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Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address alternatives to address our security interests in Asia-Pacific region. To that end, I will first discuss America's enduring interests in the region. I will then describe the challenges, both international and domestic, to our continued ability to pursue our traditional interests in the region. I will then outline three alternative approaches before concluding with several recommendations to increase our ability to safeguard our interests in an increasingly challenging environment.

U.S. AIMS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

There has been a bipartisan consensus in U.S. defense circles since the end of the Cold War that Asia's global strategic weight is growing. Although the Obama administration's announcement of a "pivot" or "rebalance" to the Pacific has justifiably received considerable attention, recognition of the increasing importance of Asia and calls for a growth in U.S. presence in the region have much deeper roots. The two East Asian security reports produced by the George H.W. Bush administration in 1990 and 1992 foretold the rise of Asia, whereas the 1995 and 1998 Clinton administration reports even more clearly pointed to rising Asia's importance to the United States. Subsequent strategy documents reiterated this importance, including the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review,* 2005 *National Defense Strategy*, the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, 2008 *National Defense Strategy*, the 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, and the 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidelines*.

These policy pronouncements, which span four presidential administrations, are testimony to the fact that a favorable balance of power in Asia is key to protecting vital American interests. Although administrations may use very different words to convey U.S. objectives in Asia, the historical record of America's strategic behavior demonstrates remarkable continuity. As a result, it is likely that an emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region represents a long-term trend that will outlast the Obama administration.

The United States has pursued a consistent set of aims in the Asia-Pacific region, in some cases since World War II, in other cases for a much longer period of time. First and foremost, the United States has acted to defend U.S. territory against attack. This includes the need to protect the Continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. The United States is also bound by treaty to defend American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. Since World War II, U.S. strategy has been predicated upon meeting threats to the United States as far from America's shores as possible through the forward stationing and rotational deployment of U.S. forces to U.S. territory and allied territory in the Western Pacific.

Second, the United States is legally committed to protect its allies. In Asia, these include Japan, Australia, South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand. The United States is also obligated to help defend quasi-allies such as Taiwan. The Taiwan Relations Act requires the U.S. government to both provide arms and services of a defensive nature to Taiwan and maintain U.S. military capacity to resist coercion of Taiwan by China.

Third, the United States has acted over decades to assure access to the global commons in peacetime and commanding them in wartime. It does so through a strategy of forward presence. The U.S. Navy has, for example, repeatedly acted to defend freedom of the seas and the right of freedom of navigation. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard have also worked together to combat piracy and human trafficking. Command of the commons has benefited not only the United States, but others as well. The free flow of goods, services and information has undergirded economic growth and prosperity for decades. It has lifted literally millions out of poverty and served as the midwife of globalization.

A fourth objective is less frequently discussed openly but nonetheless represents an enduring American aim: For the past century, the United States has sought to preserve a favorable balance of power across Eurasia. The United States has repeatedly used force when its territory or allies were attacked and when a would-be hegemon has threatened the balance of power in Eurasia. The United

States twice intervened on the European continent when it appeared that Germany was on the brink of dominating the Continent. Similarly, the United States resisted Japan's attempt at hegemony in the Pacific. During the Cold War, the United States sought to prevent the Soviet Union from becoming a Eurasian hegemon. And U.S. defense planning after the fall of the Soviet Union similarly sought to prevent a would-be hegemon from arising.[1]

Finally, the United States has acted for the common good by providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Indeed, the United States generally leads international relief efforts. Moreover, the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard are often first on the scene to render assistance to those in need. The response to Typhoon Haiyan is but the most recent instance of such efforts. The United States is thus not only a global power, but also one that is active in the Asia-Pacific region.

CHALLENGES

Several developments are challenging the ability of the United States to pursue its traditional interests in Asia. The most consequential of these is the growth of Chinese power and Chinese military modernization, which threatens not only to deny the United States access to areas of vital national interest, but also to erode the alliances that have served as the foundation of regional stability for over half a century. Specifically, elements of Chinese military modernization give Beijing the ability to destroy fixed targets in the region (including on our allies' home territory) and threaten U.S. power projection forces. In addition, China's nuclear modernization, including the deployment of increasing numbers of nuclear ballistic missiles, could potentially decouple allies from the American extended nuclear deterrent by reducing the credibility of U.S. nuclear retaliatory threats.

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[1] See, for example, Eric S. Edelman, "The Strange Career of the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance," in Melvin P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, editors, *In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy After the Berlin Wall and 9/11* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

A second challenge arises from North Korea's communist regime, which has embarked upon increasingly aggressive behavior since it tested its first atomic weapon in 2006. It has tested nuclear weapons three times (in 2006, 2009, and 2013), and has also conducted four flight tests of long-range missiles. It is also a proliferator of nuclear technology, having sold a nuclear reactor to Syria and signed an identical cooperation agreement with Iran. The North Korean government is responsible for sinking the South Korean naval vessel *Cheonan* on March 26, 2010, killing 46 crewmen. P'yongyang is also responsible for shelling Yeonpyeong Island in May 2011, injuring 16 soldiers and 3 civilians. If the North Korean regime is bellicose, it is also weak. Looking to the future, the United States and its allies may face not only the need to plan to respond to North Korean provocation, but also the prospect of North Korean instability and collapse. Responding to a collapse of authority in North Korea, safeguarding North Korean nuclear material, and stabilizing the country could, in turn, require nearly half a million men to execute successfully.[2]

These challenges will persist despite sharp limits to the resources available for defense. Currently planned cuts to the U.S. defense budget will greatly reduce the ability of the United States to pursue its historical aims in Asia. Moreover, over the long term the United States – indeed, most advanced industrial countries – will face pressure on their defense budgets arising out of limited economic growth and increasing demands for social spending. Although the debate over defense spending in the United States has been on full display, it is but one instance of a much broader phenomenon. Naval budgets across much of the world are under pressure, and will continue to be. China's naval investments are a notable exception.

The defense budget squeeze is multiplied by the long-term growth in the cost of navies. Personnel costs have increased, and will continue to increase, as navies have to recruit, train, and retain skilled sailors. Similarly, the cost of naval combatants has risen with the incorporation of new technology. Although

[2] Bruce W. Bennett and Jennifer Lind, "The Collapse of North Korea: Military Missions and Requirements," *International Security* 36, no. 2 (Fall 2011), 84-119.

individual naval combatants possess increasing capability, navies are able to afford fewer of them. Because capability is being concentrated in fewer and fewer platforms, the relative value of naval combatants is going up. As a result, naval combatants represent increasingly lucrative assets that leaders may be reluctant to put at risk. In addition, a naval combatant, no matter how powerful, can only be in one place at one time. The ability of naval forces to demonstrate presence, and potentially to deter and reassure, may therefore diminish over time, a trend magnified by the rise of China and Chinese military modernization

BALANCING ENDS, WAYS, AND MEANS

It is axiomatic that states formulate and implement strategy with finite resources. However, the United States will face increasing constraints in coming years, just as China appears to be catching its stride. For reasons of domestic politics as much as economics, resources for, and attention to, national security will likely be limited in coming years. The United States thus faces a growing gap between its commitments, which are, if anything, growing, and its ability to meet them, which is declining. In this situation, the United States will face three alternatives: accept greater risk, reduce commitments, or balancing risk.

An evaluation of these options should incorporate an assessment of the risks and rewards of each option. Moreover, it is useful to differentiate among different types of risk. We should, for example, seek to minimize *strategic risk*: that is, the risk to achieving our political objectives and safeguarding our interests. We should also, however, seek to reduce *operational risk*: that is, the risk that our forces face. An ideal strategy would seek to minimize both. Of the two, however, strategic risk the more dangerous: we should be more willing to risk our forces than jeopardize our interests.

The first strategic alternative that lies before the United States is to continue its current approach to the region – that is, to pursue broad objectives even as the military balance shifts against us. By relying upon increasingly vulnerable forward-

based forces for reassurance and deterrence, this approach would incur additional risk. Moreover, as the size of the Navy decreases, it will be increasingly difficult to maintain an American presence across the region. As a result, a continuation of the current U.S. posture in the region will over time lead to progressively greater strategic and operational risk.

The second alternative, favored by neo-isolationists of various stripes in both political parties, would be to scale back U.S. commitments and accept a narrower definition of America's role in the world than we have played for the better part of a century. Such a strategy would have the United States pull back from the Asian littoral and rely upon allies to shoulder a greater portion of the load, husbanding its resources against the possible emergence of a peer competitor.

Reducing commitments is, however, easier said than done. Protecting the United States against attack is one of our government's most fundamental responsibilities. Similarly, the United States would lose more than it would gain by abrogating any number of treaties that commit it to the defense of allies across the globe. A failure on the part of the United States to continue to command the commons would similarly incur great economic, political, and military costs. It would, in other words, trade reduced operational risk for increased strategic risk. Moreover, such an approach reflects a sense of defeatism that is unwarranted. Although complacency would be unwise, it would be misguided to argue that the only, or even the best, option for the United States is to reduce its commitments in Asia.

A third approach would be to adopt a strategy that would balance the need to reduce the vulnerability of U.S. forces while maintaining U.S. commitments. It would rest upon a mixture of forward-based and standoff capabilities. Moreover, in order to reduce operational risk while not sacrificing America's strategic interests, more than the current force posture it would feature greater specialization between forces employed in keeping the peace and those for fighting wars.

Such an approach would have four elements. First, there is a need to develop new approaches to presence. For the United, States, for example, this may involve moving away from reliance on carrier strike groups and toward networks of capable surface ships as the most visible symbol of U.S. presence.[3] The United States and its allies should also think creatively about how to network various sensors to increase maritime domain awareness in the Western Pacific. It should also continue to bolster its submarine fleet in the Pacific and think creatively about ways to use undersea forces as instruments of presence, deterrence and reassurance.

Second, the United States and its allies need to enter into a serious dialogue on extended deterrence and reassurance. The shift in the operational environment, and the shift in force structure and force posture to accommodate it, should be an opportunity to strengthen deterrence and reassure allies and friends.

Third, there is a need to change the character of its forward-deployed forces to make them more survivable and hence credible. The United States and its allies should, for example, harden and diversify their bases in the region and augment them with contingency operating locations. These should be balanced between bases on sovereign U.S. territory, such as Hawaii and Guam, and those on allied territory, such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. Bases on U.S. territory guarantee access, whereas those on allied territory provide extended deterrence and reassurance.

Finally, the United States and its allies should increase their ability to strike at a distance in the face of growing anti-access threats. By bolstering the ability to strike precisely at a distance, they will not only strengthen deterrence, but also force competitors to increase their investments in active and passive defenses. Investments in defensive capabilities represent resources that will not be available for offensive arms.

[3] For two recent proposals along these lines, see CAPT Robert C. Rubel, USN (Ret.), "Cede No Water: Strategy, Littorals, and Flotillas," *Proceedings* 139/9 (September 2013); ADM John Harvey, Jr., CAPT Wayne Hughes, Jr., and CAPT Jeffrey Kline, USN (Ret.), and LT Zachary Schwartz, USN, "Sustaining American Maritime Influence," *Proceedings* 139/9 (September 2013).

Although such a balanced strategy may be the best one, it is very likely that, the United States will continue with the *status quo*. Absent a catalytic event, the need to change will not appear to be convincing and the costs of doing so will appear too great. As a result, the United States will face increasing operational vulnerability and hence increasing strategic risk due to the eroding credibility of extended deterrence and reassurance.