strategies approach when he stated that “we’re actually thinking of this in terms of a never-ending [competition].” The Third Offset initiative further followed Marshall’s thinking by highlighting the strategic importance of the development of long-range precision strike capabilities, which Work identified as the “Second Offset” that provided the United States with a decisive advantage in Cold War conflict scenarios in Europe. Like the DSR, the goal of the initiative was to maintain the United States’ “unfair competitive advantage” and “unchallenged military superiority” by finding the next strategic breakthrough that would offset the advantage gained by adversaries through their A2/AD capabilities. In Work’s words, the Third Offset Strategy initiative was “about developing the means to offset advantages or advances in anti-access area denial weapons and other advanced technologies that we see proliferating around the world.” The initiative encouraged investment in new technologies, which—because they focused on countering A2/AD—broadly encompassed and extended the portfolio suggested in the DSR. The initiative also went beyond the DSR to echo the GPR and the interagency Asia strategy in emphasizing the importance of developing interdependence with allies.<sup>156</sup> To the extent that the Third Offset Strategy initiative remains oriented toward offsetting A2/AD, it is likely to further promote the reorientation toward Asia.

The United States thus began an internal balancing effort in 2004 that promoted a reorientation toward Asia. The effort comprised a buildup of U.S. forces based on U.S. territories adjacent to East Asia and the reallocation of naval assets to the region, as well as doctrinal innovations to focus military training, budgeting, and acquisitions on countering A2/AD capabilities. This internal balancing effort has been discounted in analyses of the pivot for sev-

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155. Chuck Hagel, “Reagan National Defense Forum Keynote” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, November 15, 2014), <http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Article/606635>.

156. Robert O. Work, “The Third U.S. Offset Strategy and Its Implications for Partners and Allies” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 28, 2015), <http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Article/606641>.

eral reasons. First, the military buildups in Guam, Alaska, and Hawaii were introduced with little fanfare, consistent with the Bush administration's decision to keep the reorientation quiet. Apart from the few official statements surrounding the GPR in 2004, government statements did not link the buildups in each location to one another nor indicate that they were part of a broader strategy. Second, much of the internal balancing pre-dated the pivot announcement. Third, the doctrinal elements of the rebalance have either been dismissed inaccurately as being insubstantial (in the case of AirSea Battle) or have not been identified as likely to promote the reorientation toward Asia (in the case of the Third Offset Strategy initiative).

#### EXTERNAL BALANCING

The second element of the long-term reorientation strategy was that of external balancing. This element of the strategy explains many of the actions of the United States in the Asia Pacific that—when viewed in isolation—appear to make little strategic sense. U.S. efforts to reduce the numbers of U.S. forces based in South Korea and Japan seem a perplexing move in the context of China's rise.<sup>157</sup> The rotation of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) to northern Australia from 2012 seems a puzzlingly small-scale force in the context of any potential contingency involving China.<sup>158</sup> Similarly, the rotation of LCSs to Singapore from 2012 seems bewildering given the LCS's lack of survivability in the context of such a contingency.<sup>159</sup> Each of these moves make clear strategic sense, however, when understood in the context of the United States' long-term reorientation strategy.

The external balancing element of the strategy consisted of two interrelated parts: (1) increasing the military capabilities of, and building stronger bilateral interoperability with, allies and partners; and (2) encouraging allies and partners to develop stronger military relationships and greater interoperability with one another. The second part was the innovation in the strategy given that the first part had been a constant desideratum for the United States in Asia. As originally conceived, the aim of the external balancing strategy, in Hoehn's words, was to "show the strength of relationships [part one of the external balancing strategy] and the strength of commitments among al-

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157. One commentator attempted to resolve this puzzle by suggesting—incorrectly—that the troop withdrawals were intended to "mollify" China. See Christian Le Mièrè, "America's Pivot to East Asia: The Naval Dimension," *Survival*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (June/July 2012), pp. 82–83, 89.

158. Friedberg, "Bucking Beijing." See also Manyin et al., *Pivot to the Pacific?* p. 7.

159. On the survivability of the LCS, see U.S. House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, *Acquisition and Development Challenges Associated with the Littoral Combat Ship: Hearing before the U.S. House Armed Services Committee*, 113th Cong., 1st sess., July 25, 2013, [http://armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/hearings-display?ContentRecord\\_id=1ede5577-2759-4ee9-97f0-63b9cbbdfc87](http://armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/hearings-display?ContentRecord_id=1ede5577-2759-4ee9-97f0-63b9cbbdfc87).

lies and partners [part two of the external balancing strategy]” to signal to “China and others [. . .] [that] their ability to disrupt or interfere or weaken these relationships” would not increase over time. External balancing was, according to Hoehn, to be an important “part of dissuasion.”<sup>160</sup>

INCREASING THE MILITARY CAPABILITIES OF ALLIES AND PARTNERS. The GPR planned to reduce the number of U.S. troops based in South Korea and Japan by relocating them back to U.S. territory. Originally, the plan was to draw down from 37,500 to 25,000 in South Korea and to relocate 9,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam, although the figures to date have been considerably fewer than that.<sup>161</sup> Counterintuitively, the aim of these relocations was not to reduce the role of these alliances in U.S. Asia strategy. Rather, these allies were to play a greater role in U.S. strategy, albeit of a different type. U.S. officials believed that South Korea and Japan had the capacity to assume more responsibility for their own defenses and for regional security.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, the GPR planners envisaged that the United States would provide additional support to these allies to transform their militaries and develop greater expeditionary capabilities.<sup>163</sup> This support was not aimed at eventual military independence for these allies. The intention was to develop their military capabilities in a way that would complement U.S. capabilities and orient the South Korean and Japanese militaries toward operating jointly with the United States.

By way of illustration, it can be observed that the United States made substantial progress in this respect with Japan from 2004. The United States and Japan announced the Alliance Transformation and Realignment Agreement in October 2005, followed by the United States–Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation in May 2006, and the Guidelines for U.S.–Japan Defense Cooperation in April 2015. Missile defense cooperation was advanced in December 2005, when Japan announced that it would upgrade its cooperation with the United States from joint research to the joint development of interceptor missiles. This marked a significant policy shift because it challenged Japan’s constitutional commitment to field military forces only in self-defense.<sup>164</sup> Pursuant to the Roadmap agreement, the headquarters of the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Forces moved along with the U.S. Army I Corps

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160. Author telephone interview with Hoehn, May 22, 2013.

161. Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States, “Report to the President and U.S. Congress,” p. H8; and David J. Berteau and Michael J. Green, “U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment” (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 27, 2012), p. 27.

162. Author interview with Rumsfeld, April 13, 2012.

163. See Department of Defense, “Report to Congress”; and Richard B. Myers, testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, *The Global Posture Review of United States Military Forces Stationed Overseas*, p. 86.

164. Andrew L. Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008), p. 149.

(Forward) to Camp Zama in 2007, the U.S. deployed an X-band radar to the Shariki Base in June 2006 and another to Kyogamisaki in 2014, and the Japanese Air Defense Command relocated to Yokota Air Base in March 2012. According to the U.S. Air Force, the relocation of the Japanese command “place[d] key decision makers from both nations’ air components across the street from one another, and improved interoperability on issues ranging from defense planning to daily operations and a broad range of contingencies in between.”<sup>165</sup> The increased levels of interoperability brought by these new arrangements were assessed by an independent evaluation of the implementation of the GPR in 2012 to “have essentially created a joint command relationship between the United States and Japan from the perspective of any possible adversary.”<sup>166</sup>

MULTILATERAL INTEROPERABILITY. The United States worked toward building greater multilateral interoperability in Asia by forging new agreements with local allies and partners for rotational deployments of U.S. forces, encouraging allies and partners to develop stronger defense relationships with each other, and greatly expanding the frequency and scale of multilateral military training in the region. That states in Asia have built stronger defense ties with one another and trained more frequently together has been noted by other observers. What these observers failed to identify, however, is that these outcomes were driven by a deliberate U.S. external balancing strategy.<sup>167</sup>

As the GPR envisaged, the United States established new facilities on the territory of allies and partners to host “rotational rather than permanently stationed forces and be a focus for bilateral and regional training” in Australia and Singapore, and regained access to the naval and air facilities in the Philippines, which had been revoked by the Philippines in 1991.<sup>168</sup> The first of these agreements, which was many years in the making—and which was presaged by Marshall in the process of operationalizing the DSR in 2002—was that between the United States and Australia in November 2011.<sup>169</sup> The agreement provided for the rotational deployment of a MAGTF of 2,500 Marines to

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165. Christopher W. Love, “Air Defense Command Commences Operations at Yokota” (Fussa, Japan: Yokota Air Force Base, U.S. Air Force, March 26, 2012), <http://www.yokota.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123295402>.

166. Berteau and Green, “U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region,” p. 26.

167. See, for example, Patrick M. Cronin et al., *The Emerging Asia Power Web: The Rise of Bilateral Intra-Asian Security Ties* (Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, 2013).

168. Department of Defense, “Report to Congress.” On the Philippines, see Jaine Laude, “U.S. Troops Can Use Clark, Subic Bases,” *Philippine Star*, June 6, 2012, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/814109/us-troops-can-use-clark-subic-bases>.

169. Memo from Andy Marshall to Secretary of Defense, “Near Term Actions to Begin Shift of Focus towards Asia.” See also Matt Siegal, “As Part of Pact, U.S. Marines Arrive in Australia, in China’s Strategic Backyard,” *New York Times*, April 4, 2012.



Darwin, in Australia's north, as well as for increased visits to Australian bases by U.S. aircraft, ships, and submarines. The MAGTF deployment was interpreted by critics in the United States as being a merely "symbolic" gesture because of its small size, particularly in the context of any major contingency involving China.<sup>170</sup> This interpretation fueled criticism of the pivot policy because the Marine deployment is commonly identified as one of the few "concrete" elements of the pivot.<sup>171</sup>

The MAGTF deployment makes strategic sense if it is understood in the context of the long-term external balancing strategy. It was primarily intended to advance multilateral training in the region, a purpose for which Australia's geography is uniquely suited because of its location in the region and the vast sizes of its training ranges.<sup>172</sup> This purpose of the deployment was clearly explained by both U.S. President Barack Obama and Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard upon announcing the agreement. In Obama's words, the rotations would "enhance our ability to train, exercise, and operate with allies and partners across the region."<sup>173</sup> The first contingent of 250 Marines arrived in Australia in March 2012 for six months, during which they trained with the Australian Army as well as with forces from Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.<sup>174</sup> From the outset, the MAGTF deployment thus immediately began to contribute toward increasing multilateral interoperability.

The June 2011 announcement by the United States of the deployment of up to four new LCSs to Singapore on a rotational basis can be understood similarly as a substantive strategic move. The debate about the survivability of the LCS obscured the important point that a primary aim of the deployment was to improve interoperability in the region. This was explained clearly by Panetta upon making the announcement in 2011, when he "reaffirmed that the LCS deployment would strengthen U.S. engagement in the region, through the port calls at regional ports, and engagement of regional navies through activities such as exercises and exchanges."<sup>175</sup> The LCS might not have the sur-

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170. Friedberg, "Bucking Beijing."

171. Manyin et al., *Pivot to the Pacific?* p. 7.

172. Seth Robson, "Plenty of Reasons for Marines to Train in Australia—Just Don't Mention China," *Stars and Stripes*, 2013, <http://www.stripes.com/news/plenty-of-reasons-for-marines-to-train-in-australia-just-don-t-mention-china-1.230050>.

173. "Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Gillard of Australia in Joint Press Conference" (Washington, D.C.: White House, November 16, 2011), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/16/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-gillard-australia-joint-press>.

174. Gidget Fuentes, "Marines Pave Way for Larger Force in Australia," *Marine Corps Times* October 16, 2012, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/article/20121016/NEWS/210160318/Marines-pave-way-larger-force-Australia>.

175. Marcus Weisgerber, "Agreement Calls for 4 U.S. Littoral Combat Ships to Rotate through Sin-

vivability to participate directly in major conflict but its capabilities were, according to the commander of the Logistics Group in the Western Pacific, Rear Adm. Thomas Carney, “very closely matched to many of the other navies in the region,” which were smaller in scale.<sup>176</sup> The utility of the LCS in this respect was highlighted by U.S. Navy officials in the context of the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training exercises in which the LCS participated for the first time in 2013.<sup>177</sup> In this context, Lt. Anthony Falvo, a spokesman for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, stated: “[U]nlike the deep draft known to accompany some of the U.S. Navy’s larger ships, the LCS can more readily and easily interoperate in shallow water with ships from allies’ navies such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and others.”<sup>178</sup>

The United States also took unprecedented measures to lay the foundations for enhancing interoperability among its allies and partners in Asia by encouraging them to forge new formal security relationships with one another. The United States supported a Japanese proposal to create a “quadrilateral” security dialogue among the United States, Japan, India, and Australia in 2007.<sup>179</sup> The dialogue did not endure,<sup>180</sup> but the proposed “quad” states all established or upgraded their bilateral security agreements with each other,<sup>181</sup> with the encouragement of the United States. The Trilateral Security Dialogue among the United States, Japan, and Australia was upgraded to the foreign and defense ministerial level in 2006. Australia and Japan signed the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in 2007, which marked the first time that Japan signed a permanent security cooperation agreement with a country other than the United States.<sup>182</sup> The U.S. external balancing strategy was an important factor motivating the agreement. Upon signing the agreement, Australian and Japanese “[m]inisters emphasized the contribution that bilateral defence cooperation could make to the development of trilateral cooperation between Japan, Australia and the United States [ . . . ] and to broader multilateral ex-

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gapore,” *Defense News*, June 2, 2012, <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120602/DEFREG03/306020001/Agreement-Calls-4-U-S-Littoral-Combat-Ships-Rotate-Through-Singapore>.

176. Mariko Oi, “USS *Freedom* Arrives in Singapore as Part of U.S. ‘Pivot,’” *BBC News*, April 17, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22156283>.

177. Kris Osborn, “Navy Pivots Training to Match Pacific Transition,” *DoD Buzz*, July 2, 2013, <http://www.dodbuzz.com/2013/07/02/navy-pivots-training-to-match-pacific-transition>.

178. *Ibid.*

179. Dennis Shanahan, “Pacific Allies to Enlist India,” *Australian* (newspaper), March 15, 2007.

180. Australia unilaterally withdrew from the Quad because of concern about alienating China. See Brendan Nicholson, “Japan Jittery over Closer Ties between Australia and China,” *Age* (newspaper), February 6, 2008.

181. This point is made in David Brewster, “The Australia-India Security Declaration: The Quadrilateral Redux?” *Security Challenges*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn 2010), pp. 1–9.

182. Reiji Yoshida, “Japan Signs Landmark Security Pact with Australia,” *Japan Times*, March 14, 2007.

changes and activities.”<sup>183</sup> Even more important, given their combined power, Japan and India signed a defense cooperation agreement in 2008 and then the Strategic and Global Partnership agreement in 2014. India and Australia completed the web of quadrilateral relations in November 2009, with the encouragement of the United States, when they signed a joint declaration on security cooperation.<sup>184</sup> The United States also promoted security cooperation between Japan and South Korea with mixed success, including a proposal to create a U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral secretariat in Seoul, which South Korea rejected.<sup>185</sup> The three states did, however, establish an annual security dialogue in 2008, and conducted annual trilateral naval exercises beginning in that year.

Furthermore, the frequency of U.S.-led multilateral exercises grew significantly. The United States, Japan, and India conducted their first trilateral naval exercises in the western Pacific in April 2007. Later in 2007, the annual U.S.-India Malabar exercise was expanded to include Japan, Australia, and Singapore, which was the first time that such multilateral exercises had been conducted on India’s east coast.<sup>186</sup> Japan joined the TAMEX antisubmarine maritime surveillance exercise hosted by Australia—along with the United States, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand—for the first time in 2009. Another first was marked in February 2012, when Australia joined the U.S.-Japan Cope North air exercise at Anderson Air Force Base in Guam.

#### EXPANDED ENGAGEMENT

The previous section provided a detailed account of the military dimensions of the reorientation, because it is that dimension that critics of the pivot to Asia most often point to as insufficient. The claim that the United States has expanded its diplomatic engagement with China—and later under Obama with other Asian states and institutions—is less controversial and has been documented in detail elsewhere, so the key developments are merely noted here.<sup>187</sup>

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183. Japan-Australia Joint Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultations, “Joint Statement 2007” (Canberra: Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia, June 6, 2007), [http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2007/fa064\\_07.html](http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2007/fa064_07.html). See also Alan Boyd, “US, Japan in Security Overdrive,” *Asia Times* [online], March 17, 2007, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/IC17Dh04.html>.

184. The United States encouraged Australia to deepen its strategic ties with India further at the 2011 Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations. See U.S. Department of State, “Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) 2011 Joint Communiqué” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, September 15, 2011), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/09/172517.htm>.

185. Berteau and Green, “U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region,” p. 30. On the efforts by the United States to encourage trilateral cooperation, see “U.S. Eyes ‘Trilateral’ Military Cooperation,” *Japan Times*, March 9, 2006.

186. K. Alan Kronstadt et al., *India: Domestic Issues, Strategic Dynamics, and U.S. Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2011), p. 85 n. 347.

187. See Swaine, *America’s Challenge*; Bonnie S. Glaser, “The Diplomatic Relationship: Substance

What is most noteworthy about the history of the expansion of U.S. engagement with China is that it accelerated from 2004 onward, precisely the same moment at which the United States initiated the military reorientation toward Asia described above. Prior to that year, the United States and China had no mechanisms for regular political and security discussions at senior diplomatic levels. In 2004, Armitage initiated a process to establish what became the Senior Dialogue with China. The dialogue was conceived as a mechanism for engaging with the most senior foreign policy official under the Chinese president and establishing a forum for that person to spend extended time with the deputy secretary of state.<sup>188</sup> Armitage had deliberately called the dialogue “senior” rather than “strategic” because he wanted to reserve the label “strategic” for U.S. allies, which China was not.<sup>189</sup> This distinction was dispensed with when the Bush administration established the Strategic Economic Dialogue with China in 2006, led by Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson. The United States and China already had mechanisms for dialogues on economic matters such as the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade and the U.S.-China Joint Economic Committee, but the view of the administration was that these mechanisms did not engage Chinese officials at sufficiently senior levels and that they were too limited in their focus on technical trade matters.<sup>190</sup> The United States pursued an expansive agenda in the Strategic Economic Dialogue, including market access, environmental protection, finance-sector reform, energy policies, and encouraging China to shift away from export-led growth toward greater domestic consumption.<sup>191</sup>

The trend toward expansion continued during the Obama administration. The administration inaugurated the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) in 2009, which combined the Senior Dialogue and the Strategic Economic Dialogue. This had the effect of elevating the Senior Dialogue from the level of the deputy secretary of state to the level of the secretary of state. The S&ED constituted a uniquely intensive and comprehensive diplomatic dialogue, as illustrated by the fact that the United States did not have equivalent mechanisms even with its close allies.<sup>192</sup>

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and Process,” in David Shambaugh, ed., *Tangled Titans: The United States and China* (Plymouth, U.K.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013), pp. 151–180; and Bader, *Obama and China’s Rise*, chap. 9.

188. Author interview with Dennis C. Wilder, Arlington, Virginia, July 20, 2012.

189. Randall G. Schriver, “The U.S.-China Relationship and the Role of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue,” testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, *Hearing on U.S.-China Relations: Maximizing the Effectiveness of the Strategic Economic Dialogue*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., September 10, 2009, [http://project2049.net/documents/testimony\\_randall\\_schriver\\_strategic\\_and\\_economic\\_dialogue.pdf](http://project2049.net/documents/testimony_randall_schriver_strategic_and_economic_dialogue.pdf).

190. Swaine, *America’s Challenge*, pp. 198–199.

191. *Ibid.*, p. 199; and Henry M. Paulson Jr., “A Strategic Economic Engagement,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 5 (September/October 2008), pp. 59–77.

192. Bader, *Obama and China’s Rise*, p. 22.

The Obama administration added to the diplomatic element of the pivot by intensifying diplomatic engagement with other states and institutions in Asia. As has been documented elsewhere, the administration joined the East Asia Summit in 2011, which the Bush administration had refused to do, and prioritized attending that and other regional dialogues.<sup>193</sup>

The existence of a strong engagement element in the reorientation provides obvious, compelling evidence that the reorientation was not a containment strategy. This conclusion is bolstered when the relationship between the engagement and balancing elements of the reorientation is understood. There is a trend in U.S. policy commentary to believe that the United States instituted two strategies simultaneously—engagement and hedging—because of uncertainty about the future of China’s rise.<sup>194</sup> In this interpretation, hedging is understood to have been the “insurance” in case engagement were to fail.<sup>195</sup> This is not an accurate representation of the reorientation strategy. There is no evidence to suggest that U.S. officials intended balancing to be a form of insurance. Rather, engagement and balancing were symbiotic means toward a single end. That end was described either as shaping or dissuasion. Shaping, as the more positive term, tended to be used more frequently in the context of engagement with China, whereas dissuasion was used more frequently in the context of balancing China. These terms were, however, interchangeable and defined similarly to refer to reducing the likelihood that China would bid for hegemony.

The interdependent nature of the engagement and balancing elements of the reorientation is articulated clearly by Thomas Christensen, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, who emphasized in a post hoc analysis that preserving U.S. military superiority in the Asia Pacific was not a hedge against the possible failure of engagement. Instead, military superiority would contribute to engagement to further the goal of the strategy. In Christensen’s words, “[T]he maintenance of U.S. military superiority in the region, properly considered, is an integral part of [the] broader engagement strategy, and makes diplomatic engagement itself more effective. The military strength of the United States and its allies and security partners in Asia com-

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193. On the East Asia Summit, see David Capie and Amitav Acharya, “The United States and the East Asia Summit: A New Beginning?” *East Asia Forum*, November 20, 2011, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/11/20/the-united-states-and-the-east-asia-summit-a-new-beginning>.

194. See, for example, Swaine, *America’s Challenge*, p. 26; Øystein Tunsjø, “China’s Rise: Towards a Division of Labor in Transatlantic Relations,” in Vinod K. Aggarwal and Sara A. Newland, eds., *Responding to China’s Rise: US and EU Strategies* (New York: Springer, 2014), pp. 151–174; and Daniel Twining, “America’s Grand Design in Asia,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Summer 2007), p. 79.

195. For a critique of this approach, see Evelyn Goh, “Understanding ‘Hedging’ in Asia-Pacific Security,” *PacNet*, August 31, 2006, <http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/pac0643.pdf>.

plements positive U.S. diplomacy by channelling China's competitive energies in more beneficial and peaceful directions."<sup>196</sup>

There was not, therefore, a containment strategy that was instituted simultaneously with the engagement strategy as a hedge against future uncertainty. Engagement and balancing—as distinct from containment—were integral elements of the one reorientation strategy.

#### THE ECONOMIC ELEMENT OF THE PIVOT

Upon announcing the pivot to Asia, the Obama administration emphasized that the pivot would not refer only to the military, but would also include the diplomatic and economic spheres of statecraft. As discussed above, the long-term reorientation toward Asia had a strong diplomatic dimension, which extended across the second-term Bush and Obama administrations. The questions that follow are: To what extent—and at what point—did the reorientation toward Asia also have an economic element and did that element constitute an economic denial strategy?

Although some Chinese critics believe that the Bush administration sought to establish “an FTA [free trade agreement] sphere geo-economically surrounding China,”<sup>197</sup> the original plans to shift focus toward Asia did not have a strong economic component. The administration did implement a free trade strategy that had some bearing on China, but the free trade strategy was not coordinated explicitly with the shift toward Asia and did not have a particular focus on that region. Zoellick reports that as U.S. trade representative he was mindful of U.S. national security interests in developing the strategy, but that foreign policy and security goals provided the background context for the strategy and were not the primary considerations. The first consideration for Zoellick in determining which countries to target for FTAs was whether the conditions within the United States and within the target countries were conducive to the negotiation of a successful agreement, such as whether there were favorable counterparts in the target country with whom to negotiate. To the extent that the FTA strategy had a bearing on China, it operated according to what Zoellick called “the logic of competitive liberalization.” Given that the global free trade agenda had stalled, the United States would work on multiple fronts: bilaterally, regionally, and globally, to promote trade liberalization. In relation to the effect of that strategy on China, Zoellick explains, the idea was “if China does not move up the standards and terms of the rules-based

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196. Thomas J. Christensen, “Shaping the Choices of a Rising China: Recent Lessons for the Obama Administration,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (July 2009), p. 91.

197. Quoted in Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*, p. 139.

system, we will move ahead with those who are willing to liberalize, and then we will welcome China at the appropriate point.”<sup>198</sup>

That the free trade strategy was not deliberately coordinated with the military-diplomatic reorientation is evidenced in an exchange between Rumsfeld and Zoellick in 2003. In what appears to be a discrete, one-off correspondence on this topic, Rumsfeld sent Zoellick a note in June to express his support for Zoellick’s work in negotiating FTAs. In reply, Zoellick offered to deliver a presentation to DoD to explain his trade strategy, which he did later that month.<sup>199</sup> This presentation indicated no particular focus on pursuing FTAs in the Asia Pacific region or on China.<sup>200</sup> Zoellick’s reply to Rumsfeld explains why the FTA strategy was kept separate from defense strategy. He wrote, “[T]he Congressional trade committees are extremely sensitive about our using FTAs for ‘foreign policy’ reasons.” He continued that he would, “of course, welcome any suggestions” from Rumsfeld, but there is no evidence in the available documentary record to suggest that the issue of directly coordinating trade and defense strategies was taken any further than this interaction.<sup>201</sup>

The 2004 reorientation was, therefore, primarily military and diplomatic in nature. It was only when the United States joined the negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in February 2008 that the United States added an economic dimension to the reorientation, although this development like others pre-dated the pivot announcement. If successful, the TPP would be an extensive free trade agreement involving (at the time of writing) twelve countries in the Pacific, notably including Japan and excluding China. The U.S. commitment to the TPP was touted by the Obama administration as a key plank of its pivot and as evidence that the pivot was not only military in nature but also diplomatic and economic. The notion that the economic dimension of the pivot was to consist of a regional free trade agreement that would exclude China fueled the argument—made in China and also by some in the West—that the pivot to Asia was a containment strategy.<sup>202</sup>

The conclusion that the TPP constituted a shift toward an economic denial strategy would be puzzling, surprising, or anomalous given the consistency with which the United States had pursued efforts to integrate China into the

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198. Author telephone interview with Zoellick, April 24, 2013.

199. Memo from Robert Zoellick to Donald Rumsfeld, “Free Trade Agreements,” June 30, 2003, Rumsfeld Archive.

200. Robert B. Zoellick, “U.S. Trade Policy and Foreign-Security Policy Interests,” June 23, 2004, presentation to the Department of Defense, email attachment to author, April 26, 2013.

201. Memo from Robert Zoellick to Donald Rumsfeld, “Free Trade Agreements.”

202. See, for example, Marc Palen, “Containing China,” *Australian*, May 18, 2012.

global economy. Economic engagement had been a constant feature of U.S. policy toward China since the mid-1980s, when China and the United States struck what Harry Harding calls an “economic partnership” characterized by “American cooperation in China’s modernization and reform.”<sup>203</sup> This element of U.S. strategy was maintained and extended throughout the George W. Bush and Obama administrations. Indeed, economic engagement was the central aim of the Strategic Economic Dialogue and later the S&ED.<sup>204</sup>

If, however, engagement and balancing are understood to be complementary means toward a single goal—rather than distinct strategies mobilized simultaneously to hedge against uncertainty—then the TPP is neither surprising nor anomalous. The logic of using competitive liberalization as a means of advancing economic engagement with China accords closely with the logic of using internal balancing to advance diplomatic engagement described by Christensen above. According to Department of Treasury Senior Coordinator for China Affairs David Loevinger, China was not excluded from the TPP negotiations because the United States wanted to create an exclusive trade bloc but because U.S. officials knew that China would work to dilute the liberalization provisions of the agreement. Moreover, there was no desire on the part of U.S. officials to exclude China from joining the final agreement once enacted, although most officials believed it to be unlikely that China would agree to such broad, deep liberalization. The intended effect of the TPP, insofar as it related to China, was to raise the bar for liberalization standards and thereby place greater pressure on China to further reform its economic system.<sup>205</sup> In this respect, the TPP was consistent with the long-term economic engagement strategy. Although the TPP appeared to signal a shift toward economic denial, in fact this element of the reorientation was intended to advance the process of economic engagement.

#### RESPONDING TO CHINA’S GROWING GLOBAL INFLUENCE

There is one element of containment that has yet to be addressed in this account of the reorientation strategy and that is whether the United States aimed to, in Art’s terms, thwart China’s rising global influence. Throughout the course of the planning and implementation of the reorientation strategy, China

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203. Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China since 1972* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1992), p. 298.

204. Paulson, “A Strategic Economic Engagement.”

205. Author telephone interview with David Loevinger, August 19, 2014. It is important to note that the TPP was not primarily intended to pressure China, but to further another long-standing goal of U.S. strategy in Asia: securing access to markets. See Michael McDevitt, “The Origin and Evolution of the Rebalance,” in Meijer, *Origins and Evolution of the U.S. Rebalance toward Asia*, pp. 31–54, at pp. 43–44.



sought to expand its political influence outside the Asia Pacific in Africa, Latin America, and Central Asia. The available evidence suggests that there was little emphasis in U.S. strategy on countering these efforts by China. As with any negative result in a historical inquiry, absence may be the result of nonexistence or it may be the result of unavailable sources. There is some evidence to indicate nonexistence. It was only in 2005–06, well after the 2004 reorientation strategy was developed, that Rumsfeld evidently became concerned about China’s extra-regional influence and dictated a number of memos about it, all of which made the point that the United States was failing to address the issue. For example, in March 2005, Rumsfeld sent a briefing prepared by a private consultancy firm to Bush about China’s objectives in Latin America, and wrote: “It seems to me that this is a subject that might usefully be discussed at some point.”<sup>206</sup> Later, in July of that year, Rumsfeld wrote a memo to National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley to suggest that Bush invite the president of Kazakhstan to visit, because “there was the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting where Russia and China were trying to push the US out of Central Asia.”<sup>207</sup> In another example, Rumsfeld argued that the United States was “behind the curve” relative to the expanding influence of Cuba, Venezuela, and China in Latin America.<sup>208</sup>

Rumsfeld’s exhortations did not appear to affect U.S. strategy. Although U.S. officials monitored China’s expanding influence, that influence was not interpreted as a threat to be countered in U.S. strategy. For example, in a cable dated February 2010, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Affairs Johnnie Carson reported that China’s influence in Africa would only become a threat when it expanded in the military sphere. “There are,” Carson explained, “trip wires for the United States when it comes to China. Is China developing a blue water navy? Have they signed military base agreements? Are they training armies? Have they developed intelligence operations? Once these areas start developing then the United States will start worrying.”<sup>209</sup> One of these tripwires was already in the process of being triggered in 2009 when China began to participate in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. Even though, in the words of a senior DoD official, China viewed its participation as “a major step forward in the reach of their navy,” the United States welcomed

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206. Memo from Donald Rumsfeld to President George W. Bush, “China and Latin America,” March 16, 2005, Rumsfeld Archive.

207. Memo from from Donald Rumsfeld to Steve Hadley, “Invitation to President of Kazakhstan,” July 27, 2005, Rumsfeld Archive.

208. Memo from Donald Rumsfeld to President George W. Bush, “Cuban Medical Missions,” March 28, 2006, Rumsfeld Archive.

209. “U.S. Embassy Cables: U.S. Monitors China and Its Expanding Role in Africa,” *Guardian*, December 8, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/250144>.

China's involvement.<sup>210</sup> In this respect, as in all others, the United States did not institute a strategy to contain China's rise.

### *Conclusion*

This article has provided a revised history of U.S. strategy toward the Asia Pacific that has revealed the presence of many misperceptions about that strategy. Foremost among these misperceptions are that the pivot to Asia was either "all talk and no walk" or that it was a containment strategy. Newly available sources reveal neither of these claims to be accurate. The United States undertook a sustained and substantial reorientation toward Asia, but that reorientation began in the mid-2000s, not in 2011. From then, the United States implemented major revisions to its force posture in Asia to increase the overall capabilities of the United States and its allies and partners in the region. The hub-and-spokes model of alliance relationships, which had endured since the end of the Korean War, was substantially revised to build stronger defense relationships among the spokes and add India—an important new partner—to the arrangement. The United States departed from the prior pattern of ad hoc, irregular diplomacy with China and embarked upon a concerted strategy to regularize, expand, and elevate diplomatic engagement with China. An economic element was added to the reorientation in 2008, when the United States committed to the TPP. These moves were designed deliberately to work in concert toward the goal of reducing the likelihood of a Chinese bid for hegemony in Asia. If the strategy were successful, it would preserve the existing power balance in the region, in which the United States held the superior position.

The reorientation did not aim to slow China's growth. China's rise was a given premise of the strategy. Instead of trying to curtail China's rise, the Bush and Obama administrations sought to increase the combined power of the United States and its allies and partners to match China's rise and thereby preserve the relative power balance in the region. Moreover, the reorientation did not mobilize economic denial as a means of containing China. Although the TPP negotiations excluded China, the purpose of the agreement was not to slow China's growth or isolate China. Rather, U.S. officials intended the TPP to place additional pressure on China to liberalize and integrate with the global economy. Neither was the construction of a federated network of allies

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210. Author interview with senior official in the Department of Defense, Arlington, Virginia, September 27, 2011. See also Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), pp. 239–240.

and partners in Asia designed to encircle and thereby contain China. The network left members free to maintain their relationships with China, and was accompanied by a robust expansion of U.S. engagement with China.

The reorientation strategy has been overlooked in existing accounts for multiple reasons, including the tendency to date the reorientation to 2011, to focus on the most visible actions associated with the pivot such as the MAGTF and LCS deployments, and to discount the external balancing element of the strategy because it did not take the form of a multilateral alliance. The lack of a full account of the reorientation strategy is understandable in the context of the Bush administration's decision to keep declaratory policy about the strategy muted. The early phase of reorientation was only revealed in full in the internal planning documents of that administration.

This article has departed from much of the research on U.S.-China relations by focusing on U.S. strategy and outputs, rather than on explaining outcomes in the bilateral relationship. This is not because outcomes are unimportant. On the contrary, the purpose of elucidating and classifying U.S. strategy is precisely to contribute to efforts by scholars and policymakers to explain outcomes and produce better ones. With regard to scholarship, this new history provides fertile ground for further research on outcomes. As examples, three areas for future research will be mentioned here. First, this history provides valuable data for developing a longitudinal net assessment of the changing power balance in Asia. The focus of this article has been on the question of whether there has been a substantial relative reallocation of U.S. resources to Asia. It has not assessed the effect of that reallocation on the Asian power balance. Second, this history provides a basis for developing a set of event data against which to test explanatory theories of bilateral outcomes. Third, there is need for further research on how strategic concepts such as containment and encirclement are defined in China and applied to interpret U.S. strategy, which is itself a type of outcome.

This new account of U.S. strategy toward Asia has important implications for the policy debate about how to manage China's rise. It indicates that the terms of the existing debate have little applicability to describing or prescribing U.S. strategy. The perennial question of whether the United States should engage or contain China, or adopt some portmanteau strategy in between, has limited relevance in the context of the reorientation strategy. Similarly, the notion of hedging provides little illumination of existing or likely future U.S. strategy. In the reorientation, engagement and balancing were instituted as symbiotic means toward the ultimate goal of preserving the superior position of the United States in the Asian power balance. This goal was rarely stated explicitly by U.S. officials but it would be the effective end state of the reorienta-

tion strategy if it were successful. The policy debate should be reframed accordingly. The primary questions for the United States that arise from the revelation of the long-term reorientation strategy are whether to continue to pursue a superior power position in Asia, what achievement of that goal would require, and how to pursue that goal without antagonizing or provoking conflict with China.

These questions, together, present an unusually difficult strategic challenge. The substance of the long-term reorientation strategy reveals a potentially serious underlying conflict between the United States and China about the future security order in Asia. That conflict is about whether the region will be characterized by ongoing U.S. preponderance or a more balanced bipolar structure. Although it may be good news for China that the United States did not aim to slow China's growth or undermine Communist Party leadership, many in China will not welcome the conclusion that the United States aimed to preserve its superior position in Asia. If the United States were to continue to pursue this goal, the strategy would become increasingly apparent to Chinese observers, even if the United States were to resume the tactic of keeping declaratory policy about its strategy in Asia muted.<sup>211</sup>

An accurate account of the history of U.S. strategy in Asia under the Bush and Obama administrations is a prerequisite for formulating an effective response to this strategic challenge. Such an account provides a baseline from which to interpret China's responses to U.S. actions to date and predict the likely future course of the U.S.-China dynamic. Properly interpreting the pivot to Asia thus matters a great deal for the purpose of formulating future strategy. This article has provided one interpretation, with hope that it will aid U.S. policymakers to better know themselves and other states to better interpret U.S. intentions.

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211. For a general discussion of the potential dangers of Obama's rebalance, see Robert S. Ross, "The Problem with the Pivot: Obama's New Asia Policy Is Unnecessary and Counterproductive," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 6 (November/December 2012), pp. 70–82; and Glaser, "A U.S.-China Grand Bargain?" pp. 88–89.