

# Is China Trying to Push the U.S. out of East Asia?

Wang Dong

**Abstract:** One of the key questions for understanding the future trajectory of regional order is whether or not China is trying to push the United States out of East Asia and build a China-dominated regional order. Some Western analysts accuse China of pursuing the Monroe Doctrine and excluding the United States from the region. This article argues that the Western discourse of China practicing the Monroe Doctrine is a misplaced characterization of China's behavior. Rather than having intention of pushing the United States out of East Asia and build a China-dominated regional order, China is pursuing a hedging strategy that aims at minimizing strategic risks, increasing freedom of action, diversifying strategic options, and shaping the U.S.' preferences and choices. This can be exemplified in five issue areas: China's ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and China's foreign policy activism, China-Russia relations, the Conference on Interactions and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the New Asian Security Concept, as well as China-U.S. relations. Beijing has explicitly acknowledged the U.S. predominance in the international system and reiterated its willingness to participate in and reform the existing system. It concludes by suggesting that, for a more peaceful

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*Wang Dong is Associate Professor at the School of International Studies and Executive Deputy Director of the Institute on China-U.S. People to People Exchange, Peking University.*

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future to emerge in East Asia, the United States and China, as an incumbent power and a rising power, will have to accommodate each other, and negotiate and renegotiate the boundaries of their relative power, as well as their respective roles in the future regional order where Beijing and Washington would learn to share responsibilities and leadership.

*Keywords:* Regional order; Monroe Doctrine; hedging strategy; China-U.S. relations; China-Russia relations.

The breakneck rise of China, both economically and militarily, has increasingly posed challenges to U.S. primacy in East Asia. Arguably, the interactions between China, the rising power, and the United States, the incumbent dominant power, will to a great extent shape the future regional strategic landscape. The alleged Chinese assertiveness and U.S. high-profile pivot/rebalancing to Asia since the 2008 global financial crisis have led many security analysts to wonder whether or not East Asia has been drifting toward bipolar confrontation. One of the key questions for understanding the future trajectory of regional order, of course, is China's strategy in dealing with the predominant power — the United States. Is China trying to push the United States out of East Asia and build a China-dominated regional order? The other side of the coin is whether or not the United States is bent on containing China, like many Chinese analysts have alleged. To the contrary of some Western analysts' accusations, this article argues that, rather than intending to push the United States out of East Asia, China is pursuing a hedging strategy that aims at minimizing strategic risks, increasing freedom of action, diversifying strategic options, and shaping U.S. preferences and choices. Facing the uncertainties accompanying the rise of China, the United States is also employing a hedging strategy toward China. In fact, U.S. pivot/rebalancing is essentially a hedging strategy. In this article, I will first review the Western analysts' allegation that China is pursuing a Chinese version of the Monroe Doctrine. I will then explain why China's recent foreign policy behavior can be characterized as a hedging strategy.

### **China's "Monroe Doctrine"? A Misplaced Characterization**

2010 seems to be a turning point in the Western perception of a so-called new Chinese assertiveness. In March 2010, China refused to join the United States and its allies in condemning North Korea after the sinking of a South Korean

naval ship *Choenan*, citing the unavailability of clear-cut evidence proving Pyongyang as the culprit. Following the incident, Beijing quickly lodged strong protest against the U.S. decision to deploy an aircraft carrier into the Yellow Sea for a joint U.S.-South Korea military exercise, accusing the deployment as a threat to China's national security. Earlier, some Western media reported that China had added the South China Sea to the list of its *hexin liyi* [core interests]. The Chinese moves prompted Patrick Cronin, a prominent U.S. policy analyst, to allege that China "is creating its own Monroe Doctrine for Asia's seas" and threatening "freedom of the seas."<sup>1</sup>

On September 8, 2010, the Japanese authorities arrested a Chinese captain after his trawler collided with a Japanese Coast Guard ship in waters near the Diaoyu Islands, a ring of islets in dispute between China and Japan. The arrest, along with the Japanese government's attempt to try the captain, triggered strong reactions from China, with China's Foreign Ministry making a "strong protest" and demanding an immediate release of the captain. Allegedly, China began to impose a de facto "sanction" on the exports of rare earths — minerals crucial to manufacturing many advanced industrial products — to Japan.<sup>2</sup> China's strong responses during the incident, along with other allegedly assertive behavior, quickly prompted David Pilling, an editor of the *Financial Times*, to criticize China for practicing a "Chinese Monroe Doctrine" and, doing what the United States did to Latin America, attempting to turn the South China Sea into its "backyard."<sup>3</sup>

The meme of China practicing the Monroe Doctrine continued to spread after 2010. At a U.S. Naval War College forum in June 2012, several speakers likened China's policy in the near seas to the U.S. Monroe Doctrine in the Caribbean and Gulf.<sup>4</sup> Most recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping's pronouncement of a "New Asian Security Concept" in a keynote speech given at the Conference on Interactions and Confidence-Building Measures

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<sup>1</sup>Patrick Cronin and Paul Giarra, "China's Dangerous Arrogance," *The Diplomat*, July 23, 2010, <http://thediplomat.com/2010/07/chinas-dangerous-arrogance/?allpages=yes>.

<sup>2</sup>"Amid Tension, China Blocks Vital Exports to Japan," *The New York Times*, September 22, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/23/business/global/23rare.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>3</sup>David Pilling, "Time to be Wary of China's New Swagger," *The Financial Times*, September 30, 2010.

<sup>4</sup>James Holmes, "China's Monroe Doctrine," *The Diplomat*, June 22, 2012, <http://thediplomat.com/2012/06/chinas-monroe-doctrine/?allpages=yes>.

in Asia (CICA) in May 2014 again caused some Western analysts to cry out that China intended to pursue a Chinese version of the Monroe Doctrine, excluding the U.S. from Asia and establishing a China-dominated order.<sup>5</sup> The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) interception of a U.S. P-8 reconnaissance plane over the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of China's Hainan Province in August 2014 led another American scholar to allege that China's real goal is to exercise the Monroe Doctrine in Asia.<sup>6</sup>

The discourse of a Chinese Monroe Doctrine comes among a wave of commentaries and analyses in the Western media, blogs, and academic works that accuse China of turning assertive, flexing muscles, bullying neighbors, trying to push the United States out and dominate the region in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis. However, as Alastair Iain Johnston, a leading China specialist at Harvard University has forcefully argued, the new assertiveness meme has overestimated the amount of change in China's foreign policy in 2010 and after, and therefore is a "problematic characterization of China's foreign policy."<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the discourse of China's "Monroe Doctrine" has misread China's intentions and misinterpreted China's behavior. Indeed, an absence of the Chinese perspective has caused much of the misreading and misinterpretation.<sup>8</sup>

Take China's establishment of the Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea — a case often cited by Western analysts as

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<sup>5</sup>Kor Kian Beng, "Don't Bet on China's 'Asia for Asians Only' Vision Yet," *Straits Times*, May 30, 2014, <http://www.straitstimes.com/news/opinion/eye-the-world/story/dont-bet-chinas-asia-asians-only-vision-yet-20140530>; Seiichiro Tagaki, "Xi Jinping's New Asian Security Concept," August 27, 2014, The Association of Japanese Institutes of Strategic Studies (AJISS)-Commentary, [http://www2.jiia.or.jp/en\\_commentary/201408/27-1.html](http://www2.jiia.or.jp/en_commentary/201408/27-1.html); Minxin Pei, "China's Asia?" Project Syndicate, December 3, 2014, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/asia-for-asians-political-rhetoric-by-minxin-pei-2014-12>.

<sup>6</sup>Peter Navarro, "China's Real Goal: A 'Monroe Doctrine' in Asia," *The National Interest*, September 2, 2014, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/chinas-real-goal-monroe-doctrine-asia-11179>.

<sup>7</sup>Alastair Iain Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security*, Vol. 37. No. 4 (Spring, 2013), pp. 7–48.

<sup>8</sup>Part of the following analysis is adopted from Dong Wang, "Assessing U.S.-China Relations: How We Should Not Misread China" The Asan Forum, April 15, 2014, <http://www.theasanforum.org/sino-us-relations-4/>.

evidence of China's pursuit of the Monroe Doctrine — for example. From the perspective of crisis prevention and management, the way the ADIZ was rolled out could have been improved. China could have better communicated and consulted with neighboring countries and other stakeholders, including the United States, so as to minimize the negative repercussions that might result from the abrupt announcement of the ADIZ in November 2013. That being said, fair-minded American scholars and policymakers would nevertheless acknowledge that China has the legitimate right to set up an ADIZ, since the right to do so falls under the discretion of a sovereign nation. In any event, framing China's establishment of the ADIZ as a case of Chinese aggression is not only misleading, but it also reminds one of the old saying, "One man may steal a horse, while another may not look over a hedge" (or in Chinese, *zhixu zhouguan fanghuo, buxu baixing diandeng*, literally meaning, "the magistrates are allowed to set a fire, while common people are forbidden even to light lamps"). In the eyes of many Chinese, the hypocrisy of the Western criticism could not be more evident: the United States never consulted China when the U.S. occupation forces in Japan unilaterally established the first ADIZ in the East China Sea (its administration was then transferred to Japan in 1969), nor did the Japanese government consult China when it unilaterally expanded the ADIZ several times afterwards, most recently in 2010, leaving the expansive boundary of Japan's ADIZ as close as 130 km from the east coast of China's Zhejiang Province.

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One hallmark of the remarkable transition taking place in China is that it has increasingly become a pluralistic society. Stereotype frameworks or labels such as authoritarian regime vs. democracy are misleading, and might render policy thinking over-simplistic. Analyses and conclusions drawn by applying those labels need to be treated with caveats. Much like there are some analysts in the United States who strongly advocate a con-

tainment strategy against the rising China, there are radical voices in China who argue for "pushing the U.S. out" of the Asia Pacific. Neither represents official views or policy. In China, mainstream observers and leadership views remain sober-minded.

More broadly, we have to be very careful in assuming that China's strategic goal is to "erode" or challenge U.S. "leadership," if not hegemony. Such a zero-sum view of the relationship between China, the rising power, and the United States, the established power, may fit realist assumptions. Yet, such assumptions are dubious. Moreover, they help produce and reproduce narratives that will prove to be self-fulfilling prophecies.<sup>9</sup>

In the following pages, I will argue that, rather than pushing the United States out of East Asia, China is pursuing a hedging strategy that aims to reduce strategic risks, increase the freedom of action, diversify its strategic options, and shape U.S. preferences.

### China's Hedging Strategy in East Asia

The end of the Cold War has given rise to hedging behavior in the region. I hereby define hedging in international relations as an insurance strategy that aims at reducing or minimizing risks arising from the uncertainties in the system, increasing freedom of maneuver, diversifying strategic options, and shaping the preferences of adversaries. It is a portfolio or mixed strategy that consists of both cooperative and competitive strategic instruments ranging from engagement and enmeshment, all the way up to balancing. Any hedging portfolio will be a combination of both cooperative and competitive strategic instruments.<sup>10</sup> Unsure of China's intentions and reluctant to choose sides between Beijing and Washington, countries in East Asia have increasingly been employing a hedging strategy between China and the United States in an attempt to minimize strategic uncertainties and

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>There is a small but growing literature on hedging in international relations. Despite the fact that hedging has been increasingly discussed by scholars and policymakers, the concept is notorious for lacking a coherent definition, much less a theory. Elsewhere I have tried to develop a theory of hedging that will answer the following questions: under what conditions will states choose to hedge, in what form, and with how much intensity? See Dong Wang, "The Promise and Perils of Hedging Strategy: A Preliminary Theoretical Framework," paper presented at the first Annual Conference of Democracy and Peace in East Asia, September 16–18, 2011, Uppsala University, Sweden; Dong Wang et al, "Zhongguo Jueqi yu Yatai Guojia Duichong Xingwei Yanjiu" [A Study on China's Rise and the Hedging Behavior of Asia-Pacific Countries], in *Zhanlue Zongheng: 2012–2013 Yanjiu Baogao Huibian* [Strategic Review: Collection of Research Report, 2012–2013], Center for International and Strategic Studies, Peking University, 2013, pp. 70–123.

potential risks brought by the rise of China and the emergence of a potential dual structure.<sup>11</sup>

### *China and ASEAN*

Since the early 1990s, China has crafted and adopted a strategy of *taoguang yanghui*, *yousuo zuowei* [to keep a low profile while trying to accomplish something], coined by the former top leader Deng Xiaoping, as its overarching foreign policy guideline. By 2005, China had unveiled a “peaceful rise/development” strategy. Under the guidance of *taoguang yanghui* and peaceful development strategy, Beijing avoided security competition with the unipolar hegemon, the United States, actively engaged and reassured ASEAN countries through “good neighbor” diplomacy, and successfully created a stable external environment for its economic growth.<sup>12</sup> China’s emerging grand strategy was labeled a “Neo-Bismarckian” strategy by the leading U.S. international security scholar Avery Goldstein.<sup>13</sup> Taking advantage of U.S. preoccupation with counterterrorism and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, China reassured and “co-opted” the region through forging close economic and trade relations and the provision of positive

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<sup>11</sup>For discussion of East Asian countries’ hedging strategy, see Dong Wang, “The Promise and Perils of Hedging Strategy: A Preliminary Theoretical Framework,”; Dong Wang et al., “Zhongguo Jueqi yu Yatai Guojia Duichong Xingwei Yanjiu” [On China’s Rise and Asia-Pacific Countries’ Hedging Strategy]; *Zhanlue Zongheng: Yanjiu Baogao Huibian* (2012–2013 *Niandu*) [Strategic Review: Collection of Research Reports, 2012–2013], October 2013; C. P. Chung, “Southeast Asia-China Relations: Dialectics of ‘Hedging’ and ‘Counter-Hedging’,” *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2004, pp. 35–43; Evelyn Goh, “Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies,” *Policy Studies* 16, Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2005.

<sup>12</sup>Zhang Yunling and Tang Shiping, “China’s Regional Strategy,” in David Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift: China and Asia’s New Dynamics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 48–70; Zhu Feng, “China’s Rise will be Peaceful: How Unipolarity Matters,” in Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng, eds., *China Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 34–54.

<sup>13</sup>Avery Goldstein, “An Emerging China’s Emerging Grand Strategy — A Neo-Bismarckian Turn?” in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *International Relations Theories and the Asia Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 57–106; Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005).

inducements such as economic aids. In November 2002, China and ASEAN kicked off the process to establish a free trade area. When it took effect in January 2010, the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area encompassed a 1.9 billion population, a total GDP of U.S.\$ 6 trillion, and a total trade volume of U.S. \$4.5 trillion.<sup>14</sup> In November 2012, China and 15 other regional states formally embarked on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiation process, marking a key step toward a deeper level of regional economic integration.<sup>15</sup> In September 2013, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called for an upgrading of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area with the aim to increase bilateral trade volume to U.S.\$1 trillion and mutual investments to U.S.\$160 billion by 2020.<sup>16</sup> In October 2013, China proposed to build an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to increase interconnectivity and economic integration in the region.<sup>17</sup>

In the political and security arenas, China actively supported and participated in ASEAN-centered regional multilateral regimes such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). In 2003, China signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) with ASEAN, and the two decided to establish the China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity. In 2011, China and the ASEAN held the first defense ministers meeting.<sup>18</sup> During his trip to Southeast Asia in

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<sup>14</sup>For the data, see the website operated by a non-government Chinese trade organization, China Council for the Promotion of International Trade. "Zhongguo-Dongmeng Zimaogu de Tedian" [The Characteristics of China-ASEAN Free Trade Area], China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, April 28, 2012, <http://www.cafta.org.cn/show.php?contentid=63875>.

<sup>15</sup>"ASEAN Framework for Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership," <http://www.asean.org/news/item/asean-framework-for-regional-comprehensive-economic-partnership>.

<sup>16</sup>Yao Jing and Li Xiaokun, "Premier Calls for Action on Free Trade Area Upgrade," *China Daily*, October 10, 2013, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013livisiteastasia/2013-10/10/content.17018957.htm>; "Li Keqiang: China-ASEAN Have Become the Model of Good-Neighborly Cooperation," China's Foreign Ministry, September 5, 2013, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceindo/eng/ztbd/5798112rredf/t1073224.htm>.

<sup>17</sup>"Xi's Southeast Asia Tour Boosts Ties, Regional Cooperation: Chinese FM," Xinhua Net, October 8, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/09/c\\_125496979.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/09/c_125496979.htm).

<sup>18</sup>"China-ASEAN Cooperation, 1991-2011," Xinhua Net, November 15, 2011, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-11/15/c\\_131248640\\_2.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-11/15/c_131248640_2.htm).



October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for the building of a more closely knit China-ASEAN Community of Shared Destiny.<sup>19</sup>

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Beijing's expansion of its ties with ASEAN is part of its hedging portfolio that aims at fulfilling multiple goals: minimizing the risks brought by U.S. hegemonic behavior through engagement and accommodating U.S. primacy; diversifying its strategic options vis-à-vis the United States and preserving and expanding China's freedom of maneuver; as well as shaping U.S. preferences through engagement and persuasion (both peaceful and

forceful).<sup>20</sup> One might argue it is precisely such a hedging strategy that has helped avoid security competition between China and the United States and has led to the emergence of the dual structure in East Asia.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and China's Foreign Policy Activism*

One prominent example of hedging is China's active cultivation and promotion of the SCO. Established in June 2001, the SCO has over the years evolved into a premier regional security regime that encompasses China, Russia, and Central Asian states. Mongolia, Pakistan, Iran, and India have also acquired observer status since 2004. Through the SCO, China has expanded security ties with Russia and Central Asian states, diversified and secured sources of energy supply, and enhanced cooperation with member states against threats posed by the "Three Evils," namely

<sup>19</sup>"China Vows to Build a Community of Common Destiny with ASEAN," Xinhua Net, October 3, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/03/c\\_132770494.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/03/c_132770494.htm).

<sup>20</sup>Evan S. Medeiros, "Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia Pacific Stability," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 2005–2006), pp. 145–167; Rosemary Foot, "Chinese Strategies in a U.S.-Hegemonic Global Order: Accommodating and Hedging," *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1, 2006, pp. 74–94.

<sup>21</sup>Zhou Fangyin, "Zhongguo Jueqi, Dongya Geju Bianqian yu Dongya Zhixu de Fazhan Fangxiang" [China's Rise, East Asia's Shifting Landscape and the Future Trajectory of East Asian Order], pp. 11–12.

terrorism, separatism, and extremism. In particular, since 2002, China has conducted annual joint counter-terrorist military exercises with member states, with the sophistication and scale of the drills continuing to grow over time.<sup>22</sup>

With the perceived relative decline of the West and the shift of balance of power between China and the West since the 2008 global financial crisis, there has been a renewed debate among Chinese analysts as to whether China should still stick to *taoguan yanghui* as a strategic guideline. An increasing number of analysts have come to question whether this guideline has become outdated, given China's newfound power and much improved status. It is time for China to "*liangjian*" [reveal the sword], as some Chinese security analysts would like to call it, and demonstrate its resolve and determination to defend its core interests.<sup>23</sup> At the policy level, subtle changes were made to the guideline. In July 2009, China convened a four-day ambassadorial conference in which the top leadership and senior diplomats reviewed the international situations since the outbreak of the financial crisis and mapped the direction for China's diplomacy in the years ahead.<sup>24</sup> It is also at this conference that "*jixu taoguang yanghui, jiji yousuo zuowei*" [to continue to keep a low profile, and to proactively accomplish something] was proposed as the guideline for China's foreign policy.<sup>25</sup> In October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping advocated that China should be more "*fengfa*

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<sup>22</sup>Stephen Aris, *Eurasian Regionalism: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Chen Yurong, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A Banner of Multilateral Cooperation," *China International Studies*, No. 2, 2010, pp. 98–108.

<sup>23</sup>"*Zhuanjia: Zhongguo Yao Ganyu Liangjian, Shaoyou Luohou Jiuhui Aida*" [Experts: China Should Have the Courage to Reveal the Sword; China Will Get Beaten Up if It Lags Behind], July 29, 2013, <http://mil.huanqiu.com/observation/2013-07/4182321.html>.

<sup>24</sup>Besides Hu and Wen, the other seven Standing Members of the Politburo, Wu Bangguo, Jia Qinglin, Li Changchun, Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, He Guoqiang, Zhou Yongkang were all present at the conference. Also present were other senior leaders including Defense Minister Liang Guanglie. State Councilor in charge of foreign affairs Dai Bingguo also gave a talk. Both Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Vice Foreign Minister Wang Guangya presented working reports to the conference. For a detailed report of the conference see China's foreign ministry website, "*Di Shiyici Shijie Huiyi Zaijing Zhaokai*," [The Eleventh Ambassadorial Conference Was Held in Beijing] July 20, 2010, <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/gxh/xsb/xw/t574427.htm>.

<sup>25</sup>Interview with China's foreign ministry officials, January 2010.

*youwei*" [proactive] in pursuing its good-neighbor policy.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, President Xi, after assuming the leadership, has repeatedly emphasized that, in order to achieve the "Chinese dream," China should remain "modest and prudent" and stick to the path of peaceful development.<sup>27</sup>

The "proactive" foreign policy agenda advocated by the new Chinese leadership includes ambitious proposals to build a "Silk Road Economic Belt" extending through Central Asia and a new "Maritime Silk Road" with ASEAN countries (which are summarized as "One Belt and One Road"), as well as an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. In November 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that China would establish a US\$40 billion "Silk Road Fund" in support of the implementation of the "One Belt and One Road" initiative.<sup>28</sup> Such a "proactive" foreign policy agenda clearly reflects China's emerging shift in its foreign policy in support of its arrival as a global economic player as well as a dominant regional player.<sup>29</sup> Supposedly, China's "One Belt and One Road" was designed to promote economic growth through building connectivity in the region, boosting exports, enhancing access to natural resources, and integrating China's neighbors more closely with the Chinese economy.<sup>30</sup> As Chinese President

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<sup>26</sup>Xi Jinping: Rang Mingyun Gongtongti Yishi zai Zhoubianguojia Luodi Shenggen," [Xi Jinping: Let the Consciousness of Community of Common Destiny Take Root in Neighboring Countries], October 25, 2013, Xinhua Net, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-10/25/c\\_117878944.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-10/25/c_117878944.htm).

<sup>27</sup>Xi Jinping, "Zai Di Shier Jie Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui Diyici Huiyi Shang de Jianghua," [Speech at the First Plenary Session of the Twelfth National People's Congress] March 17, 2013, the official website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, [http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2013-03/17/content\\_2356344.htm](http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2013-03/17/content_2356344.htm).

<sup>28</sup>"Xi Jinping Zhuchi Jiaqiang Hulianhutong Huoban Guanxi Duihuahui bing Fabiao Zhongyao Jianghua," [Xi Jinping Presides over the Dialogue on Strengthening Connectivity and Delivers an Important Speech] China's Foreign Ministry, November 8, 2014, [http://www.mfa.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/zyxw\\_602251/t1208701.shtml](http://www.mfa.gov.cn/mfa_chn/zyxw_602251/t1208701.shtml).

<sup>29</sup>Peter Neil, "Maritime Silk Road," *The Huffington Post*, October 31, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-neill/maritime-silk-road\\_b\\_4181663.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=world&ir=World](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-neill/maritime-silk-road_b_4181663.html?utm_hp_ref=world&ir=World).

<sup>30</sup>Xi Jinping, "Xi Jinping Zhuchi Yataijinghezuzhi Di Ershier Ci Lingdaoren Feizhengshi Huiyi," [Xi Jinping Hosts the 22nd APEC Leaders' Meeting], China's Foreign Ministry, November 11, 2014, [http://www.mfa.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/zyxw\\_602251/t1209650.shtml](http://www.mfa.gov.cn/mfa_chn/zyxw_602251/t1209650.shtml); Nadege Rolland, "China's New Silk Road," *The NBR Commentary*, February 12, 2015, [http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=\\_531](http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=_531).

Xi noted at the 22nd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, held in Beijing in November 2014, it is at the core of the "One Belt One Road" initiative to increase regional connectivity, serving the overall goal of promoting regional economic integration.<sup>31</sup>

China's foreign policy activism naturally raises the question of whether or not China aims to "push the United States out" of the Asia Pacific and form an exclusive, China-dominated regional order? Arguably, the SCO, in which China remains the main architect and promoter, is a counter-balance to the United States, or as one Western analyst puts it, "China's NATO."<sup>32</sup> In 2005, the United States was denied an observer status in the SCO. Together with the SCO's 2005 decision to demand a withdrawal of foreign forces from the territories of SCO member states, and its 2006 decision to accept Iran, Washington's arch rival, as an observer, the SCO was regarded by many Western analysts as aiming to limit U.S. presence in Central Asia. However, the worry that the SCO would be developing into an anti-U.S. coalition might be overstated. In fact, China was cautiously downplaying the anti-U.S. rhetoric played up by some member states (particularly Uzbekistan and Iran).<sup>33</sup>

In responding to a press question in June 2012, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Liu Weimin explicitly ruled out the possibility

The worry that the SCO would be developing into an anti-U.S. coalition might be overstated.

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<sup>31</sup>"The 22nd Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting Held in Beijing," China's Foreign Ministry, November 11, 2014, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1210349.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1210349.shtml).

<sup>32</sup>Tyler Roney, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: China's NATO?" *The Diplomat*, September 11, 2013, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/09/the-shanghai-cooperation-organization-chinas-nato-2/>.

<sup>33</sup>Andy Yee, "Autocratic Peace and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," East Asia Forum, May 11, 2011, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/05/11/autocratic-peace-and-the-shanghai-cooperation-organisation/>; Akihiro Iwashita, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Japan: Moving Together to Reshape the Eurasia Community," The Brookings Institution, January 28, 2008, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2008/01/28-asia-iwashita>.

that the SCO would “evolve into a political and military bloc.”<sup>34</sup> On the positive side, though, China has responded favorably to the U.S. call for a more active Chinese role in Afghanistan. Chinese President Xi Jinping, at the SCO Summit Meeting in May 2013, sanctioned the idea of aiding the Afghanistan peace process through the SCO platform.<sup>35</sup> When President Xi hosted U.S. President Barack Obama for a summit in Beijing in November 2014, the two presidents agreed to work together to support the Afghan

reconciliation and reconstruction process, including continuing the joint training program for Afghan diplomats and planning to launch trilateral talks between China, the United States, and Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the shared interest in securing a stable and peaceful Afghanistan may draw the United States (and its NATO allies) and China (and the SCO) closer in the region.

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### *China-Russia Relations*

One main “yardstick” for measuring whether or not China aims to exclude the United States from the region is China’s ties with Russia. In March 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping made his first foreign visit to Russia after assuming the presidency. While in Moscow, Xi declared that the China-Russia relationship was “the most important bilateral relationship in the world.”<sup>37</sup> Apparently, Xi’s visit was meant to send a message to the United States and

<sup>34</sup>“Waijiaobu: Shanghe Zuzhi Bucunzai Yanbian Cheng Zhengzhi Junshi Jituan De Keneng,” [MFA: The SCO Will Not Evolve into a Political and Military Bloc] June 6, 2012, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2012-06/06/c\\_112139596.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2012-06/06/c_112139596.htm).

<sup>35</sup>“Xi Jinping zai Shanghe Zuzhi Fenghui Fabiao Jianghua, Tichu Sidian Zhuzhang,” [Xi Jinping Gives Speech at the SCO Summit Meeting, Making Four Propositions] Xinhua Net, September 13, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-09/13/c\\_117365319.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-09/13/c_117365319.htm).

<sup>36</sup>“Zhong Mei Yuanshou Beijing Huiwu Zhuyao Gongshi He Chengguo,” [The Main Consensus and Fruits of the Summit between Chinese and U.S. Presidents] China’s Foreign Ministry, November 12, 2014, [http://www.mfa.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/zyxw\\_602251/t1210103.shtml](http://www.mfa.gov.cn/mfa_chn/zyxw_602251/t1210103.shtml).

<sup>37</sup>“Xi Jinping Shouchang Yanjiang Cheng Zhong E Guanxi Zuihao Zuizhongyao” [Xi Jinping’s First Speech Declares China-Russia Relations are among the Best and the Most Important Bilateral Relationships], *Ta Kung Pao*, March 4, 2013, <http://news.takungpao.com/opinion/highlights/2013-03/1508612.html>.

the West that Beijing and Moscow had an option. Particularly, Beijing and Moscow want to bolster their influence as a geopolitical counterweight to Washington as Beijing is increasingly disturbed by perceived U.S. heavy-handed pivot/rebalancing to Asia and Moscow's relations with the United States have become more and more strained after Vladimir Putin was re-elected Russian President in March 2012 and, particularly, in the wake of the recent crises over Crimea and Ukraine.

Over the years, Russia and China have staged quite a number of joint military drills both bilaterally and within the multilateral framework of the SCO. During his April 2014 trip to Asia, U.S. President Barack Obama publicly declared that the U.S.-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty covers the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and signed a ten-year defense pact with Manila that would allow increased U.S. troop presence in the Philippines, moves regarded by China as infringing on its territorial integrity and strategic interests.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, the United States and the European Union have ratcheted up sanctions against Moscow as the crisis in Ukraine deepened. Not surprisingly, the next day after Obama concluded his Asia trip, China and Russia announced that the two navies would stage a large-scale joint naval drill in the East China Sea in late May, involving 16 vessels from both sides, including missile cruisers, missile destroyers, missile frigate, and submarines.<sup>39</sup> On May 20, Xi and the visiting Russian President Putin inspected the participating naval vessels, kicking off a week-long joint naval exercise.<sup>40</sup> Clearly, strategic pressures from the United States drew Beijing and Moscow closer.

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<sup>38</sup>The White House, "U.S.-Japan Joint Statement: the United States and Japan: Shaping the Future of the Asia Pacific and Beyond," April 25, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/25/us-japan-joint-statement-united-states-and-japan-shaping-future-asia-pac>; Juliet Eilperin, "U.S., Philippines Sign 10-Year Defense Agreement Amid Rising Tensions," *The Washington Post*, April 28, 2014, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/us-philippines-sign-10-year-defense-agreement-amid-rising-tensions/2014/04/28/74a605d8-cec6-11e3-b812-0c92213941f4\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/us-philippines-sign-10-year-defense-agreement-amid-rising-tensions/2014/04/28/74a605d8-cec6-11e3-b812-0c92213941f4_story.html).

<sup>39</sup>Su Yincheng, "Zhong E Haijun jiang Juxing Haishang Lianhe Junshi Yanxi" [Chinese and Russian Navies will Hold Joint Naval Exercises], *People's Daily*, May 14, 2014, <http://military.people.com.cn/n/2014/0514/c1011-25013159.html>.

<sup>40</sup>Li Bin and Li Zhihui, "Xi Jinping he Eluosi Zongtong Pu Jing Gongtong Chuxi Zhong E Haishang Lianhe Junshi Yanxi Kaishi Yishi" [Xi Jinping and Russian President Putin Jointly Attend the Opening Ceremony of the China-Russia Joint Maritime Military Exercise], *Xinhua Net*, May 20, 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-05/20/c\\_1110779705.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-05/20/c_1110779705.htm).

Some Chinese strategic analysts and scholars argue that China should consider forming an alliance with Russia. Regarding the U.S.-led “hub-and-spoke” alliance system as the cornerstone of the existing regional order, those strategic analysts and scholars argue that China should make efforts to forge a competing China-Russia alliance. Yan Xuetong, a prominent realist international relations scholar at Tsinghua University, is among them. Specifically, Yan believes that a China-Russia alliance would enhance China’s security environment to the north and to the west, assuage strategic pressures from the eastern and the southern flank, and be conducive to the emergence of a bipolar structure in East Asia. Therefore, Yan argues, China should abandon the principle of nonalignment it has held dear and actively seek to forge an alliance with Russia.<sup>41</sup>

Despite some realist scholars’ urge to form a China-Russia alliance, Beijing and Moscow are reluctant to do so.

However, despite some realist scholars’ urge to form a China-Russia alliance, Beijing and Moscow are reluctant to do so. In fact, Putin, when facing the ongoing crisis over Ukraine, has publicly brushed aside the possibility of forging a political and military alliance between Russia and China, dismissing the alliance system as “outdated.”<sup>42</sup> Beijing seems to be fully aware of the limits of its bilateral relations with Russia. While calling for a deepening of the “comprehensive, strategic cooperative partnership” between the two countries so as to contribute to the “*guoji zhanlue pingheng*” [international strategic balance], Beijing has so far settled for the strategy of — as a Foreign Ministry spokesperson called it — “*jieban er bu jiemeng*”

<sup>41</sup>Deng Yuan, “Yan Xuetong: Zhong E Jiemeng Zuiju Xianshi Yiyi,” [Yan Xuetong: Forming a China-Russia Alliance Is of Most Realistic Meaning] *Guoji Xianqu Daobao* [International Leader Herald], March 26, 2013, <http://ihl.cankaoxiaoxi.com/2013/0326/183592.shtml>; Yan Xuetong, *Lishi de Guanxing* [Inertia of History], pp. 193–199.

<sup>42</sup>“Putin Urges Intra-Ukraine Dialogue, Eyes Closer Ties with China,” *Shanghai Daily*, April 17, 2014, [http://shanghaidaily.com/article/article\\_xinhua.aspx?id=213333](http://shanghaidaily.com/article/article_xinhua.aspx?id=213333); “Putin Hails Russia’s Relationship with China,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 17, 2014, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-04-17/news/sns-rt-us-russia-putin-china-20140417\\_1\\_russia-and-china-alexei-anishchuk-lidia-kelly](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-04-17/news/sns-rt-us-russia-putin-china-20140417_1_russia-and-china-alexei-anishchuk-lidia-kelly).

[forging a partnership without forming an alliance].<sup>43</sup> Most recently, at a September 2014 press conference, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei reaffirmed that the China-Russia Strategic Partnership of Cooperation should be characterized and defined as “*bu jiemeng, bu chongtu, bu zhendui disanfang*” [non-aligned, non-confrontational, and not targeting a third party].<sup>44</sup> Again, at a November 2014 press conference, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying emphasized that China-Russia relations would not evolve into an “*dongfang beiyue*” [Oriental NATO] and the principles of “*bu jiemeng, bu chongtu, bu zhendui di sanfang*” are important components of the basis for China-Russia relations to grow and prosper.<sup>45</sup>

If China were to follow offensive realist scholars’ — such as Yan Xuetong’s — proposal for actively forging alliances and competing for regional hegemony, it would greatly increase the security and geopolitical competition between China and the United States. In fact, Yan’s analysis is self-contradictory on that account and fails to make a convincing case for why the growing strategic competition between China and the United States will not lead to a costly and perilous new cold war.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>The phrase was first put forward by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Liu Weimin at a press conference in June 2012, see “*Waijiaobu: Shanghe Zuzhi Bucunzai Yanbian Cheng Zhengzhi Junshi Jituan de Keneng*,” [MFA: No Possibility for SCO to Evolve into a Political and Military Bloc]; “*Nianzhong Pendian: 2008 Zhongguo yu Daguo Guanxi—Zhong E Pian*” [Year-end Summary: China’s Relations with Great Powers in 2008—China and Russia] Xinhua Net, December 10, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2008-12/10/content\\_10482794.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2008-12/10/content_10482794.htm); “*Zhong E Miyue: Bujiemeng, Wan Lianheng?*” [China-Russia Honeymoon: Not Forging Alliance, Entertaining Partnership?] *Zhongguo Xinwen Zhoukan* [China Newsweek], June 13, 2013, [http://insight.inewsweek.cn/topic\\_detail-608.html](http://insight.inewsweek.cn/topic_detail-608.html).

<sup>44</sup>“*Waijiaobu Fayarenren Jiu Jianli Zhonghe Junshi Tongmeng Zuochu Huiying: Bu Jiemeng*,” [FM Spokesperson Responds to the Question of Sino-Russian Military Alliance: Non-alignment] Xinhua Net, September 17, 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2014-09/19/c\\_127003320.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2014-09/19/c_127003320.htm).

<sup>45</sup>“*Waijiaobu: Zhong E Anquan Hezuo Bu Jiemeng, Bu Chongtu, Bu Zhendui Disanfang*,” [MFA: China-Russia Security Cooperation Is Non-aligned, Non-Confrontational, and Not Targeting a Third Party], The People’s Net, November 27, 2014, <http://news.nen.com.cn/system/2014/11/27/013935438.shtml>.

<sup>46</sup>For Yan’s view that growing strategic competition between China and the United States will not lead to a new Cold War, see Yan Xuetong, *Lishi de Guanxing* [Inertia of History], p. 34; Yan Xuetong and Qi Haixia, “Football Game Rather Than Boxing Match: China-U.S. Intensifying Rivalry Does Not Amount to Cold War,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 2012) pp. 105–127.



However, even from the Chinese perspective, forging alliances in East Asia might prove to be unrealistic. China's protection of possible client countries whose interests are diametrically opposed to those of the United States might increase China's security competition/conflict of security interests with the United States. For instance, China's enhancing security ties (or otherwise renewing its alliance treaty) with North Korea will almost certainly aggravate its security relations with the United States and, by extension, South Korea. On the other hand, if China refuses to endorse one of North Korea's most cherished goals — the possession of nuclear weapons and recognition as a nuclear power — it is doubtful that North Korea would ever be willing to submit its own strategic autonomy and independence in exchange for Chinese security guarantee. In other words,

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it will be highly unrealistic, that China can revive its military alliance with North Korea.

When it comes to the possibility of a China-Russian alliance, something Yan strongly advocates, it is difficult to see the conditions of a China-Russia alliance come to fruition — unless the United States increases its strategic pressures on and security threats to Beijing and Moscow to such an extreme that the

leadership of both these countries feel compelled to form a formal alliance. Falling short of that, Beijing and Moscow will continue to pursue a hedging strategy, forming a tactical coalition in groupings such as the Group of 20 (G20) or the BRICS countries, but shy away from forging any formal alliance. The limited potential of a China-Russia alliance is highlighted by the 2008 Russia-Georgia War, and again by the recent crises over Crimea and Ukraine, when China refrained from offering outright support to Russia and deliberately kept an ambivalent attitude.<sup>47</sup> In short, a China-Russia alliance is unlikely to ripen, given the current geostrategic dynamics.

<sup>47</sup>“Waijiaobu Fayanren Qing Gang Jiu Nanaosaiti Diqu Chongtu Da Jizhe Wen,” [MFA Spokesman Qing Gang's Remarks to the Press Concerning the Conflicts in South Ossetia] August 8, 2008, [http://www.china.com.cn/policy/txt/2008-08/09/content\\_16172485.htm](http://www.china.com.cn/policy/txt/2008-08/09/content_16172485.htm); “Allies Let Him Down,” Kommersant, August 29, 2008, [http://kommersant.com/p1017558/SCO\\_refused\\_to\\_support\\_Russia/](http://kommersant.com/p1017558/SCO_refused_to_support_Russia/).

Moreover, Beijing's ability to attract followers and thus form a China-dominated alliance system in East Asia is also greatly hamstrung by the fact that it has been embroiled in a series of territorial disputes in the East China Sea and the South China Sea with a number of regional countries.

Therefore, in the years to come, the likelihood of Beijing forging a formal alliance with Moscow or even building a China-dominated alliance system in East Asia will remain low. Nevertheless, the shared interests in promoting a multipolar world and alleviating strategic pressures from the United States will likely continue to draw Beijing and Moscow closer.

### *The CICA and a New Asian Security Concept*

In his May 2014 speech at the CICA summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping unveiled China's "New Asian Security Concept," stating that "it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia." Pointedly denouncing the Cold War alliance system, Xi also called for the development of regional security cooperation architecture.<sup>48</sup> Xi's speech was read by some Western analysts as a declaration of China's "Monroe Doctrine" or otherwise excluding the United States from any Asian security architecture.<sup>49</sup> Such anxiety, however, is overblown. A careful reading of Xi's CICA speech reveals that, in fact, much of what he said was nothing new or by no means revisionist in nature. China has always been critical of the Cold War mentality and the alliance system associated with it; and China has always been stressing the respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs.<sup>50</sup> At the core of Xi's

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<sup>48</sup>"New Asian Security Concept for New Progress in Security Cooperation", Remarks by President Xi Jinping at the 4th CICA Summit, May 21, 2014, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/topics\\_665678/yzxhxzyxrcshydscfh/t1159951.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/yzxhxzyxrcshydscfh/t1159951.shtml).

<sup>49</sup>"Asia-Pacific Major Power Relations and Regional Security," Remarks by Former U.S. National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley at the World Peace Forum, June 21, 2014, Beijing, China, <http://www.wpfforum.org/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=95&id=266>; Zachery Keck, "China's Growing Hegemonic Bent," *The Diplomat*, June 26, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/chinas-growing-hegemonic-bent/>.

<sup>50</sup>Bates Gill, *Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2007) pp. 4–5, 27.

"New Asian Security Concept" is his call for the realization of "common security, comprehensive security, cooperative and sustainable security," definitions and concepts that have been widely accepted by the international community. Moreover, Xi's call for the establishment of an Asian regional security architecture might be more rhetorical than substantive.<sup>51</sup> Apparently, China, as the rotating chair state of the CICA from 2014–2016, aims to revive the regional forum initiated by Kazakhstan that now encompasses twenty-four members states and twelve observers (including the United States). It is unclear, however, as to how China would be able to turn the CICA into an effective regional security architecture, given the wide heterogeneity in ideologies, religions, history, and social and economic conditions across the member states. Excluding the United States from any prospective Asian security architecture might be at odds with the will of most Asian countries. In fact, virtually every country in the region would favor a strong U.S. presence, as a counter-balance and hedge against the rising China.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps keenly aware of that, President Xi noted in his keynote speech that "we welcome all parties to play a positive and constructive role in promoting Asia's security and cooperation," implicitly acknowledging that China will not pursue a strategy of excluding the United States.<sup>53</sup> As a matter of fact, China's efforts to revive the CICA can be viewed as part of its hedging portfolio, an effort to enmesh the United States into a region-wide security architecture so as to reduce strategic risks, increase China's freedom of action, and shape U.S. preferences.

### *China-U.S. Relations*

Since the end of the Cold War, stabilizing China-U.S. relations has become the priority of Beijing's "*daguo waijiao*" [great power diplomacy]. In 1993, Chinese President Jiang Zemin proposed a sixteen-character mantra for

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<sup>51</sup>David Cohen, "'A Clash of Security Concept': China's Efforts to Redefine Security," *China Brief*, Vol. 14, No. 11 (June 2014) p. 2.

<sup>52</sup>Keck, "China's Growing Hegemonic Bent."

<sup>53</sup>"New Asian Security Concept for New Progress in Security Cooperation", Keynote Speech by President Xi Jinping at the 4th CICA Summit, May 21, 2014.

China-U.S. relations, namely, "to enhance trust, reduce trouble, develop cooperation and avoid confrontation."<sup>54</sup> Despite a rough take-off (i.e., the 2001 EP-3 spy plane incident), George W. Bush's presidency saw a deepening of China-U.S. bilateral relations. After the "9/11" terrorist attacks, Beijing quickly lent support to Washington's global war on terror that greatly increased the strategic trust between the two countries. China responded positively to Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick's September 2005 call for China to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system.<sup>55</sup> In November 2005, Chinese President Hu Jintao pointed out to the visiting U.S. President George W. Bush that the China-U.S. relationship carried more and more "*quanqiu yiyi*" [global implications].<sup>56</sup> By the end of Bush's second term, officials in both countries were able to declare that the bilateral relationship was at its best since normalization in 1979.<sup>57</sup>

Both privately and publicly, Chinese leaders acknowledge that the United States is a dominant power in the region, probably for decades to come. In December 2011, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Le Yucheng

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<sup>54</sup>Zhou Shuchun and Ding Qilin, "Zai Jieshou 'Meiguo Xinwen yu Shijie Baogao' Zongbianji Shi Jiang Zemin Zonglun ZhongMei Guanxi Deng Qida Wenti," [When Receiving an Interview by the Chief Editor of *U.S. News and World Report*, Jiang Zemin Discusses Seven Issues Including China-U.S. Relations] *People's Daily*, March 9, 1993, p. 1; "Secretary Perry Welcomes Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian", December 9, 1996, <http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=827>.

<sup>55</sup>"Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" Remarks by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick to National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, September 21, 2005, [http://www.ncuscr.org/files/2005Gala\\_RobertZoellick\\_Whither\\_China1.pdf](http://www.ncuscr.org/files/2005Gala_RobertZoellick_Whither_China1.pdf); "Zoellick: 'Stakeholder' Concept Offers New Direction," *China Daily*, January 25, 2006, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/09usofficials/2009-05/22/content\\_7932826.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/09usofficials/2009-05/22/content_7932826.htm); Bates Gill *et al.*, "China as a Responsible Stakeholder," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 11, 2007, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2007/06/11/china-as-responsible-stakeholder/2kt>.

<sup>56</sup>"Zhongmei Guanxi Yuelaiyue Juyou Quanqiu Yiyi" [China-U.S. Relations Have Increasing Global Implications], the Xinhua Net, November 21, 2005, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2005-11/21/content\\_3809831.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2005-11/21/content_3809831.htm).

<sup>57</sup>"Leigh Sales Speaks to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice," Australian Broadcast Corporation, May 9, 2007, <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2007/s2025319.htm>.

noted in a speech given at the MFA-affiliated Foreign Affairs University that the United States “has never left the Asia Pacific.” Confessing that China “has neither desire nor capability to push the United States out of” the region. Most recently, Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang acknowledged at the Forum on Sino-U.S. Commercial Relations, held in Chicago in November 17, 2014, that “it is the United States that leads the world,” and “China does not have any ideas or capabilities to challenge the leading role of the United States.”<sup>58</sup>

At his speech given at Foreign Affairs University, Le Yucheng also argued that “[t]he Pacific Ocean is vast enough to accommodate the co-existence and cooperation” between the two big powers of China and the United States.<sup>59</sup> In an interview given to *The Washington Post* in February 2012, then Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping noted that “the vast Pacific Ocean has ample space for both China and the United States.” Xi actually implicitly acknowledged U.S. primacy in the region when he noted, “We welcome a constructive role by the United States in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the region.” To be sure, Xi balanced his statement by adding, “We also hope that the United States will fully respect and accommodate the major interests and legitimate concerns of Asia-Pacific countries.”<sup>60</sup> At the summit meetings with U.S. President Obama held at Sunnylands, California in June 2013, and in Beijing in November 2014, respectively, Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated his belief that “the vast Pacific Ocean has enough room to accommodate” the development of two

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<sup>58</sup>“The Road of Sino-U.S. Economic Partnership Will be Broader and Brighter,” Keynote Speech Given by Vice Premier Wang at the Forum on Sino-U.S. Commercial Relations, November 17, 2014, Chicago, <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/article/newsrelease/significantnews/201412/20141200849560.shtml>.

<sup>59</sup>“The Rapid Development of China’s Diplomacy in a Volatile World,” Address by Assistant Foreign Minister Le Yucheng at the “Seminar on China’s Diplomacy in 2011 and Its Prospects”, December 27, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t890675.htm>.

<sup>60</sup>“Views from China’s Vice President”, Vice President Xi Jinping’s Written Interview with the Washington Post, *The Washington Post*, February 12, 2012, [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-02-12/world/35445241.1\\_amchamchina-mutual-benefit-chinese-products/2](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-02-12/world/35445241.1_amchamchina-mutual-benefit-chinese-products/2); “Xi Jinping Accepts a Written Interview with the Washington Post of the United States,” February 13, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t904674.htm>.

major powers, the United States and China.<sup>61</sup> The Chinese comment, sometimes misconstrued by Western analysts as implying a division of sphere of influence in the region, in fact reflects Chinese leaders' conviction that China, as the rising power, does not need to be on a collision course with the United States, the established, dominant power. Rhetoric aside, these statements and remarks show that Chinese leaders are trying to avoid the emerging security dilemma between China and the United States, and thus seeking a non-zero-sum path forward for China-U.S. relations.<sup>62</sup> The idea of a new type of major country relationship was first proposed by Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo at the second round of Strategic and Economic Dialogue in May 2010.<sup>63</sup> During his summit meetings with U.S. President Obama in Sunnylands, California in June 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed that China and the United States should build a new model of major country relationship characterized by "no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation."<sup>64</sup> Again, at the November 2014 Xi-Obama summit meetings in Beijing, Chinese President

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<sup>61</sup>"Xi, Obama Meet for First Summit," Xinhua Net, June 8, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-06/08/c\\_132440860.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-06/08/c_132440860.htm). For a post-Summit assessment, see Dong Wang, "The Xi-Obama Moment: A Post-Summit Assessment," *The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) Commentary*, October 21, 2013, pp. 1–3; "Xi Jinping Holds Talks with President Barack Obama of the U.S., Stressing Promoting Construction of New Model of Major-Country Relationship Between China and the U.S. in Six Key Directions and Putting into Practice Principles of No Conflict, No Confrontation, Mutual Respect, and Win-Win Cooperation," China's Foreign Ministry, November 11, 2014, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1211022.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1211022.shtml).

<sup>62</sup>Wang Dong, "Addressing the U.S.-China Security Dilemma," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 17, 2013, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/01/17/addressing-u.s.-china-security-dilemma/f2rv>.

<sup>63</sup>Dai Bingguo, "Remarks by State Councilor Dai Bingguo At the Opening Session of the Second Round of The China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogues," China's Foreign Ministry, May 24, 2010, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t704804.shtml>; Dai Bingguo, "Remarks by State Councilor Dai Bingguo at Joint Press Conference of the Second Round of the China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogues," China's Foreign Ministry, May 27, 2010, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t705280.shtml>.

<sup>64</sup>"Zhongguo Guojia Zhuxi Xi Jinping Tong Meiguo Zongtong Aobama Annaboge Zhuanyuan Huiwu," [Chinese President Xi Jinping Meets U.S. President Obama at the Annenberg Ranch] June 11, 2013, the People's Net, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2013/0611/c64094-21812719-2.html>.

Xi further suggested that both sides should promote the building of a China-U.S. new model of major country relationship in six directions, namely, (1) "strengthen high-level communication and exchanges to promote strategic trust"; (2) "handle bilateral relations on the basis of mutual respect"; (3) "promote exchanges in all circles... to consolidate the social basis of bilateral relations" and "expand and deepen the practical cooperation" in "all fields"; (4) "manage and control divergences and sensitive issues in a constructive way"; (5) "carry out inclusive cooperation in the Asia Pacific region"; and (6) "jointly cope with all regional and global challenges."<sup>65</sup> The idea of building a "new model of major country relationship" between China and the United States was proposed by Chinese leaders as an intellectual framework for transcending the destiny of great power conflict between rising powers and established powers, the so-called "Thucydides trap."<sup>66</sup> Policymakers and scholars in both countries who endeavor to break away from the "old pattern" of great power competition and war bear the traits of idealists. This idealist approach might encompass a wide range of views. One such view would envision the possibility of shared responsibilities and even shared leadership between the United States and China. This would involve U.S. willingness to cede leadership to China or accommodating a China that will take more responsibilities and play a stronger leadership role in shaping the changing regional order in the years and decades to come, including the joint provision of public goods of some sort.<sup>67</sup> Some leading Chinese and American scholars have mentioned

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<sup>65</sup>"Xi Jinping Holds Talks with President Barack Obama of the U.S., Stressing Promoting Construction of New Model of Major-Country Relationship Between China and the U.S. in Six Key Directions and Putting into Practice Principles of No Conflict, No Confrontation, Mutual Respect, and Win-Win Cooperation," November 12, 2014, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1211022.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1211022.shtml).

<sup>66</sup>Dong Wang, "The Xi-Obama Moment: A Post-Summit Assessment," The NBR Commentary, October 27, 2013, The National Bureau of Asian Research, [http://www.nbr.org/downloads/pdfs/PSA/WangDong\\_commentary\\_102113.pdf](http://www.nbr.org/downloads/pdfs/PSA/WangDong_commentary_102113.pdf); Susan Rice, "America's Future in Asia," Remarks as Prepared for Delivery for National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, November 20, 2013, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/21/remarks-prepared-delivery-national-security-advisor-susan-e-rice>.

<sup>67</sup>Terry Cooke, "New Strains in the U.S.-China-Taiwan Triangle," *China Brief*, Vol. 10, No. 4, January 18, 2010, pp. 11-14.

the possibility of “joint patrol” of sea-lines of communications in the future, an idea that has been endorsed by senior former U.S. policymakers such as former U.S. national security adviser Stephen Hadley. Speaking at a forum in Beijing in June 2014, Hadley argued that the United States was “ready to accept a growing Chinese open sea naval capability to defend the sea lanes” and that allowing China to share the responsibility of sea-lane protection would be “of significant benefit” to the United States.<sup>68</sup>

Writing in the pages of his widely acclaimed book, *On China*, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger observes, “An explicit American project to organize Asia on the basis of containing China or creating a bloc of democratic states for an ideological crusade is unlikely to succeed — in part because China is an indispensable trading partner for most of its neighbors. By the same token, a Chinese attempt to exclude America from Asian economic and security affairs will similarly meet serious resistance from almost all other Asian states, which fear the consequences of a region dominated by a single power.”<sup>69</sup> Categorically rejecting the idea of bloc-competition between China and the United States, Kissinger proposes “co-evolution” between the two that will gradually remove mutual suspicions — Chinese fear of American containment and American concern of Chinese threat, and, together, move toward building a “Pacific Community.”<sup>70</sup> Kissinger’s “co-evolution” vision implies that any future regional order would be based on power-sharing between China and the United States, a position strongly advocated by the leading strategist Hugh White. As White convincingly argues, Asia’s alternative futures are not American primacy or Chinese dominance. In fact, any attempt by either Beijing or Washington to dominate the region will “lead to sustained and bitter strategic rivalry, imposing huge economic costs and real risk of catastrophic war.” Therefore, some form of great power accommodation or power-sharing between China and the United States will be necessary for a more peaceful regional

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<sup>68</sup>Both Wang Jisi and Susan Shirk have mentioned such a possibility, author’s conversations; “Asia-Pacific Major Power Relations and Regional Security,” Remarks by former U.S. National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley at World Peace Forum, June 21, 2014, Beijing, China, <http://www.wpfforum.org/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=95&id=266>.

<sup>69</sup>Henry A. Kissinger, *On China* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011) pp. 526–527.

<sup>70</sup>Kissinger, *On China*, pp. 527–528.



order to emerge.<sup>71</sup> It would require that both China and the United States exhibit strategic restraint, be willing to compromise and accommodate each other, and be sensitive to the limits of/boundaries of their respective power. It would also entail constant bargaining and re-bargaining of the boundaries of power between them and, by extension, a prospective regional architecture that is able to accommodate both China and the United States, and that is reflective of the shared responsibilities and shared leadership between the two.<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

The rapid rise of China has posed challenges to American regional hegemony and is bound to reshape the regional order in East Asia. However, in the short to medium term, it is unlikely that China would be able to construct a competing alliance system that rivals the U.S.-led bilateral alliance system in the region. Rather than trying to push the United States out of East Asia, China has adopted a hedging strategy that helps minimize risks, expand freedom of maneuver, diversify its strategic options and shape the preferences and behavior of the United States. Indeed, Beijing has explicitly acknowledged U.S. predominance in the international system and reiterated its willingness to participate in and reform the existing system.

Since the inauguration of the Xi administration, China has been pursuing a foreign policy that sees both continuity and changes. Most fundamentally, China still bases its foreign policy on the overarching peaceful development strategy. Calling for “enrich[ing] the strategic thinking of peaceful development,” Chinese President Xi noted at the Second Central Foreign Affairs Working Conference in November 2014 that China should advocate the building of “*xinxing guojiguanxi*” [a new model of international relations] characterized by win-win cooperation, champion the new security outlook featuring common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, promote a neighborhood policy featuring “*qin, cheng, hui*,

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<sup>71</sup>Hugh White, *The China Choice: Why We Should Share Power*, Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 5–6.

<sup>72</sup>Wang Dong, Robert A. Kapp, and Bernard Loeffke, “Resetting U.S.-China Relations,” *The New York Times*, November 10, 2014, [www.nytimes.com/2014/11/11/opinion/resetting-us-china-relations.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/11/opinion/resetting-us-china-relations.html).

*rong*" [amity, sincerity, mutual benefits and inclusiveness], and "work to reform the international system and global governance."<sup>73</sup>

At the end of the day, the evolution of the future regional order will be largely determined by the trajectory of China-U.S. relations. A China-U.S. competition and rivalry for regional dominance is perilous, and prone to conflict or even war. For a more peaceful future to emerge in East Asia, the United States and China, as an incumbent power and a rising power, would have to accommodate each other, and negotiate and renegotiate the boundaries of their relative power, as well as their respective role in the future regional order where Beijing and Washington would learn to share responsibilities and leadership.

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<sup>73</sup>"The Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs was Held in Beijing," China's Foreign Ministry, November 29, 2014, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1215680.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1215680.shtml).