

# Rebalancing What, Exactly? Analysing the United States' Pacific Pivot <sup>1</sup>

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Thus far, the US 'rebalance' to Asia is more like a slogan than a concrete strategic plan.<sup>2</sup>

A near neighbour is better than a distant cousin.<sup>3</sup>

Nearly six years into Obama's presidency, America has failed to back up its rhetoric while tensions in Asia have become higher and higher.<sup>4</sup>

## Introduction

Ever since the US announced a strategic rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region, debate on its value has excited a substantial global following. In a conversation in which semantics matter, the bulk of academic literature measures rebalancing activity in absolute terms.<sup>5</sup> This article attempts a different strategy: judging the value of US efforts relative to those it has made elsewhere in the world and, perhaps more importantly, relative to those of China in the region.

It will argue that regardless of the wealth of evidence that can be and has been used to demonstrate US intent, the Asia-Pacific region appears to be of limited real importance to the current Administration. Furthermore, it will argue that the gains which have been made through US strategic activity in the region are generally counter-balanced by those of the Chinese—arguably the US' target in creating its strategy in the first place.

Thus, while acknowledging that measurable activity is evident in all six aspects of the rebalancing strategy announced by then Secretary of State Clinton in 2011,<sup>6</sup> it will conclude that—when measured in terms relative to US efforts elsewhere and China's counter-balancing efforts in the region—the strategy is a failing concept, ridden with strategic risk. In terms of methodology, the strategy will be analysed through the diplomatic, economic and military lenses of the 'DIME' construct.<sup>7</sup> US activity since 2011 in each of these areas will be compared with its efforts elsewhere in the world, and then with China's own activity within the Asia-Pacific region.

## The rebalancing strategy

Following Clinton's call for the US to 'pivot to new global realities through increased engagement in East Asia', President Obama announced a turning of 'attention to the vast potential of the Asia-Pacific region ... to play a larger and longer-term role and to advance security, prosperity and human dignity'.<sup>8</sup> The pivot's premise was apparently primarily economic, the region being the US' principal destination for exports and a substantial home for US foreign direct investment. The contention was that 'the lion's share of the political and economic history of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be written in the Asia-Pacific region'.<sup>9</sup>

The rebalancing contained six sub-strategies: the deepening of working relationships with emerging powers; engagement with regional multilateral institutions; expansion of trade and investment; advancing of democracy and human rights; strengthening of bilateral security alliances; and development of a broad-based military presence.<sup>10</sup> Described by proponents as a 'low-cost, durable, fundamentally sound, and strategic policy based on the national interests of the US', its most difficult aspect, however, has been the maintenance of cordial relations between the US and China.<sup>11</sup> At most risk is the balance of regional power.

Indeed, the rebalancing is largely viewed, especially by China, as a means by which the US proposes to maintain its regional hegemony in the light of China's rising influence and assertion in its immediate periphery. Suggestive of an inability to focus its attention on more than one region at once, Michael Mazza contends that the 'pivot is beset by a problem of perception'.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the 'pivot' became a 'rebalancing',

and even a 'reinvigoration'.<sup>13</sup> With the US beset by a range of simultaneous crises and financial challenges, the strategy's sustainability has even been questioned within the US Administration itself. In March 2014, for example, Assistant Secretary of Defense McFarland said that 'owing to budgetary constraints, right now the pivot is being looked at again because, candidly, it can't happen'.<sup>14</sup>

The eyes of the region are therefore firmly on the US to energise its strategy and demonstrate its capacity. The consequences of not doing so could be catastrophic for US hegemony. Indeed, if the strategy was designed to counter China's rise in the region, it might already be said to have failed.

### ***Diplomacy***

The deepening by the US, since 2011, of working relationships with emerging regional powers has been evident through a range of both bilateral and multilateral engagements. The US has established standing 'Strategic Security and Economic Dialogues' with China, improved relations with India, Indonesia and Vietnam, enhanced its partnerships with New Zealand and Singapore, and signed a series of defence cooperation agreements in the region.<sup>15</sup>

Engagement has also increased with Asia-Pacific multilateral institutions. The US has become the first non-member to open a permanent mission to ASEAN. It has also joined the East Asia Summit and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus mechanism, and has participated in the annual Pacific Island Forum.<sup>16</sup> Importantly, US Government rhetoric has consistently sought to downplay suggestions of a struggle for regional hegemony, however it may appear from China's perspective.

Analysis of the movements of key leaders, though, demonstrates the region's low priority in comparison to others. When appointed Secretary of State in January 2013, for instance, John Kerry's inaugural trip was to Europe and the Middle East.<sup>17</sup> Since January 2014, he has travelled overseas on 35 occasions, visiting East Asia just three times, Southeast Asia twice and Oceania once. He has been to Paris 11 times in the same period.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, since 2009 and up to March 2015, analysis of President Obama's overseas travel demonstrates that of eight countries visited more than twice in total, the only Asia-Pacific nations among them were Japan (three visits) and South Korea (four).<sup>19</sup> Although Presidents Xi and Obama have met five times, the relationship has been described by US aides as 'not close', contrasting with Xi's other major-power relationship with Russia's President Putin.<sup>20</sup> In addition, President Obama's annual speeches over the past four years to the UN General Assembly have lacked any particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>21</sup>

A recent study on the plethora of bilateral and multilateral international security agreements made by the US commented that 'the smaller number of agreements signed by PACOM nations [those within the geographical area of responsibility of US Pacific Command, encompassing East Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania] is surprising given the strong US commitment to countries in this region'.<sup>22</sup> Of the US' top ten partners, only one is from the region (Japan). And despite agreements with Asia-Pacific nations being on the rise, so too are agreements with nations covered by the US military's European and Central Commands.

In a shift that has major ramifications for the Asia-Pacific region, as well as for future US-China relations, 'China has [conversely] moved from a focus on "great power" diplomacy ... to prioritizing "neighbourhood diplomacy"'.<sup>23</sup> Its declared foreign policy priority has become the development of economic, cultural and security ties with its Asian neighbours, in particular 'advancing the Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road', China's vision for regional integration and a 'community of common destiny'.<sup>24</sup> Otherwise termed 'One Belt, One Road', this has been seen as representing China's own Asia pivot.<sup>25</sup>

Like the US, China has also used regional multilateral organisations to advance its strategic diplomatic goals. The two it increasingly favours are those within which it has most influence, namely the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.<sup>26</sup> At the latter, for example, President Xi proposed a 'new regional security cooperation architecture... [involving] a new Beijing-led security mechanism to replace the current US-centered alliance structure'.<sup>27</sup> China has also developed the Boao Forum for Asia into an important event in the regional geopolitical calendar, with President Xi opening it in 2015 with a speech advocating 'a community of common destiny

and a new future for Asia'.<sup>28</sup> Finally, trilateral discussion between Russia, China and India continues to be seen as important.<sup>29</sup>

Despite plenty of evidence of increased US diplomatic engagement in the Asia-Pacific region since 2011, its efforts cannot be described as uniquely focused. Its status as a global hegemon has increasingly diverted its attention elsewhere, not least with the competing priorities represented by a resurgent Russia and the rise of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Conversely, China's foreign policy has become increasingly attuned to its immediate region. Seeking to develop its role within existing forums and multilateral organisations, it has increasingly sought to advance its partnerships in the region, establishing new mechanisms for the encouragement of debate.

### ***Trade and investment***

The expansion of trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region is a key goal of the US rebalancing strategy. Negotiations remain ongoing, however, on the region's single most important project: the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which excludes China.<sup>30</sup> The partnership is likely to assist US allies to reform and strengthen their economies, while allowing signatories to 'diversify their economic relationships, becoming less dependent on an unpredictable China'.<sup>31</sup> Successful conclusion of a comprehensive agreement could also boost US income by \$77 billion annually.<sup>32</sup> If objections from the US Congress continue to stall progress, however, the collapse of talks could 'compound the narrative of US dysfunction ... and make it easier for China to push its own trade arrangements in ways that exclude the US'.<sup>33</sup>

Taking place concurrently with negotiations to finalise arrangements for the Trans-Pacific Partnership are talks between the US and the EU on establishing a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.<sup>34</sup> Although these, too, appear to be faltering, considerable effort is being made both sides of the Atlantic to conclude an agreement.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, it should be noted that the Trans-Pacific Partnership itself has a much more substantial membership within the Americas than it does in continental Asia. Of the 12 negotiating nations, only five are from Asia: Japan, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam. It is also worth noting that the US announced its intention to participate two years prior to announcing its rebalancing strategy.<sup>36</sup>

Concurrently, China is negotiating another Asia-focused trade agreement with a more substantial group of nations: the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, during the November 2014 APEC meeting, China proposed 'the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific ... [which would be] a Chinese alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership'.<sup>38</sup>

China is also continuing to pursue its Silk Road infrastructure fund initiative with central Asian economies and has been instrumental in leading a New Development Bank (known colloquially as the BRICS bank) and, most recently, development of an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.<sup>39</sup> China has proposed the latter as an alternative to the US/Japan-dominated Asian Development Bank, aimed at meeting what it sees as a substantial gap in infrastructure funding. At risk, however, is the emergence of 'two blocs of economic influence in Asia: one led by China and the other by the US and Japan'.<sup>40</sup>

Despite having a greater level of ambition than the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership has fewer Asian members and is, in any case, being stalled by Congressional refusal to grant President Obama the authority needed to negotiate trade promotion. With few Asian nations currently negotiating membership, it is in any case difficult to see how this project could indeed be considered the linchpin of a seeming hollow rebalancing strategy, especially when set against the efforts China is making to encourage trade and investment in the region.

### ***Military adventurism***

Examples of tangible US-led military developments in the Asia-Pacific region are many. They include investment in port facilities in Guam, Japan and South Korea; a new defence pact with The Philippines, allowing the US to deploy troops and equipment on local bases; a memorandum of understanding on defence cooperation with Vietnam; joint military exercises with Japan, focusing on island defence; expanded war games with South Korea; an agreement with Singapore, allowing for US Navy deployment of littoral combat ships; and the signing of an agreement with Australia to forward-deploy a US Marine Air-Ground Task Force in Darwin, to be fully operational by 2016.<sup>41</sup>

US Navy Chief, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, spoke recently of the future redeployment of forces, contending that the pivot was central to the decision to ‘increase the presence of the US Navy’s fleet in the Asia-Pacific from 50 to 60 per cent by 2020’, as well as 60 per cent of the US Air Force’s overseas-based forces.<sup>42</sup> And new Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, recently returned from Japan and South Korea, reasserted that ‘the Pacific remains “the defining region” for America’s future, despite the ongoing challenges in the Arabian Gulf and European regions’.<sup>43</sup> Emphasising the acquisition of new technologies consistent with the doctrine of Air-Sea Battle—such as the long-range strike bomber and new anti-ship cruise missiles, and the importance of keeping the F-35 program on track—Carter also unveiled proposals for a new trilateral information-sharing arrangement between the US, Japan and South Korea.<sup>44</sup>

Balancing this, however, is the deployment of additional US resources under Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE to Eastern Europe, a return on combat missions to Iraq and commencement of them in Syria, additional support for capacity-building in Iraq, retention of more substantial troop numbers than planned in Afghanistan, and a requirement to assist in tackling Ebola in West Africa.<sup>45</sup> Assurances that 60 per cent of the Navy would rebalance to the Pacific belies the fact that many would be littoral combat ships and that the Pacific Fleet is liable to provide assets for operations in the Persian Gulf.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile, China maintains unabated ‘substantial procurement programmes across the services’ and a continuation of annual double-digit growth in defence expenditure.<sup>47</sup> In particular, ‘the PLA [People’s Liberation Army] is undertaking mass production of destroyers, frigates and corvettes to build a navy sufficient in numbers to patrol its near seas and project power into the Pacific and Indian Oceans’.<sup>48</sup> Following increased participation in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and a couple of non-combatant evacuation operations, Shannon Tiezzi contends that ‘China is making its case that a global military presence is beneficial for the world’.<sup>49</sup>

In terms of regional alliances, China hosted two major exercises with Shanghai Cooperation Organisation partners in 2014, namely *Peace Mission-2014* in Inner Mongolia, which was the largest joint and multinational land exercise since 2005; and *Joint Sea-2014* with Russia, taking place in the disputed East China Sea.<sup>50</sup> In addition, its modernisation program is paying economic dividends in that China replaced Germany as the third-largest arms exporter from 2010 to 2014, being previously ranked ninth.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, although it is in the military sphere that US rebalancing is most evident, conflicting priorities elsewhere have had at least as much weight. And much of its proposed future activity is reversible under a change of administration. When compared to China’s military modernisation in the region, US rhetoric may ultimately be insufficient to persuade wavering Asia-Pacific nations to remain aligned.

## Conclusion

Although there is plenty of tangible evidence of activity commensurate with the US desire to demonstrate strategic effectiveness in the Asia-Pacific region, its attention has been clearly diverted elsewhere. As demonstrated within this article, it is measurement of the US’ relative efforts that matter.

This shows comprehensively that it has delivered at least as much breadth to its relationships outside the Asia-Pacific region as it has within it. And when contrasted with China’s own efforts in the region, which have also been both tangible and substantial, there is considerable danger that if its rhetoric is not matched by reality, the US will soon find its regional hegemony usurped.

Of particular interest in analysing China’s own pivot to its immediate region is that it is increasingly ‘placing relatively less of a premium on keeping the US-China relationship steady at all costs’.<sup>52</sup> Certainly, when viewed in relative terms, China’s pivot appears much more substantial than that of the US—and its ‘shift to a more active leadership role is clearly on display... a change of attitude [that] is positive, and one that needs to be encouraged’.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, with increasing assertiveness in Chinese foreign policy, it has been argued that ‘if the pivot’s purpose was to dissuade Chinese aggression by proving American staying power, it failed’.<sup>54</sup>

A more realist interpretation of the situation under a new US Administration could lead to a raising of the strategic stakes between China and the US, and draw other nations to a point where they may feel they have to make a choice.<sup>55</sup> Although conflict is possible if relations are mismanaged, especially ‘if leaders in Washington and Beijing indiscriminately cast China and the US as tragic actors condemned to re-enact the

Peloponnesian War', there is actually much potential for accommodation of both US and Chinese interests in the region.<sup>56</sup>

Whatever its next approach, the US needs to deliver on its strategy in a way that is credible to allies and partners in the region but also avoids the trap of making China the target, as opposed to the central component, of its policy. As it stands, its strategy is not convincing.

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## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> This is an edited version of an essay, with the same title, submitted by the author while attending the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies at the Australian Defence College in 2015.
  - <sup>2</sup> Yasuhiro Matsuda, 'How to Understand China's Assertiveness since 2009: hypotheses and policy implications', CSIS [Center for Strategic and International Studies] [website], April 2014, p. 15, available at <[http://csis.org/files/publication/140422\\_Matsuda\\_ChinasAssertiveness.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140422_Matsuda_ChinasAssertiveness.pdf)> accessed 12 March 2015.
  - <sup>3</sup> Taken from a recent op-ed in *Xinhua*, explaining China's diplomatic priorities: see Shannon Tiezzi, 'How China Seeks to Shape its Neighbourhood', *The Diplomat* [website], 10 April 2015, available at <<http://thediplomat.com/2015/04/how-china-seeks-to-shape-its-neighborhood/>> accessed 20 April 2015.

- 4 Zihao Liu, 'Pivot to Asia is Defunct', *The Diplomat* [website], 18 December 2014, available at <<http://diplomacist.org/articles/2014/12/11/pivot-to-asia-in-defunct>> accessed 21 April 2015.
- 5 Michael Mazza, 'US in the Asia-Pacific: toward a more effective Asia strategy', *American Enterprise Institute* [website], 30 January 2015, available at <<http://www.aei.org/publication/u-s-asia-pacific-towards-effective-asia-strategy/>> accessed 20 April 2015.
- 6 Hillary Clinton, 'America's Pacific Century', *Foreign Policy*, 11 October 2011, p. 1.
- 7 An analytical construct related to the levers of national power: diplomatic, identity, military and economic.
- 8 Clinton, 'America's Pacific Century', p. 1. President Obama, 'Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament', Canberra, 17 November 2011, *White House* [website], available at <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>> accessed 20 October 2015.
- 9 Kurt Campbell and Brian Andrews, 'Explaining the US Pivot to Asia', *Chatham House* [website], August 2013, p. 2, available at <[https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Americas/0813pp\\_pivottoasia.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Americas/0813pp_pivottoasia.pdf)> accessed 20 October 2015.
- 10 Amitai Etzioni, 'The US Retreat from the Middle East and Pivot to the Far East is likely to Intensify', *Defense and Security Analysis*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 2014, p. 305, abstract available at <<http://www.herzliyaconference.org/eng/?CategoryID=513&ArticleID=2536>> accessed 20 October 2015.
- 11 Scott W. Harold, 'Is the Pivot Doomed? The Resilience of America's Strategic Rebalance', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4, p. 86; also International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), *2014 Strategic Survey: the annual review of world affairs*, Routledge: London, 2014, pp. 75-9.
- 12 Mazza, 'US in the Asia-Pacific'.
- 13 Etzioni, 'The US Retreat from the Middle East and Pivot to the Far East is likely to Intensify', p. 306; also Fred Dewes, 'Pivot, Rebalance or Reinvigorate? Words Matter in US Strategy toward Asia', *Brookings* [website], 21 April 2014, available at <<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/brookings-now/posts/2014/04/pivot-rebalance-reinvigorate-words-matter-us-strategy-toward-asia>> accessed 12 March 2015.
- 14 Harold, 'Is the Pivot Doomed? The Resilience of America's Strategic Rebalance', p. 85; also Zachary Fayer-Biggs, 'DOD Official: Asia pivot can't happen due to budget pressures', *Defense News*, 4 March 2014.
- 15 IISS, *2014 Strategic Survey*, pp. 75-9; also Campbell and Andrews, 'Explaining the US Pivot to Asia', p. 4.
- 16 Campbell and Andrews, 'Explaining the US Pivot to Asia', p. 5.
- 17 *Time*, 'Secretary of State John Kerry's First Overseas Trip', *Time* [website], 28 February 2013, available at <<http://swampland.time.com/2013/02/28/secretary-of-state-john-kerrys-first-overseas-trip/>> accessed 18 March 2015.
- 18 Extracted from *US State Department* [website], available at <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/travel/>> accessed 21 April 2015.
- 19 Analysis derived from Wikipedia, 'List of Presidential Trips Made by Barack Obama', *Wikipedia* [website], available at <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_presidential\\_trips\\_made\\_by\\_Barack\\_Obama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_presidential_trips_made_by_Barack_Obama)> accessed 20 October 2015.
- 20 Evan Osnos, 'Born Red: how Xi Jinping ... became China's most authoritarian leader since Mao', *The New Yorker* [website], 6 April 2015, p. 19, available at <<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/04/06/born-red>> accessed 20 October 2015; President Xi met Russian President Putin seven times between March 2013 and September 2014 alone. Relations are said to be at an all-time high, even if China has not offered positive support in favour of Russia's Ukraine strategy: see Yu Bin, 'China-Russia Relations: navigating through the Ukraine storm', *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 16, No. 2, September 2014, pp. 123-41, available at <<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lang=en&id=185570>> accessed 20 October 2015.
- 21 See, for example, President Obama, 'Remarks by President Obama in Address to the United Nations General Assembly', 24 September 2013, *White House* [website], available at <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/24/remarks-president-obama-address-united-nations-general-assembly>> accessed 15 April 2015.
- 22 Jennifer Kavanagh, *US Security-Related Agreements in Force since 1955*, RAND: Santa Monica, 2015, p. 6.
- 23 Tiezzi, 'How China Seeks to Shape its Neighbourhood'.
- 24 Tiezzi, 'How China Seeks to Shape its Neighbourhood', p. 2.

- 25 Zheng Wang, 'China's Alternative Diplomacy', *The Diplomat* [website], 30 January 2015, available at <<http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/chinas-alternative-diplomacy/>> accessed 20 April 2015.
- 26 The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia was formed in 1999 with 15 member states. Participants and observers now account for the majority of Asian nations from across the continent. China is in the chair from 2014 to 2016. The US has observer status.
- 27 President Xi called on Asian countries to pursue 'common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security based on peace, development and win-win cooperation': see Richard Weitz, 'Beijing Expands its Multinational Toolkit at CICA Summit', *The Jamestown Foundation* [website], 31 July 2014, available at <[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=42692&cHash=e741793745f90ba42e06c9f4f9e1e886#.VTVu2SGqkq](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42692&cHash=e741793745f90ba42e06c9f4f9e1e886#.VTVu2SGqkq)> accessed 20 April 2015.
- 28 The Boao Forum for Asia is a non-profit forum modelled on the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and attended by a range of world leaders (15 in 2015); see also the speech by President Xi Jinping to the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2015, 28 March 2015, available at <[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/topics\\_665678/boao\\_665692/t1029405.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/boao_665692/t1029405.shtml)> accessed 20 April 2015.
- 29 Bin, 'China-Russia Relations', pp. 123-41.
- 30 Editor's note: this article pre-dated broad-ranging agreement reached on the Trans-Pacific Partnership in early October 2015: see, for example, Krista Hughes and Kevin Krolicki, 'Officials Reach Deal on Trans-Pacific Partnership', *Huffington Post* [website], 5 October 2015, available at <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/tpp-deal-reached\\_561267dae4b0dd85030c7933](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/tpp-deal-reached_561267dae4b0dd85030c7933)> accessed 20 October 2015.
- 31 Michael A. Levi, 'China will React with Displeasure if America tries to Weaponise Trade', *Council on Foreign Relations* [website], available at <<http://www.cfr.org/china/china-react-displeasure-if-america-tries-weaponise-trade/p36433>> accessed 13 April 2015.
- 32 Peter Petri, Michael Plummer and Fan Zhai, 'The TPP, China and the FTAAP: the case for convergence', *New Directions in Asia-Pacific Integration*, East-West Center: Honolulu, 2014, abstract available at <[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2438725](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2438725)> accessed 20 October 2015.
- 33 Joshua Meltzer, 'Pass Trade Promotion Authority and enable conclusion of the TPP Negotiations', *Brookings* [website], 9 April 2015, available at <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2015/04/09-trade-promotion-authority-trans-pacific-partnership-negotiations-meltzer>> accessed 9 April 2015; also Levi, 'China will React with Displeasure if America tries to Weaponise Trade', p. 1.
- 34 *The Economist*, 'Ships that pass in the Night', *Economist* [website], 13 December 2014, available at <<http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21636061-trade-deal-america-would-be-good-everybody-yet-it-still-may-not-happen-ships-pass>> accessed 20 April 2015.
- 35 See European Commission and US Government trade websites: <<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>> and <<https://ustr.gov/ttip>>
- 36 US Government, 'Overview of the Trans-Pacific Partnership', *Office of the US Trade Representative* [website], available at <<https://ustr.gov/tpp/overview-of-the-TPP>> accessed 4 May 2015.
- 37 This group includes all ASEAN nations, plus Japan, ROK, Australia, New Zealand and India. Significantly, it excludes the US: see Meltzer, 'Pass Trade Promotion Authority and enable conclusion of the TPP Negotiations', p. 5.
- 38 Wang, 'China's Alternative Diplomacy'.
- 39 Paola Subacchi, 'The AIIB is a Threat to Global Economic Governance', *Foreign Policy*, 31 March 2015, p. 4, available at <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/31/the-aiib-is-a-threat-to-global-economic-governance-china/>> accessed 20 April 2015.
- 40 Subacchi, 'The AIIB is a Threat to Global Economic Governance'.
- 41 US Secretary of Defense Speech, 'Remarks on the Next Phase of the US Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific', McCain Institute, Arizona State University, 6 April 2015, available at <<http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1929>> accessed 20 April 2015. Note, though, that recent talks between Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and Japanese counterparts sidestepped a substantial looming issue in that the newly-elected Okinawan governor is opposed to the US base relocation plan on the island: see Euan Graham, 'Ashton Carter's Northeast Asia visit looks south', *Lowy Interpreter* [website], 13 April 2015, available at <<http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2015/04/13/Ashton-Carters-Northeast-Asia-visit-looks-south.aspx?COLLCC=4116900588&>> accessed 15 April 2015; and Vince Scappatura, 'The US Pivot to Asia, the Chinese Specter and the Australian-American Alliance', *The Asia-Pacific*

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- Journal*, Vol. 11, Issue 36, No. 3, 9 September 2014, p. 1, available at <<http://japanfocus.org/-Vince-Scappatura/4178/article.html>> accessed 20 October 2015.
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- 43 Mehta, 'SecDef Carter reasserts US Pacific Vision'.
- 44 In the light of China's development of capabilities associated with the denial of operational access, the Air-Sea Battle concept is discerned by many to have a 'counter-China' emphasis, encouraged by the many briefings and writings that predominantly identify China as the rationale for Air-Sea Battle. Such writings include that by David C. Gompert, 'Responding to China's Anti-Access Strategy', available at <[http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Gompert\\_Testimony1.30.14.pdf](http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Gompert_Testimony1.30.14.pdf)> accessed 20 October 2015, and Richard A. Bitzinger, 'The Challenge of Strategic Ambiguity in Asia', *RSIS Commentary*, No. 48/2014, 13 March 2014, p. 2.
- 45 Part of the US' European Reassurance Initiative, containing a number of substantial confidence-building measures: see US Government, 'European Reassurance Initiative and Other US Efforts in Support of NATO Allies and Partners', *White House* [website], 3 June 2014, available at <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/03/fact-sheet-european-reassurance-initiative-and-other-us-efforts-support->> accessed 15 April 2015.
- 46 IISS, *The Military Balance*, Routledge: London, 2015, pp. 30-2.
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