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Asia, overall, is a major long-term success story for US foreign policy. This is not the Ukraine, Libya, Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan. No wars are taking place in Asia. Rapid economic growth began in Asia during the 1970s and Asia has witnessed the greatest increase in wealth, for the largest number of people, in the shortest time, in the history of mankind. Terrorism has largely been contained. Even though there has been some regression, more Asians live in democracies than we would have thought possible a few decades ago. What we need now is a strategy for dealing with the more complex world generated by success in Asia.

Because Asia has been on a positive trajectory for the last thirty-five years the natural temptation is to forget about it, focusing on today's hot spots while ignoring the coming challenges that a rising Asia will pose for U.S. policy. A steady American devotion of moderate military, economic, and diplomatic resources to Asia now may allow us to avoid major tensions and even conflict in the future. Steady attention to all of Asia now, from India around to Korea and all the way down under to Australia and New Zealand, will give us a better chance of integrating two rising, major powers (China and India) into a peaceful and prosperous structure similar to the one we have maintained since the end of World War II.

The last time the world faced the task of integrating two major powers into the international system, statecraft failed miserably. Two world wars resulted from a failure to either include or deter Germany and Imperial Japan when they became more powerful at the dawn of the 20th century. China and India are emerging as part of a multi-polar Asian balance of power. The job of the next generation of soldiers, diplomats, legislators, business leaders, and policy intellectuals is to ensure that 21st century history will not repeat the follies of the 20th century. The mantle of leadership that fell on the United States on the 7th of December 1941 cannot now be abandoned without disastrous consequences. The United States, along with its allies, must convince China and India that they each have more to gain through collective moderation than through nationalist revisionism. This must involve both diplomacy and deterrence, both carrots and sticks, and it can only work if there is steady leadership from Washington that will

resist the temptation of leaving Asia's problems to another day and thereby allowing them to fester until they become insolvable.

The Challenges

All emerging power-holders bring to the international system a sense of entitlement and a desire to change things rapidly in their favor. They have never been so powerful before, and like all newcomers they dream that the future belongs to them. From time to time, political challenges at home may prompt these emerging powers to adopt uncompromising nationalistic stances abroad, especially in disputes where the physical stakes are small but are defined in the emotional terms of national identity. While rising powers demand more space, established powers are reluctant to yield appropriate portions of power and prestige to the newcomers. Just when the international system most needs a burst of creativity, inertia remains the predictable norm.

What we are witnessing in Asia is the rise of two new powers, China and India. Inevitably they will increase their defense budgets very substantially, and this will certainly compel the established powers such as Japan, Korea, the Southeast Asian countries, and the United States to increase their deployments in response. The question is how to slow the upward spiral and still deter the emerging power-holders from taking actions over questions of identity that may drag the entire system into conflict? Can we not find a new way of increasing the stature of the emerging powers in ways that will ensure peace rather than threaten it?

A Strategy

A new paradigm is necessary to channel the inevitable tensions that will be generated by much larger and more powerful air and naval forces. What I am suggesting is creating of an Asia Pacific Council consisting exclusively of the Big Four (China, India, Japan, and the U.S.). Since the late 1980s, Asia has witnessed the creation of one multi-lateral organization after another: APEC, ARF, EAS to cite just a few. Almost all of these concern themselves primarily with trade and economic integration while avoiding the critical questions that actually bedevil

the international system in Asia - questions of territory and national identity. Each existing organization contains too many actors. Rather than creating another talk shop, the purpose of an Asia Pacific Council is to have a powerful group that can be convened informally whenever there is a security crisis. Only a small group can constrain a crisis, by removing any ambiguities about where the major powers stand and by putting major leaders in the same room. Rather than seeking paper resolutions, the Asia-Pacific Council would be an emergency response mechanism for preventing the escalation of local conflict situations and for the maintaining constant contact at the foreign minister level. An Asia Pacific Council may be necessary to calm the roiling waters by involving the major naval powers of Asia and the Pacific in an elevated process of crisis prevention through rapid communication and interaction whenever a crisis is brewing in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, or elsewhere. Creating the diplomatic equivalent of a quadripartite hot line would restrain powers from undertaking unilateral actions because of the inevitability of a concerted challenge to unilateral measures by the other members of the Big Four. The purpose of an Asia Pacific Council would be to recognize the rising status of China and India and to reward them with an involvement in 21st century rule making that would be both real and exclusive. Rather than just calling for rules-based conflict avoidance, the United States should take the lead in sitting down with the leading air and naval powers of the Asia-Pacific to devise rules for precluding conflict and for streamlining arbitration procedures.

In the meantime, the U.S., as the primary established power, must maintain a meaningful forward military presence and continue to engage in steady diplomatic efforts to preserve and promote a stable security framework as well as a system of international trade in which both Asians and Americans have prospered. Again the problem will be to convince the emerging powers that their long-term benefits will be maximized by actively participating in a modified international architecture that recognizes their emerging status while maintaining peace and prosperity throughout Asia and the Pacific.

The Rebalance to Asia must be multi-faceted and involve all of Asia rather than just a concern for China. Sending Marines to Darwin, rotating air and naval

assets through the Philippines and home porting naval vessels in Singapore only makes sense if there is an equal emphasis on creating a new economic infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific. A Rebalance to Asia that does not have new military and economic resources will be dismissed as public relations puffery rather than a strategy. Likewise a Rebalance to Asia that does not involve India will be dismissed as just a new name for containing China.

U.S.

Not only must the United States remain the preeminent naval and air power in Asia but it must be perceived to be so. An inevitable by-product of the growth of both China and India will be a narrative about “America in decline.” This story is an old one. “Soviet superiority” now seems an odd phrase. Likewise, the statement, “The Cold War is over and Japan won,” is more amusing than accurate. Nonetheless we are looking toward a multi-polar balance of power in Asia. This is why the US should take a leading role actively bringing the new powers to the high table of international politics by taking an active role in designing new trade and security structures. Continuing to be the major force in international affairs is not compatible with the currently envisioned force cuts. Regardless of what we say, Asian nations, be they friend or foe, will judge U.S. intentions by its capabilities and accept or reject U.S. leadership as a consequence. If we make “we can’t do everything, everywhere” our public mantra, our intentions will be tested everywhere to determine the exact limits of what we mean.

Japan

Japan is the most important ally of the United States in Asia. Hence the United States retains a critical interest in Japan’s economy and national security policies. The current prime minister of Japan is unusual in that he will be prime minister for at least four years rather than just for a year like his immediate predecessors. Prime Minister Abe’s first priority is to reform the Japanese economy by transferring the high productivity of the export manufacturing sector into the service and agricultural sectors. Joining the U.S. in the Trans Pacific Partnership can provide a motive for accomplishing domestic economic reforms that have been long overdue in Japan. Prime Minister Abe’s desire to remove

some of the restrictions that the U.S. imposed on Japan during the constitution writing process nearly seventy years ago is understandable but political realities within his own coalition will naturally limit this process. Japan's military posture has changed and its defense budget is rising. The changes taking place in Japan are profoundly unsettling to China and Korea but Japan perceives its altered stance as having been forced upon it by the unsettling behaviors of China. This is a classic security dilemma that can only be cured by a combination of deterrence and increased diplomatic activity. Silence is the worst option.

China

China has risen, and fulfilling Napoleon Bonaparte's prophecy, it is shaking the world. It is already a massive economic power and well on its way to becoming a military power capable of projecting its influence well beyond its coastal areas. Like all rising powers it dreams have yet to be fully tempered by the cold water of reality. In the future China's growth will slow because growth always slows with economic maturation. In addition China will need to adapt to a future in which the United States will become more active in constraining China's assertiveness toward traditional U.S. friends and allies. The easy part of China's rise is now over and the question is whether the next, more economically difficult phases, will be managed with the astuteness of a Deng or the petulance of a Mao? General Secretary Xi Jinping seems to fall somewhere in between. Xi has taken full control of the party and the military and has set forth an anti-corruption campaign aimed at restoring the moral legitimacy of the Communist Party while conveniently humbling his political opponents. In foreign policy he has adopted a distinctively more assertive policy toward Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. His China dream is a revisionist one, and the fundamental questions remain: how much risk he feels he must take to maintain his domestic support base and how much risk to the international system his strategy will entail?

U.S. clarity can ensure that China will understand: 1) that the U.S. does not accept Chinese sovereignty over the South China Sea; 2) that the U.S. sides with Japan on the relationship of the U.S.-Japan Security Arrangement to the Senkaku/Diaoyu controversy; 3) that if provoked the U.S. will match Chinese

military assertiveness by increasing its military presence in Australia, the Philippines, and Singapore, as well as providing increased diplomatic support for Vietnam; 4) that any use of force regarding Taiwan continues to be unacceptable and that any moves in this direction will increase rather than decrease arms sales to Taiwan. Reiteration of these “red lines” through normal diplomatic channels remains important, even when reiteration is met with blunt rejection. Verbal assertion of freedom of navigation remains insufficient. U.S. naval and air presence in the South China Sea and the East China Sea must be maintained or increased. Chinese policy makers can determine by their own actions whether they will have a smooth or a rough relationship with the U.S. but the U.S. must remain ready to respond accordingly. Rather than trying single-handedly to contain China, we need to build an Asia wide strategy to convince China (under a variety of leaders) that it is better to play in a peaceful and cooperative sandbox than it is to create incidents and to practice raw mercantilism toward the outside world.

India

As Henry Kissinger recently remarked, China, Japan, and India are each currently led by unusually strong and assertive leaders. For decades India remained off the U.S. policy radar screen during the Cold War, but since the mid-1990s India and the United States have moved, slowly but steadily closer to one another. A strong India, working in tandem with the United States, could be a powerful source of moderation, especially with regard to the maritime disputes plaguing East and Southeast Asia. India’s greatest strength lies in its democratic system which contains a set of stable procedures for replacing parties and leaders. Although Indian democracy is messy, it is inherently stable. Policies do not move in autocratically straight lines but the system of government contains the safety valves that are necessary for Indian society to continue to move forward toward rapid economic development. Defense expenditures always rise with rapid economic growth, and India will be no exception. U.S. policy should seek to influence rather than to direct India. India, as a rising power, will have its own dreams. By bringing India to the high table of international politics, alongside China, Japan, and the U.S., India’s prestige and influence will be

increased as it joins the Big Four Asia-Pacific naval and air powers. To make this relationship work the United States must put as much effort into U.S.-India relations as it does currently into U.S.-China and U.S.-Japan relations. Rather than resist the expiration of the brief uni-polar world of the immediate post-Cold War era, the United States must learn to play nimbly in a four-sided diplomatic game to ensure peace and stability in a new and more prosperous and powerful Asia.