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US Asia-Pacific Strategy: Engagement or Containment?

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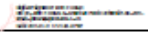
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US ASIA-PACIFIC STRATEGY: ENGAGEMENT OR CONTAINMENT?

A Master Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

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by

David Joseph Hernandez

In Partial Fulfillment of the

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of

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my fiancé Lauren, to my parents, and to my best friend James. Their confidence in my abilities and their help in reminding me to keep a balanced life were instrumental to completing this project.

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I wish to thank Dr. Vincent Lindenmeyer for his steadfast guidance, assistance and most of all, patience in the development of not only this thesis, but also helping me develop a topic to research and analyze.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

US ASIA-PACIFIC STRATEGY: ENGAGEMENT OR CONTAINMENT?

by

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American Public University System, February 2015

Charles Town, West Virginia

Dr. Vincent Lindenmeyer, Thesis Professor

The purpose of this research paper was to make a comparative analysis of the current US Asia-Pacific strategy versus the Cold War strategy in terms of US military capability, diplomacy, and economics. At the present, US strategy towards China appears as containment. A qualitative analysis was selected as the primary method of research. The analysis examined several government documents including the National Security Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review, and peer reviewed studies regarding current US-China relations. Investigation was

necessary for assessing the extent of the current strategy of containment versus engagement. The findings showed US military posture and capability toward China indicates engagement with lesser lines of effort toward containment. Also, diplomatic and economic stance reflected a desire to open up avenues for financial gain while still maintaining security in Asia-Pacific via Japan and the Philippines. Simply, the overall US stance toward China is engagement based on economic interdependency. Nevertheless, elements of containment remain in the form of necessity for the US military to ensure it still has the ability to defend itself and regional allies.

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I. Introduction

In 2011, the Obama administration announced that the US would “re-balance” its focus to the Pacific.¹ This shift in foreign policy was termed “the Pacific Pivot.”² According to Mark Manyin’s “Pivot to the Pacific?,” there was no major difference between the US policy prior to the “Pivot” as the Bush administration was already engaged and maintaining relationships with nations in the region.³ However, the features of the Obama administration policy include: “new military priorities and deployments...a more integrated and region-wide approach to Asia (diplomatic, economic, and military means),” and “inclusion of coastal areas South Asia” due to high volumes of transiting trade-traffic.⁴ This can be translated to an effort to show the public overt postures of military forces in the region. It also indicates a statement that the Obama administration intends to incorporate all instruments of national power in its new focus in Asia-Pacific.

After the US spent over a decade involved in the combat action of Afghanistan and continuously unstable Iraq, a shift to the Pacific region is a welcomed change of pace not only for the American people, but the US military. Yet, the true reasons for such a shift might be better explained from *The Economist’s* 2012 article, “China’s Military Rise: The Dragon’s New Teeth.”⁵ *The Economist* provides indications that China is interested in two things: its military and investing in it, and being an economically strong nation.⁶ Furthermore, *The Economist*

¹ Mark E. Manyin et.al., “Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration’s “Rebalancing” Toward Asia,” *Congressional Research Service*, March 28, 2012, p.10, accessed September 6, 2014, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>

² Ibid, p.10.

³ Ibid, p.2.

⁴ Ibid, p.5.

⁵ “China’s Military Rise: The Dragon’s New Teeth,” *The Economist*, April 17, 2012, accessed December 5, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/node/21552193>.

⁶ Ibid.

estimates China's spending on defense to be "around \$160 billion."⁷ This sort of money is generated from China's economic strength where "unlike the Soviet Union, China has a vital national interest in the stability of the global economic system."⁸ The article considers this a limitation to the *dragon* as well as the weakness in its defense industry.

China is gaining ground in building a formidable navy, one of the most conspicuous hallmarks of its war machine. Yet, the *Economist* wrote that the Chinese defense industry "remains scattered, inefficient, and over-dependent on high-tech imports from Russia."⁹ This opens up speculation that China lacks organization and efficiency with respect to the defense industry. Nevertheless, China is undeterred in acquiring the goods and services needed for bolstering its surface, sub-surface, cyber, air and space components of its armed forces.

In the Cold War, the US would have made it a priority to contain China's growth and capability on all instruments of power: diplomacy, information, military, and economics. However, the relationship the US holds with present-day China is different from the one it held with the Soviet Union of the 1950s to 1980s. Nevertheless, there are still interactions between the two where it is almost implied that the US is trying to contain China. The implication is drawn from Manyin's highlights on US intentions to initiate a rotational military presence in Australia, with military visits to other countries such as Singapore and the Philippines combined with the already present US bases on Japan, Guam, and Korea.¹⁰ All of these bases are strategically located throughout the Asia-Pacific region. On a map, their locations would be ripe for trying to challenge China's military and overall national influence.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Mark E. Manyin et.al., "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia," *Congressional Research Service*, March 28, 2012, p.1,5, accessed September 6, 2014, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>.

Thus, in light of China's emerging status as a great power in military and economic strength, it should be no surprise that the US would seek to counter balance and contain its Far East competitor through diplomatic, economic, and military actions and activities.¹¹ The US traditionally works to maintain an advantage over other nations in order to be able to match any enemy that would attempt to undermine its influence as a world leader. Economics, diplomacy, and military strengths were also used to counter the Soviets in the period of 1945-1989. In the Vietnam War, the US sought to undermine and halt the Soviet influence of communism by deploying troops and material to support the struggling South Vietnamese government. Thus, when the US strategy towards China and the Soviet Union are compared, this raises the question: what of the US strategy towards China in the Pacific "pivot" is similar or different to its previous Cold War strategy for containing Russia?

While the Asia-Pacific strategy towards China is similar to the Cold War strategy of containment toward the Soviets, the two are more different than similar due to how the US approaches China in terms of military posture, diplomacy and economics. The purpose of this research paper is to make a comparative analysis of the current US Asia-Pacific strategy against the US strategy exercised during the Cold War on the basis of US military capability, diplomacy, and economics. From the outset, the diplomacy towards China is much different than that used against former Soviet Russia as President Obama's 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) states that "we [US] will encourage China to make choices that contribute to peace, security and prosperity as its influence rises."¹² The President's NSS makes an engaging invitation to China

¹¹ Ibid, p.16.

¹² Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*, White House.org, May 2010, accessed September 21, 2014, http://search.whitehouse.gov/search?affiliate=wh&query=National+Security+Strategy&form_id=usasearch_box, p.43.

that is much different than the Cold War strategy painted in Donald Langridge's paper "Was the Domino Theory Wrong? Communist Internationalism and the Vietnam War."¹³

Langridge wrote that China's participation in the Korean conflict meant that "Communists...were prepared and willing to sacrifice to ensure that Communist philosophy remained in the smaller countries of Asia."¹⁴ This plus other events, such as the perceived unfilled void in US technology and the influence of communism on smaller vulnerable nations, created such a threat to the US that an invitation to assisting in peace and stability in the Soviet's sphere of influence was out of the question. Instead it had to be met with containing the spread of communism throughout the world.¹⁵ Although China is not considered to be the threat that communism was in the Cold War as perceived by then-President Truman and the National Security Council Staff (NSC), the US strategy towards China implies one of containment in light of the US military presence and activities in the region.¹⁶ This research will determine what is different or similar of the Asia-Pacific strategy when compared to the policy of containment against the Soviets.

Traditionally, the US enjoys being the driver of world peace and stability ever since the end of World War II. In the Cold War, deployments of troops to Vietnam and their mere presence in regions all around the globe defined areas that the US would seek to prevent communist influence and domination. When the *iron curtain* came down, the US maintained a role as a primary world leader to ensure peace and stability prosper and aggression put down. It is natural that the US would continue to apply containment of any threat to freedom but unlike

¹³ Donald L. Langridge, "Was the Domino Theory Wrong? Communist Internationalism and the Vietnam War," *DTIC Online*, April 11, 1996, accessed September 21, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA309186>.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.5.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.6.

¹⁶ "NSC-68, 1950," *US Department of State: Office of the Historian*, accessed December 16, 2014, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/NSC68>.

preventing communism, the US is out to assist China as in developing into a responsible superpower. Though the current strategy leaves the impression that military containment is being applied to China, the Obama administration's engagement makes the relationship of the two nations more complex. Therefore it is worth investigating what the body of literature has to offer regarding the US's use of engagement and containment in its Asia-Pacific strategy.

II. Literature Review

At the present, the interaction between China and the US makes one believe that the US is attempting to contain China via President Obama's Pacific pivot. Specifics include overt military focus as seen in Manyin's "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia."¹⁷ Mark Manyin's work is of particular merit because of his knowledge of Asia Affairs in the Congressional Research Service (CRS).¹⁸ In regards to the Asia-Pacific strategy, he reported that "the most high-profile and concrete elements...toward the Asia-Pacific pivot have come in the military realm."¹⁹ The military elements of a foreign policy strategy aimed towards a specific region can give nations not completely friendly or hostile to the US a reason to translate such a posture as a threat. Given threat assessments that indicate China has formidable capabilities, it is only logical that the US would place more focus on the Asia-Pacific given that Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan is winding down.²⁰ However, the move to place military focus on the Asia-Pacific region is not only seen as threat

¹⁷ Mark E. Manyin et.al., "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia," *Congressional Research Service*, March 28, 2012, accessed September 6, 2014, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>, p.10.

¹⁸ "Mark E. Manyin," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed December 16, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/staff/b16408>.

¹⁹ Mark E. Manyin et.al., "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia," *Congressional Research Service*, March 28, 2012, accessed September 6, 2014, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>, p.10. .

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.15.

by China, but Manyin et.al. go so far as to cite that Chinese leadership interprets strengthening “military alliances in the region reflect a ‘Cold War mentality.’”²¹

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) military leadership might be correct in that the US is engaging with them via containment however, the US’s better option is not initiating a Cold War with China in the way it did the former Soviet Union. Since the US does not want to give the appearance of containing China, but an open hand and door for ensuring peace and prosperity in Asia-Pacific and overall global stability, the better option is to maintain a posture of engagement while still ensuring that a strategic, operational, and tactical edge against the Chinese can be maintained. This ensures that the US enjoys the best of both worlds: promoting peace and friendship with China while holding onto its tradition of superiority over other nations. This is substantiated by the available information regarding Asia-Pacific matters. However, engagement, containment, or a combination of the two, possess pros and cons with respect to the Asian region. Therefore, it is worth exploring the aspects of the three strategies to truly understand why the US would elect for using a strategy of engagement with containment characteristics.

Engagement

One of the prevailing themes in literature regarding the US strategy in the Asia-Pacific are recommendations that it should not be one that reflects containment, but one where China is being engaged on diplomatic, economic, and even military levels. In “Maintaining Regional Stability In the Asia Pacific: United States Pacific Command Theater Security Cooperation Strategy,” Marcus Galman writes that military interaction between China should not be one of

²¹ Ibid, p.19.

containment but engagement.²² Galman’s reasoning for this is simply because China’s motives are “unclear.”²³ Engagement is a less contentious posture whereas containment ignites competition as seen in the Cold War. Galman cites a specific recommendation to pursue comprehensive engagement between the US Navy and the Chinese Navy, and to encourage similar engagement between China and neighboring nations. However, he does note that “assisting China with modernizing the PLAN (People’s Liberation Army and Navy) could have serious implications” with respect to US national security and allies in the Asia-Pacific.²⁴ He acknowledges that providing limited support in terms of modernization can be perceived as containment.²⁵ There is a degree of support that should be given to China such as integration for performing “counter-piracy, peacekeeping, humanitarian and disaster relief” for achieving a sustainable and profitable friendship.²⁶ Yet, there is always the danger that providing a limited amount to ensure national security can backfire. A safety valve for preventing the perception of containment would have to be engagement with a delicate balance of containment that promotes national security, global stability, and peace with China.

Gen. John Shaud and Kevin Holzimmer also imply the need to engage with China in the Asia-Pacific in a work titled “Asia Pacific and the US Air Force’s Contribution to the Future of National Security.” Shaud and Holzimmer make recommendations for the Air Force’s strategy in support of engagement in the Pacific based on three significant factors that impact nations

²² Marcus B. Galman, “Maintaining Regional Stability In the Asia Pacific: United States Pacific Command theater Security Cooperation Strategy,” *DTIC Online*, May 4, 2012. Accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA563836>.

²³ *Ibid*, p.1.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p.3.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p.4.

²⁶ Hagel, Charles, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, *Defense.gov*, accessed October 23, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf, p.17.

involved in the Asia-Pacific region.²⁷ First, according to Shaud and Holzimmer, it is predicted that by 2020, the US, China, Japan, Australia, South Korea, and India “will comprise about 30% of the world’s input and output.”²⁸ These same nations already have integrated economic ties, thus economic outlook for the future is positive. Second, the nations in the Asia-Pacific region favor bilateral agreements “particularly when dealing with the US” instead of multilateral agreements.²⁹ Third, Shaud and Holzimmer point out that despite a Cold War appearance between China and the US, the two share a commonality with respect to economics systems: each has a capitalist system.³⁰ This contrasts greatly with the Cold War where the US capitalist system competed against the Soviet Union’s Communist system. In the case of China and the US, both nations want to gain wealth through the same system.³¹ Therefore, Shaud and Holzimmer recommend “transitional engagement” as a means of getting the US and Asia-Pacific nations to connect on the basis of shared economic interests.³² Economics make a significant talking point for the PRC and the US; in spite of the military growth of China, both nations have an interest in getting rich. Thus, Shaud and Holzimmer prove that the concept of engagement with China is more advantageous with the Air Force playing a role in engaging international counterparts.³³ Even though Shaud and Holzimmer do not mention engagement should be backed by nuances of containment, small amounts of containment would add to US advantages during engagement with China.

Engagement and Containment

²⁷ John A. Shaud and Kevin Holzimmer, “Asia Pacific and the US Air Force’s Contribution to the Future of National Security,” *DTIC Online*, 2013, accessed October 5, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a582307.pdf>, p.5.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.5.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.5.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.5.

³¹ *Ibid*, p.5.

³² *Ibid*, p.6.

³³ *Ibid*, p.7.

While Galman's suggestion of engagement was penned in 2012 and has relevance in contributing to the Asia-Pacific strategy, it is worth looking back to a piece from 2001 by Roy C. Howle Jr.: "An Evitable War: Engaged Containment in the US-China Relationship."³⁴ The argument for engagement continues to be supported albeit with a touch of containment. Howle states that the US should pursue a policy that is one of engagement and containment; engagement would include assistance and/or encouragement to China in economic growth that is mutually beneficial to the US.³⁵ Such engagement must be managed by ensuring China is unable to alter the balance of power. This can be achieved by containment of their military with a credible US presence and capability.³⁶ This opens up suggestion that engagement should be utilize light efforts of containment. The end result of such engagement and containment means stability in the Asia-Pacific.³⁷ Overall, Howle suggests that a strategy including containment remains relevant just as it did in the Cold War. This supports the argument that a strategy of engagement with containment is desired in Asia-Pacific strategy as it pertains to China.

As mentioned earlier, engagement is a posture that President Obama intends to pursue; it generates less tension with China. Yet, the security of the US still needs to be maintained therefore, elements of the Cold War strategy's containment would be effective in ensuring the security is maintained. Peter Gadd's "Re-Balance to the Pacific: Resourcing the Strategy" addresses how the US should go about being successful in its strategy while attempting to minimize tension with the PRC.³⁸ He states that the issues in the region include competition for economic resources and China's growing military with discussion on its equivalent to Anti-

³⁴ Roy C. Howle Jr., "An Evitable War: Engaged Containment in the US-China Relationship," *DTIC Online*, February 1, 2001, accessed September 27, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA390549>.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p.13.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.15.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.15.

³⁸ Peter Gadd, "Re-Balance to the Pacific: Resourcing the Strategy," *DTIC Online*, March 2013, accessed October 5, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA589241>.

Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy, and the reduction to the US military's budget for addressing President Obama's strategic vision for the Pacific pivot.³⁹ Territorial claim disputes create problems because they "extend national claims of sovereignty out into the continental shelf" dictating who has ownership over sea-lanes and fishing areas, causing potential economic and strategic advantage for the nation that holds domain of these areas.⁴⁰ Due to the potential for friction between China and the smaller nations in the region, the US has a vested interest in ensuring stability in the region.

According to Gadd, the answer for addressing issues of territorial claims and its military expansion is to "build a healthy, transparent relationship with China" considering 14% of US treasury bond debt is owned by China.⁴¹ In short, the answer for dealing with China in these matters is engagement. Unfortunately, engagement only works to a point; it does not answer how to deal with Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD). The Air Sea Battle doctrine deals directly with A2/AD; discussion regarding what this concept is can be found in "Air Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenges."⁴² Anti-Access is defined as "action intended to slow deployment of friendly forces into a theater or cause forces to operate farther from the locus of conflict."⁴³ Area Denial is similar yet different in that it is "intended to impede friendly operations within areas where an adversary cannot or will not prevent access."⁴⁴ In short, both are tactics that allow an enemy to inhibit other forces' movements and/or preventing them from entering an enemy's sphere of influence, giving the enemy a degree of

³⁹ Ibid, p.12,13,16.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.6.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.17.

⁴² "Air Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenges," *Defense.gov*, May 2013, accessed December 26, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/ASB-ConceptImplementation-Summary-May-2013.pdf>, p.2.

⁴³ Ibid, p.2.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.2.

initiative to shape the battlespace. Technologies and weapons required for meeting challenges such as A2/AD typically fall under the military's domain of responsibility. Though A2/AD could be meant as a means of defense for a sovereign nation, it can challenge the US's ability to waging war. Therefore, containment of A2/AD is useful in ensuring the US maintains an advantage.

Elements of containment are more useful in equipping the US for countering A2/AD. Elements of deterrence certainly help in containing the threat of Chinese growth. This translates to the US's newly developed concept: Air Sea Battle (ASB). Given that the US has to be judicious in spending based on its current debt, Gadd says the US will have to aim for what it can afford to place in the region.⁴⁵ US Navy vessels, air power such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), and other equipment are needed to execute the Air Sea Battle (ASB) concept.⁴⁶ The ultimate goal of ASB is only to "deter China's rapidly expanding military power," not to develop conditions for conflict with the PRC.⁴⁷

Though ASB can assist in checking China's military expansion, it costs money for the equipment previously mentioned to give *teeth* to the concept. Gadd notes that some of the fiscal pressure on the Department of Defense (DOD) to execute the rebalance must be offset by reliance on "regional security" through our allies in the area.⁴⁸ Although Gadd does not advocate for containing China's growth, he does suggest the necessity for the US and China to work together as their economies are tied together.⁴⁹ Yet, he does state that the US "must continue to

⁴⁵ Peter Gadd, "Re-Balance to the Pacific: Resourcing the Strategy," *DTIC Online*, March 2013, accessed October 5, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA589241>, p.18.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.16.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.18.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p.17.

maintain an “upper hand” dissuading China from attempting war.⁵⁰ An upper hand cannot be maintained if the US does not have the ability to match and defeat A2/AD from China. Thus, while engagement opens the door for trust and transparency, deterrence and maintaining an advantage on China is of great interest in sustaining US national security.

A combination of engagement and containment applied to China in Asia-Pacific strategy seems to be the ideal for meeting challenges in Asia-Pacific. This combination was also promoted in a 2012 paper “Prevent, Promote, and Hedge: US Military Power in the South China Sea” by Brian Stokes. Stokes mentions the US seeks to mediate disputes in the region and that the military’s presence is to project “partnership and trust” with China, equating to engagement.⁵¹ He also writes that there is an imperative to “to address China’s growing military capability” through the Air-Sea Battle doctrine, a form of containment of China’s military. Stokes concluded that the US military’s best course of action in the South China Sea tension was continuing Zlamay Khalizad’s “conengagement” strategy, a mix of containment and engagement.⁵² Thus, in agreement with Khalizad and Stokes, engagement and containment are the two traits needed in Asia-Pacific strategy to ensure success in dealing with China.

The Fall Out of Containment

The support for engagement and containment changes as evidenced by Ashley Tellis’ “Balancing Without Containment: A US Strategy for Confronting China’s Rise” discusses a strategy where the US will not suppress China but match China through economic measures while still maintaining an edge in its military superiority. Even if the US does not suppress

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.11,17.

⁵¹ Brian J. Stokes, “Prevent, Promote, and Hedge: US Military Power in the South China Sea,” *DTIC Online*, May 22, 2012, accessed September 27, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA592509>, p.18.

⁵² Ibid, p.9.

growth, they would still be competing with China in matching and rising above them in economics and military efforts. This can still suffice as an element of containment because the ultimate goal is to hold an advantage over China. According to Tellis, “containing China—defined as attempting to suppress its growth by isolating Beijing from its neighbors and the world” is the wrong answer because of how the US and other nations friendly to the US that border China are all economically linked.⁵³ Yet, the strategy that is recommended is one where the US “raises” other nations in Asia-Pacific to “realize their strategic potential and increase mutual cooperation” as a means of balancing out and keeping the PRC in check.⁵⁴ Tellis says this will mostly be achieved by economic means such as emphasis on interdependence of economies between the US, allied nations in Asia-Pacific, and even China.⁵⁵ Ironically, these means include pursuing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with nations in the region while excluding China.⁵⁶ Behaviors such as this only fuel a temptation to avoid transparency as opposed to the building of friendship.

In addition to economically competing with the PRC, Tellis says the US must also be prepared to “defeat the Chinese effort to stymie US power projection in Asia.”⁵⁷ This speaks to containment of China’s military capability. Tellis says that countering China’s ability to halt US projection requires fuel in the form of “revitalizing” the US economy.⁵⁸ This revitalization is made possible by ensuring “high levels of capital formation,” making necessary policy changes to field a strong and competitive labor force, investing in technological innovations, and

⁵³ Ashley J. Tellis, “Balancing Without Containment: A US Strategy for Confronting China’s Rise,” *Center for Strategic International Studies*, Washington Quarterly (Fall 2013), accessed October 7, 2014, http://csis.org/files/publication/TWQ_13Winter_Tellis.pdf, p.110.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.112.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.114.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.115

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.115.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.118.

improving production efficiencies.⁵⁹ Though Tellis stated she is not for containment, the methods she recommended in dealing with China possess tones of competition seen from the days of the Cold War such as the arms race. Containment does have the capacity to generate suspicion contradicting President Obama's engagement policy.

Even though engagement coupled with containment seems to be the preferred blend of politics and strategic way ahead for Asia-Pacific, there is still evidence that the US might be exercising more of a containment posture. The tone of instability or "de-balancing" versus re-balancing to Asia is perceived to exist; to overtly announce a focus in the Asia-Pacific implies focusing towards China, perceived as a threat to China. In "Re-Balancing or De-Balancing: US Pivot and East Asian Order," Dr. Wei Ling argues that while the US intention was to "pivot" and "re-balance" to the Pacific, the reality reflects that it is more or less "de-balancing" the region.⁶⁰ Dr. Ling cites that three significant features of the US pivot included: improving US-India relations due to the vital nature of the Indian Ocean in addition to the Pacific, the highly visible US military posturing with rotational deployments of US Marines to Australia, and select engagement to specific nations in the Asia-Pacific theater in spite of diplomacy being "very active on all fronts" in the first term of the Obama administration.⁶¹

Although the intentions of the US pivot are honorable, Ling argues that the US is actually destabilizing the region.⁶² The cause can be attributed to US involvement in the East and South China Sea disputes, US military activity in the region, and US initiatives to shape the region in politics via EAS (East Asia Summit) and economics via TPP (Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.120, 121.

⁶⁰Wei Ling, "Re-Balancing or De-Balancing: U.S. Pivot and East Asian Order," *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on Foreign Policy*, 35:3, (June 10, 2013), accessed September 13, 2014 http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uafp20#.VC_MxpUcSM8.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.150-151.

⁶² Ibid, p.151.

Partnership).⁶³ In the case of US involvement in the East and South China Sea disputes, too many reassurances of commitment to Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines, Ling believes this could cause reliance and dependence on the US for security.⁶⁴ This sort of dependence can also change the perceptions China holds in its interactions with nations such as Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines. For instance, China might interact differently with these nations if it knows that they are significantly influenced by the US. They would almost serve as US satellites and thus, give China the perception that it is being cornered in the region.

There are positive effects from containing China instead of executing engagement. One of these would be that Chinese expansion and influence can be curbed and controlled if there are US supported nations to the south and to the east. Conversely, the negative aspects of this are more possibilities for conflict and mistrust to build and create a more adverse environment not just for China, but also for smaller nations in the Asia-Pacific region. Additionally, military exercises in the region, “defense ties with a number of China’s neighbors, including India and Vietnam,” plus Marines in Australia are fueling distrust rather than mutual trust between China and the US.⁶⁵ Containment through politics also has detrimental effects on the US-Chinese relationship because of the US’s attempt to make EAS a focal point for regional political and security processes.⁶⁶ According to Ling, the organization ASEAN resisted this initiative because it could undermine its significance as a central and leading body in the region.⁶⁷

Containment through economics also has detrimental rather than positive effects for the US-China relationship. Ling discussed the downside to the TPP initiative; it did not include all

⁶³ Ibid, p.151-152.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.152.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.152.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.152.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.152.

members of ASEAN and it undermined ASEAN's work with Japan and China on Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as the US would be the lead in TPP.⁶⁸ As a result, ASEAN created Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as a means of continuing to play a key role in FTA negotiations in the area.⁶⁹ Even though the US intentions are honorable, and President Obama is out to engage with China, the execution of national policy with respect to China seems to be perceived as less of an invitation for team building. Ling sums up the first term of President Obama and his pivot to the Pacific as causing more discord in Asia due to US interference in East and South China Sea disputes, developing ties with countries near China and executing military exercises, and disruption to political and trade processes of ASEAN. These issues are pertinent in discussing Asia-Pacific strategy versus Cold War strategy because it shows that the effects of US strategy are displaying containment and disruption as opposed to engagement.

Obviously, light moves of containment do more harm than good. Dr. Ling's article amplified reasons as to why containment will only fuel distrust by China and a lack of desire to engage with the US because of military, economic, and political moves that can be interpreted as inhibiting China's ability to grow. The military deployments and placement of troops and equipment throughout the Pacific is based on a US national defense imperative, but still gives the perception of containment. In "Reposturing the Force: Implications of Budget Reductions and Regional Balancing," Layton Dunbar suggests that in wake of reduced defense spending and force size, the better approach is to position and tailor forces to meet the threat that exists in a

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.152-153.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.153.

particular part of the globe.⁷⁰ This conclusion is founded on the principle that reduced amounts of funding require careful, appropriate allocation of forces capable of meeting the challenges of the security environment they are placed in. The misapplication of forces has national security impacts therefore it must be done judiciously based on the threat that looms in the region where forces may be placed. This would include areas not only Asia-Pacific, but also the Middle East and Europe.⁷¹ This is important for the security of the US however, the downside is that the perception of containment remains. It is quite possible that containment is being practiced due to the movement of military personnel and equipment to strategic locations in the Asia-Pacific is to keep China's influence in check, but that is only one small component to Asia-Pacific strategy. Thus, it seems the key to effectively dealing with China is through a posture of engagement with subtle containment.

Literature Review Conclusion

The Cold War strategy of containment was executed by the US over several decades with the object being to contain the growth of the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. In the post-Cold War era, the US is primarily focused on shifting priorities to the Pacific due to the rise of China's powerhouse in economics and military. The literature above seems to indicate that the growth of China compared to the threat presented by the Soviet Union in the Cold War does not merit a strategy of containment but one that utilizes engagement with light efforts of containment. This combination holds more benefits to both the US and the PRC. Therefore, this is why a strategy of engagement with containment is what the US exercises in dealing with China. Yet, analysis is required to determine if the present strategy is being exercised as such.

⁷⁰ Layton Dunbar Jr., "Reposturing the Force: Implications of Budget Reductions and Regional Balancing," *DTIC Online*, March 2013, accessed October 12, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA589409>, p.20-21.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.21, 22, 23.

III. Methodology

Research for developing a comparative analysis between the Asia-Pacific strategy and the Cold War strategy's containment requires data collection and application of various international relations theories. Collection is necessary for not only determining whether there is evidence to affirm or refute an argument, but for also assisting in making recommendations for change in current or future policy in this particular study. The application of select international relations theories is also necessary as behavioral trends from state actions can indicate what style of governance is being exercised. Thus, the comparative analysis of Asia-Pacific strategy against containment was achieved using a specific research design for data collection and select theories needed to provide answers on what kind of dialogue the Obama administration is exerting with respect to China.

Data Collection Technique

In order to provide a comparative analysis of Asia-Pacific strategy and the Cold War strategy of containment, the preferred research design called for a qualitative analysis. The analysis covered the NSS, Quadrennial Defense Review 2014, George F. Kennan's containment policy, and the Domino Theory. Additionally, analysis of peer reviewed studies and current events discussing US-China relations were necessary for picking out trends of US behavior toward China based on current events. This helped in determining if the present Asia-Pacific strategy is truly containment, engagement, or a combination of the two.

Applicable Theoretical Frameworks

As far as theories and doctrines applicable to the analysis, George F. Kennan's containment policy was used to aid in determining similarities and differences between Asia-

Pacific and Cold War strategy. Kennan advocated a policy that would be “long-term, patient but firm containment of Soviet expansive tendencies” to include preventing Soviet influence on Western institutions.⁷² If the US were able to execute this strategy, then the end-state achieved would be either a reduction of Soviet power or a break-up of power.⁷³ Kennan predicted correctly; his policy is useful in judging whether Asia-Pacific strategy is actually mirroring Cold War containment or a different strategy.

When studied in-depth, Kennan’s policy of containment was to suppress Soviet influence and stop communism in its tracks wherever it may have an opportunity to spread.⁷⁴ Kennan intended for this policy to include the full spectrum of measures available to the US government to counter each and every move made by the Soviet Union. In the very least, Kennan urged that the “world’s major centers of industrial power (the US, Japan, and Western Europe)” be guarded from anything emanating from Red influence.⁷⁵ This makes sense because at the core of containment, Kennan’s approach to containing Soviet influence was by countering the Soviet attempts of expansion by utilizing economic measures, political pressure, and psychological warfare such as “overt propaganda and covert operations.”⁷⁶ Kennan did not seem to feel that the application of military power was as much an imperative for national survival as was applying economic, political, and psychological force.⁷⁷ It turned out that Kennan’s successor, Paul Nitze was the advocate for the military force due to interpretation that it met Kennan’s concept of “adroit and vigilant application of counter-force” towards the Soviets.⁷⁸ This tool of

⁷² “Kennan and Containment 1947,” *US Department of State: Office of the Historian*, accessed September 28, 2014, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/kennan>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

containment won support as the principle measure for the strategy over the three Kennan envisioned. Even though military power became the symbol for containing the Soviets, Kennan is worthy of credit for the general concept of containment and its success---the collapse of the Soviet Union and the elimination of the threat of communism.

Other theories that were applicable to determining similarities between Asia-Pacific strategy and the Cold War strategy included considerations of the International Relations theory of realism and smart power. Realism is significant as it nearly captures the sentiment of the face-off between the Soviet Union and the US post World-War II through the end of the Cold War. A paper by Ronald P. Higham Jr. "Statecraft: Many Models, One Method," briefly, but succinctly touches on the basis of realism as far as international relations theory. Higham wrote that "the underlying thesis of realism is that the sovereign nation will and should always act to enhance its national security by increasing its power vis-à-vis others."⁷⁹ In summary, a nation will desire to preserve its survival through building and ensuring its own security because of the competition for power.⁸⁰ In the context of the Cold War, the US and the Soviets sought to preserve their own security as each considered the other's way of life a threat to their own identity. Therefore, the competition for space, arms, and influence began after World War II and did not end until the Soviet collapse. By applying this theory to current events, US actions determine if the US government is in a 'Cold War' concerning China. If the Asia-Pacific strategy is viewed through the lens of realism, then the theory can lend assistance in determining what, if anything, in the current Asia-Pacific strategy is similar to the policy of containment.

⁷⁹ Ronald P. Higham Jr., "Statecraft: Many Models, One Method," *DTIC Online*, 2000, accessed November 9, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a433192.pdf>, p.3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p.3.

International relations encompass more than just the theory of realism. In the 21st century the international relations arena fumes with the terms “hard power,” “soft power,” and “smart power.” All three are theoretical in the circle of international relations; this paper will consider US government actions in Asia-Pacific strategy not only against realist theory but also against smart power theory. Joseph Nye Jr. who also developed the theory of “soft power,” coined the concept of “smart power.”⁸¹ In a 2013 document titled “Smart Power and US National Strategy,” Joseph Nye is quoted as not only being the originator of the concept, but that it is more than just soft power; it is “the need for smart strategies that combine both the tools of hard and soft power.”⁸² Smart power means utilizing all instruments of national power such as using “alliances, partnerships...economic integration and expansion of free trade.”⁸³ The same document quotes former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton advocating “the full range of tools at our [US] disposal,” hence smart power.⁸⁴ In short, smart power is founded on the premise that in order to obtain desired goals, it is necessary and prudent to do so through all available methods and not just military tools. This theory differs from realism because realism views the world as nations having to fend for themselves leading to the strengthening of their respective capabilities. Capabilities could be considered more than just military as the strategy of containment was about not just procuring weapon systems, but undermining Soviet influence and advertising that US values were preferred over communist values. Nevertheless, smart power is useful in framing current US government actions in the Asia-Pacific region. Smart power theory can shed light on differences between the current strategies versus the Cold War strategy.

⁸¹ “Smart Power and U.S. National Strategy,” *DTIC Online*, August 2013, accessed November 9, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a591984.pdf>, p.

⁸² *Ibid*, p.23.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p.23.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p.24.

Another resource for comparing Asia-Pacific strategy against containment is the Domino Theory. According to Langridge's paper, the Domino Theory was based off of the US containment policy, specifically focused on preventing its spread and influence into Asia.⁸⁵ Though he does not give specific variables, Langridge stated that it was founded on the idea that if a nation in Asia fell to communism, then a chain reaction would ensue causing other nations in the region to fall to communism.⁸⁶ Former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara proves this historical sentiment in his memoir *In Retrospect* when he revisits the Truman and Eisenhower administration's belief regarding communism in Indochina.⁸⁷ Then-President Eisenhower's stance on containment with respect to Southeast Asia is stated in McNamara's memoir: a Communist takeover of Indochina would result in the subsequent fall of other nations in the region "like a row of dominoes," hence the Domino Theory.⁸⁸ In the case of the Asia-Pacific strategy, it is worth determining if a belief of nations falling to China's influence exists given the US military rebalance in the Pacific.

The US government actions chronicled by open source publications such as the NSS and current events on US relations abroad in the Pacific region are useful for determining whether current policy is engagement, containment, or a mixture of the two. Additionally, international relations theories of realism, smart power, and the domino theory provide a way to connect current events of US government interaction with China and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. Crosschecking current events and government publications against the listed international relations theories enables fewer opportunities for open-ended interpretations of the Obama

⁸⁵ Donald L. Langridge, "Was the Domino Theory Wrong? Communist Internationalism and the Vietnam War," *DTIC Online*, April 11, 1996. Accessed September 21, 2014, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA309186>.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p.1.

⁸⁷ Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), p.31.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.31.

administration's work in the region. However, not all speculation of policy execution is eliminated due to limitations of research.

Research Limitations and Variables

The scope of research was narrowed to comparing the current Asia-Pacific strategy against containment in terms of military capability, diplomacy, and economics. Since it is possible to explore beyond military capability, diplomacy, and economics with respect to the strategies, the intention was to keep the research limited to those three presenting an inherent limitation to the overall research. Nevertheless, this analysis will serve as significant extension to the discussion of the US's national policy toward China.

National policy, as founded in the NSS, is typically used as the overall strategic guidance for dictating interactions between the US and other nations with respect to building alliances and diplomatic actions with non-allied nations, military training and deployments, and even economic treaties with other countries. If the NSS drives all other policy, then Asia-Pacific policy depends on national policy. Given this construct, Asia-Pacific strategy would be derived from a document such as the NSS due to the strategic nature of guidance. Therefore Asia-Pacific strategy would be considered a dependent variable in this project as it is based from the NSS where the NSS is the independent variable in strategy. However, the methodology in this research is going to call Asia-Pacific strategy the independent variable as all other actions in the region are determined by the strategy set in place.

The Asia-Pacific strategy and the Cold War strategy would be the independent variables because all other US actions, whether they are foreign or domestic, would be fashioned to whatever was required to follow the strategies laid out. Since the specific similarities and

differences between the two will be focused on US military posture and capability, diplomacy, and economics, these will be considered dependent variables. These elements of strategy are considered dependent variables because it is only natural for a strategy to govern the set of alliances a nation will develop in pursuit of their strategy. This principle also applies to the disposition of military forces. The guidance disseminated from the NSS used to develop Asia-Pacific strategy also drives the Department of Defense's plans for correctly allocating forces and determining dispositions of the military in various regions of the globe. Thus, military posture and capability incorporated in the Asia-Pacific is considered a dependent variable as it is shaped and formed to fulfill the outlined strategy in the region. This also applies to diplomacy as state department actions particular to Asia-Pacific nations, whether they be allied or non-allied, will be executed in order to fulfill the strategy in the region, ultimately fulfilling guidance of the NSS. The same can be true for economics as the wealth of the nation can also determine its ability to remain self-sufficient and survive. While all three of these elements are the focus of exploring the similarities and differences between the two strategies, they also function as the dependent variables of the Asia-Pacific strategy.

IV. Findings and Analysis

National Security Strategy

Before analyzing the Obama administration's execution of Asia-Pacific strategy in the present, it is important to understand the overall national strategy. The reason for this is because the strategy itself dictates what measures must be taken to fulfill it. The measures taken can be weighed against those used in the Cold War strategy in order to determine if Asia-Pacific strategy is containment or a different strategy. The NSS is the overall national strategic

document for the US and as such, guides strategies for diplomacy, information, military, and economic measures in support of national objectives.

The NSS is a document that sets the direction for where the nation is to aim towards and address how the nation will achieve goals to reach the desired end state. According to President Obama, the US national strategy is to focus on “renewing American leadership so that we can more effectively advance our interests.”⁸⁹ First addressing economic issues within the US to regain American power in the economic realm in order to be an effective leader in the international arena to fulfill this broad objective.⁹⁰ Furthermore, American leadership is renewed abroad through engaging with other nations. Engagement is where the US takes an active role in developing its relationships with other nations.⁹¹ According to President Obama, engagement is crucial in establishing “security and prosperity to specific regions and to facilitating global cooperation.”⁹²

Other components cited by President Obama’s NSS for contributing to renewing American leadership included strengthening the US military to counter threats including anti-access threats, terrorism, counterinsurgency, and the threats of tomorrow.⁹³ As far as diplomacy, it is considered as the “first line of engagement” and therefore should be given attention by “expanding” diplomatic roles due to necessity to establish and maintain critical linkages. This

⁸⁹Obama, Barack, *National Security Strategy*, *Whitehouse.gov*, May 2010, accessed October 21, 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p.2.

⁹¹ Ibid, p.11.

⁹² Ibid, p.11.

⁹³ Ibid, p.14.

extends from to not just other nations, but also overseas businesses, non-state players, and a myriad of other organizations that enable America to preserve its security and that of others.⁹⁴

The theme of engagement is evident in the NSS with respect to China as President Obama declared the US “will continue to pursue a positive, constructive, and comprehensive relationship with China.”⁹⁵ Though it is expected that the US will not mutually agree with China on everything, a pragmatic approach with China engages on the grounds of mutual interests.⁹⁶ Concurrently, the US will also “monitor” and ensure that the US and its allies in the region are prepared to address any adverse effects that might come from China’s military.⁹⁷ A limitation of the NSS is that it has not been updated since 2010 to reflect policy for the present environment. Nevertheless, all of these measures work toward renewing of US leadership and the region and contribute to the development of a US Asia-Pacific strategy.

Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense

In 2012, President Obama and Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel released another strategic document to announce what the US military’s priorities would be in the strategic environment of that time. The US military was given the following missions: Defeat and destroy Al-Qaeda through Counter-Terrorism and Irregular Warfare, Deterrence, projection of power into locations where adversaries may attempt to exercise A2/AD capabilities, prevent WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) proliferation, freely operation in Space and Cyberspace, domestic defense to the nation, nuclear deterrence, stability and humanitarian operations.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.14-15.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.43.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p.43.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.43.

⁹⁸ Obama, Barack, “Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, *Defense.gov*, January 2012, accessed October 22, 2014, p.4-6.

Evidently, the US military has to tackle several mission sets around the globe in order to ensure national security as a means of renewing American leadership. Secretary Hagel does imply a mission set that is specifically geared to not only the Middle East, but also Asia-Pacific, that is, overcoming A2/AD challenges that other nations may pose.⁹⁹ Per the President and Secretary of Defense, “states such as China and Iran will continue to pursue asymmetric means to counter our power projection capabilities.”¹⁰⁰ For this reason, it is necessary for the military to be prepared to counter any attempts by other nations to deny freedom of movement. Overall, the military’s tasks are spelled out in this guidance in order to guide the Department of Defense (DOD) in structuring the military to the proper mold in fulfilling these missions.

The information provided in this document is important not only because it provides the role of the US military in fulfilling the NSS, but because it adds some insight as to the role of the US military towards China. This is a document that would play a role in shaping strategy in the region. The US military’s role in Asia will include ensuring that access to domains such as the sea will remain unimpeded and that US military forces can project their power in this arena. This not only speaks to the US military’s Asia-Pacific strategy, but it also indicates that the US intends to execute elements of containment to any adversary in the region that would attempt to deny freedom of movement.

US Pacific Command Strategy

The strategy that the US military has in Asia-Pacific is constructed from information derived in the NSS, the National Military Strategy (NMS) and other documents. It is possible that *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* may not have been

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.4-5.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.4.

included when creating this strategy as it only came out in 2012 and the NSS came out in 2010. Nevertheless, the spirit of the US military's mission spelled out in *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* and the NSS is evident in Pacific Command's strategy: strengthen current alliances with traditional allies in the region including Australia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, develop and build partnerships with other nations and organizations in the region such as ASEAN, and monitor China while deterring aggression from North Korea.¹⁰¹ Additionally, the military's role will include a multilateral approach in ensuring that other nations in the region have freedom of access to land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace domains.¹⁰² The only note that is specific to China is that China's intentions regarding its military growth are unclear necessitating engagement as opposed to containment. Overall, the military's strategy for Asia-Pacific seems to be a theme of engagement with Asian nations including China yet poised to deter aggressors that would attempt to blockade access to the global commons in the area.

Quadrennial Defense Review 2014

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) can be considered an update to the strategic guidance spelled out in *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*. This means that it takes into account events that occurred in 2013 that altered the ability for the DOD to maintain the combat capability it had in managing large scale operations. In 2013, the US defense arm was hit by the enactment of the Budget Control Act of 2011 or more popularly known as sequestration. Sequestration aimed to deduct \$50 billion dollars from the DOD's

¹⁰¹ Locklear, Samuel J., "US PACOM Strategy," *US Pacific Command*, accessed October 22, 2014, <http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM/USPACOMStrategy.aspx>.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

budget each year up until Fiscal Year (FY) 2021.¹⁰³ Even though Congress was able to pass an updated Budget Control Act of 2013, the damage to the armed forces was done as the armed forces have been planning and reducing the force sizes of their respective services spanning people, training, and equipment.¹⁰⁴ The QDR cites specifics for what the end-state of each service will look like. The relevance of this document as it pertains to Asia-Pacific strategy is it aims to convey confidence that while the strength of the DOD is changing, there should be confidence that national security will be maintained. The QDR is also useful in providing a snapshot of the strategic environment in Asia-Pacific in 2014.

According to QDR 2014, the Asia-Pacific remains a rich location for several nations' economics to flourish, yet this also comes with a price. Good business also means opportunity to develop and build a military due to incoming sources of revenue. This can become a problem for nations in Asia-Pacific because those nations that build-up their militaries attain a capability to intimidate and exercise leverage against weaker nations. This can impact economics in the region resulting in "disruptive competition or erupt into conflict."¹⁰⁵ This is a projected risk for the region based on the current status of occupants in the region. The risk is associated with China as QDR 2014 cites their unclear intentions and "lack of transparency." The answer for dealing with China is simply engagement. Evidence of engagement with China can be founded in the document as it states the US will manage their military growth through "sustained and cooperative dialogue" in subjects that are mutually beneficial to both militaries including "counter-piracy, peace keeping, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief."¹⁰⁶ At present, the US military is building this dialogue with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA);

¹⁰³ Hagel, Charles, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, *Defense.gov*, accessed October 23, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf, p.27.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.iv.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.4.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.17.

therefore, engagement is how the US military intends to manage China as part of the Asia-Pacific strategy. However, the document also proves that the DOD expects China to develop A2/AD technologies to counter the US military's power in the region.

Per the QDR, “in the coming years, China will continue seeking to counter US strengths using anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) approaches.”¹⁰⁷ The US military's solution to this problem is to acquire weapon systems and other assets that will give it the ability to bypass such challenges, a form of containment.¹⁰⁸ A small element of containment strategy is the fielding of a frontline military with the necessary equipment to maintain a tactical advantage should conflict arise. Overall, it appears that the US military is attempting to engage with China yet it is also ensuring that it continues to keep not only China, but other potential adversaries and known aggressors, at bay with superior weapons acquisitions. In short, the US military's role in Asia-Pacific with respect to China demonstrates a significant hedge toward engagement while still maintaining the ability to contain, hence a combination of engagement and containment. This is a great contrast from the Cold War; back then, the US military's arms build-up and weapons programs were all devoted to contain and stop the spread of communism at all costs. There was no open dialogue to engage with the Soviets and any formal engagement that occurred usually took place either at the national level. Thus, the record shows that the US military's current actions indicate a posture that is a combination of engagement and containment versus being one or the other.

Current US Military Actions in Asia-Pacific

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.6.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.36.

The policies set in the NSS, QDR, and Pacific Command strategy dictate what the US government will do with respect to the disposition of military forces in the Asia-Pacific and their posture. Sometimes, the actual events that unfold in regards to the actions made by the government towards moving military units differ from the plan. That is to say, the US policies concerning military activities and movements in Asia-Pacific might be focused on engagement and containment, but the decisions made by US civilian and military leadership could move forces in such a way that create an impression of overt containment or the opposite, overt engagement. Thus, an analysis of not only the policy documents but also the current, open source information is necessary to judge what kind of a strategy is being pursued in Asia-Pacific with respect to the armed forces. In the same token, open source information will also be analyzed through the lens of realist and smart power theory for determining whether US practices are focused towards containment, engagement, or a combination of both.

The NSS indicated that the US would “continue to pursue a positive, constructive, and comprehensive relationship with China.”¹⁰⁹ If the US intends to do this with all instruments of national power, then current events show that it is making a little progress in terms of working with China. A sign of this action can be seen with the DOD’s invitation to China in the US Navy’s biannual maritime exercise: Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC). The RIMPAC exercise is considered to be the “world’s largest international maritime exercise” per the US Navy.¹¹⁰ In 2014, RIMPAC combined the US with several nations including Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea,

¹⁰⁹Obama, Barack, *National Security Strategy*, *Whitehouse.gov*, May 2010, accessed October 21, 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf, p. 43.

¹¹⁰“RIMPAC 2014,” *Commander, US Pacific Fleet*, accessed October 24, 2014, <http://www.cpf.navy.mil/rimpac/2014/>.

and for the first time, China.¹¹¹ One of the main objectives for RIMPAC is to continue honing cooperation and interoperability with other nations in efforts towards ensuring freedom of navigation and protection of the sea lanes from those who would seek to impede that movement.¹¹² In 2014, the PRC was invited and did make its debut in operating with the US military and other allied nations. This was a positive step in the spirit of military engagement.

Since the Asia-Pacific region is greatly dominated by the Pacific Ocean and the water areas in or touching it such as the South China Seas and East China Sea, it is fitting that the PRC's Navy can agree to train with the US Navy at sea. Honing the skills required for large navies is an imperative where large force exercises, such as RIMPAC, are a perfect venue. Though the engagement between the two is a small political victory, the reality is that the US is left vulnerable as the PRC had an intelligence ship monitoring RIMPAC.¹¹³ According to a Reuters news article by Phil Stewart, it was determined that an intelligence risk was not at stake as China did something similar in the previous two years.¹¹⁴ Another news article from US Naval Institute provided amplifying information where China asserted the intelligence ship remained outside of the US Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ) while implying that the US has many times not respected their EEZ such as the USNS *Impeccable's* appearance in the PRC's EEZ in the South China Sea.¹¹⁵ Another appearance further vexing China was when the USS *Cowpens* shadowed the PRC's aircraft carrier in 2013.¹¹⁶ Although China does have a valid complaint if the US truly has operated inside their EEZs collecting intelligence, the presence of

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Phil Stewart, "China Sends Spy Ship Off Hawaii During US-Led Drills," *Reuters*, July 21, 2014, accessed October 24, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/21/us-usa-china-military-idUSKBN0FP0RN20140721>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Sam LaGrone, "China Defends RIMPAC Spy Ship," *USNI News*, July 22, 2014, accessed October 24, 2014, <http://news.usni.org/2014/07/22/china-defends-rimpac-spy-ship>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

US Navy ships inside their EEZs or near their ships does imply something about the US military element when viewed against Asia-Pacific strategy. The presence of US Navy vessels in China's territory does speak to the NSS and QDR in that China is being monitored however, it does not necessarily indicate the containment of the PRC. Yet, the very presence of a US warship in another nation's backyard does allow speculation of US dominance in the region. Thus, it is hard to categorize what US military collection activities could be considered. Though not engagement of any sort, they would most likely fall into containment as the intelligence gained could enable several national security decisions with different outcomes.

Overall, RIMPAC 2014 is a sign of progress and lines up with the themes of engagement spelled out in the previously mentioned NSS and QDR. Another sign of military-to-military engagement is the Chinese attendance to the survival training exercise KOWARI 14 held in Australia with the Australian and US military taking part.¹¹⁷ Although China's military expansion may lack transparency, the dialogue between the militaries is developing on grounds that are mutually beneficial to all participants in the exercise. Survival Training in the Australian climate is effective practice for all players involved because the object of surviving in harsh conditions is a desirable goal. Training to survive in an austere environment is a core capability that all services and nations can agree is an imperative. This sentiment is echoed by Australian Defense Minister David Johnston, "the exercise demonstrates the willingness of Australia, China and the United States to work together in practical ways."¹¹⁸ Overall, the concept of military-to-military engagement is clearly evident and continuing in spite of Chinese intelligence collection

¹¹⁷ Sharon Chen, "First US-China-Australia Joint Military Drills Begin at Darwin," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, October 6, 2014, accessed October 26, 2014, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2014-10-06/first-u-dot-s-dot-china-australia-joint-military-drills-begin-in-darwin>.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

at RIMPAC. Though engagement occurs on a military level, there is still much evidence that indicates the US is subtly containing China.

Even though RIMPAC invited the Chinese for the 2014 exercise, the US previously trained without the PRC and continues to train in other multinational exercises that enhance military cooperation and interoperability between nations in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to RIMPAC, China played an observer role in another large scale Asia-Pacific exercise, named COBRA GOLD.¹¹⁹ This multi-national exercise takes place in Thailand with the focus being “to advance regional security and ensure effective response to regional crises by exercising a robust multi-national force from nations sharing common goals and security commitments in the Asia-Pacific region.”¹²⁰ In 2014, the countries involved in the exercise included: Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, and Indonesia.¹²¹ The training to hone each country’s military interoperability is significant. If tensions were to build over disputed areas in the East China Sea or South China Sea, then these countries in theory could rely on each other to diffusing such a crisis. This exercise speaks to engaging and building up US allies and partners in the region however, this kind of military readiness could be applied to intimidate China. Though China did have its own members present to observe the exercise, the training gained by each of the nations involved does have its advantages. For one, Thailand or Malaysia can look to the US for support if it runs into disputes with China. Overall, while not directly stated as

¹¹⁹ Codey R. Underwood, “Despite Violent Unrest in Thailand, US Troops Remain in Place for Cobra Gold Exercise,” *Marine Corps Times*, January 21, 2014, accessed October 26, 2014, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/article/20140121/NEWS/301210020/Despite-violent-unrest-Thailand-U-S-troops-remain-place-Cobra-Gold-exercise>.

¹²⁰ Adam Miller, “Exercise Cobra Gold 2014 Concludes,” *US Marine Corps Forces, Pacific*, February 21, 2014, accessed October 26, 2014, <http://www.marforpac.marines.mil/News/NewsArticleDisplay/tabid/919/Article/159214/exercise-cobra-gold-2014-concludes.aspx>.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

containment, exercises such as these between the US and other Asia-Pacific nations provide the assurance and interoperability training needed to ensure containment of China.

Other current events also seem to indicate subtle containment towards China. This is seen in Lesley Wroughton and Andrea Shalal's article "US Eases Arms Embargo Against Vietnam for Maritime Security."¹²² Recently, the US lifted its arms embargo ban on Vietnam leading to possibilities of maritime weapons systems that can aid Vietnam's defense in the South China Sea.¹²³ Though the article includes affirmation from US officials that the opening of this avenue is not meant to cause tension with China, the actions of potentially handing over a P-3 Orion Surveillance aircraft does possess an anti-China tune. The P-3 is able to provide maritime surveillance to aid in defending Vietnam's claims in the South China Sea, but the P-3 also has a weapons capability. According to the US Navy's fact files, the P-3 Orion is capable of carrying a "mixed payload of weapons internally and on wing pylons."¹²⁴ Overall, the intent of the US embargo ease with Vietnam is to enable them in maritime security.¹²⁵ Whether defensive in nature or not, potential transfer of US maritime defense systems indicates enabling maritime security for nations in Asia-Pacific. This action equates to a US-supplied network that has the ability to intimidate China. In short, this is a case of subtle containment as the US aims to support Vietnam in maritime defense in the South China Sea.

Military Posture/Capability, Realist Theory and Smart Power Theory

¹²² Lesley Wroughton and Andrea Shalal, "US Eases Arms Embargo Against Vietnam for Maritime Security," *Reuters*, October 2, 2014, accessed October 26, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/02/us-usa-vietnam-arms-idUSKCN0HR29V20141002>.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ "P-3 Orion Long Range ASW Aircraft," *United States Navy Fact File*, February 18, 2009, accessed October 26, 2014, http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=1100&tid=1400&ct=1.

¹²⁵ Lesley Wroughton and Andrea Shalal, "US Eases Arms Embargo Against Vietnam for Maritime Security," *Reuters*, October 2, 2014, accessed October 26, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/02/us-usa-vietnam-arms-idUSKCN0HR29V20141002>.

At the present, the military posture of the US Pacific forces is one that stands ready to defend the Pacific from aggression and prevent blockages or seizures of free movement in the domains including space, cyberspace, and maritime environment. The evidence presented indicates that the US is mostly engaging with the PRC through military exercises with the political goal of ensuring better understanding and less suspicion about each other. The US-Asia military exercises that occur in the Pacific have the potential to imply containment of China based on the many years of previously training together without China. However, China's assumption of a participant and observer role in RIMPAC and COBRA GOLD is a sign that the door for military engagement is opening. US and PRC distrust can only decrease.

Unfortunately, the easing of the arms embargo with respect to Vietnam does lean towards containment. Although the US does not state that the possibilities of equipping them for maritime security is to counter China, the potential of equipping them with a P-3 aircraft does translate to increased weapons capability to employ anti-surface ordnance. Nevertheless, the simple ease of the embargo is not definitive on what message, if any, the US wishes to convey to China. When weighed against the theory of realism as it pertains to the Cold War, military training with Asian nations in the region does add to the security and capability of US. Equipping the Vietnamese with maritime-security oriented weapons does leave open speculation for adding to not only Vietnam's security but the US's security as far as interests in the South China Sea and stability in the region as well. However, the US has officially stated that its ease of Vietnam's weapons embargo was not meant to counter China.

With the US opening invitations to the PRC for military training exercises, the paradigm is shifts from the US seeking to build up its security through containment such as in the days of the Cold War. Instead, current events seem to paint a picture that the US is seeking to maintain

its security by not only training with other nations in Asia-Pacific, but to also invite China as a means of developing trust between the two countries. This not only works to ensure the security of the US but it also runs contrary to the Cold War strategy and realist theory. These actions align with the stated NSS's goal in regards to engagement where "security and prosperity to specific regions and to facilitating global cooperation" is achieved by the US.¹²⁶ If part of ensuring US security is to engage with other nations including China, then Asia-Pacific strategy seems to align more with more smart power theory as military training exercise invitations work as another avenue of diplomacy and developing trust with another nation. This means that the military becomes another diplomatic tool to develop security as opposed to furthering distrust between the US and China. Granted, the open source information gleaned for this paper is not all-inclusive; it only captures a small, yet significant snapshot of Asia-Pacific strategy in motion. Overall, the current events as far as military posture and capability in the Pacific seem to indicate that while the US will not be a nation that backs down from intimidation, the US is using its military to develop mutually beneficial ties with the Chinese. This implies that the US is more interested in cooperation with other nations including China as opposed to containment. The elements of containment that may exist in the present strategy would be the potential capabilities gleaned from the training with other nations in Pacific military exercises and the action to ease the arms embargo with Vietnam.

US Diplomacy in Asia-Pacific

Although the US continues passive and active dialogue with China via surveillance and military exercises in the areas of engagement with touches of containment, it continues

¹²⁶ Obama, Barack, *National Security Strategy*, *Whitehouse.gov*, May 2010, accessed October 21, 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf, p. 11.

discussion and forum with allies and partners in the region. An example of this includes the recent US-Philippine Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.¹²⁷ This enhanced agreement not only builds on the previous treaty that binds the US and Philippines, but it includes provisions for “modernization of the Philippine military,” a rotational US military presence, and “pre-position relief supplies” in the country.¹²⁸ President Obama made clear that this enhanced cooperation between the two nations will not incur re-opening the military bases that the US closed in the early 1990s, yet the alliance between the two will remain strong and continue to be strengthened. The main goal is to support the Philippines not only in maritime security, but to sustain itself in the event of a natural disaster.¹²⁹ This agreement clearly speaks of the engagement between the US and Philippines on a national scale, but the agreement itself also leaves open speculation in regards to maritime security enhancement and rotational US military presence. While the overt use of diplomacy as an instrument of national power has been useful in establishing and enabling military security for the Philippines, it can be conjectured that another application of this diplomatic power is to demonstrate US resolve in not only stabilizing the region through peace, but countering China in the South China Sea.

While the supplementation of defense equipment and forthcoming rotational presence in the Philippines may benefit US diplomacy, it also assures other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, especially those nations concerned with China. Japan is one of those countries. The US has enjoyed maintaining ties with Japan for many years. As of October 2014, both countries are working to update the “Guidelines for Defense Cooperation” between the two because the

¹²⁷ Jim Garamone, “US-Philippine Pact Expands Defense Cooperation,” *Defense.gov*, April 28, 2014, accessed November 1, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=122136>.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

strategic environment has changed considerable from what it was in earlier years.¹³⁰ This update to the defense cooperation is not a surprise because in late 2013, the Chinese erected an artificial ADIZ (Air Defense Identification Zone) over the Senkaku Islands where the ownership of the islands has been in dispute in the East China Sea.¹³¹ According to Thom Shanker, the earlier part of 2013 saw “cat and mouse-like” chases occurring between Chinese paramilitary ships and Japanese Coast Guard ships in and around the waters of the island chain.¹³² Though the US State Department was not quick to comment on the ADIZ, diplomacy was exercised as an instrument of US power in that the B-52s functioned as a symbol that the US does not recognize such an ADIZ and that the airspace over and the waters in and around the Senkakus still remain under the possession of Japan. Technically, such a move by the US equates to diplomacy and military instruments of power. Though it may not be overtly stated, the message indicates that US-Allied nations in Asia-Pacific will not be deterred or dominated by the PRC. This does not necessarily match traditional containment as seen in the Cold War era however, if the intent is to ensure a message that the US and Japan maintain dominance over, in and around the Senkakus, then it is containment as the two countries are preventing the PRC from gaining the upper hand.

In terms of other alliances and partnerships, the US has held discussion and maintained communication with ASEAN since 1977.¹³³ When the content is analyzed regarding US diplomacy with ASEAN, it speaks to themes of security, political, and economics to name a

¹³⁰ “Interim Report on the Revision of the US-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation,” *State.gov*, October 8, 2014, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/10/232694.htm>.

¹³¹ Thom Shanker, “US Sends Two B-52 Bombers Into Air Zone Claimed By China,” *New York Times*, November 26, 2013, accessed November 2, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/27/world/asia/us-flies-b-52s-into-chinas-expanded-air-defense-zone.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ “Overview of US-ASEAN Dialogue Relations,” *ASEAN.org*, accessed November 1, 2014, <http://www.asean.org/news/item/overview-of-asean-us-dialogue-relations>.

few.¹³⁴ In 2013, ASEAN went to the US for an “Economic Ministers Roadshow” with the intent of bolstering ties with US businesses through “investment and partnership opportunities” with the roadshow ending in success.¹³⁵ Prior to that, the US entered into a treaty with ASEAN in 2009 known as Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as a means of ensuring “US political and security commitment to the region.”¹³⁶ Economically, the US-ASEAN pact has induced significant US investment (\$11.1B).¹³⁷ The US has also become one of ASEAN’s top sources for tourism; Asian economies are stimulated from the travels of US nationals.¹³⁸ From an economic standpoint, ASEAN is fueled by the US and diplomatically engaged by the US. The relationship is useful in effecting peace and stability; however, ASEAN cannot be considered the “NATO” equivalent for Asia-Pacific because it also has dialogue with China.

China also has a stake in ASEAN with respect to economics and security. Per ASEAN’s website, “trade between ASEAN and China increased by 13.6% from USD \$280.4B in 2011 to USD \$318.6B in 2012”; it is also worth noting that ever since 2009, China remains ASEAN’s “largest trading partner.”¹³⁹ Of greater significance on a diplomatic scale is that China and ASEAN signed the “Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)” in 2002 and have interest in working to implement the DOC. At the present, ASEAN and China are still working to implement the DOC as this was a focus point in the 7th ASEAN-China Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in April 2014.¹⁴⁰ Given these facts, the US would be unable to corner

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ “ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations,” *ASEAN.org*, accessed November 1, 2014, <http://www.asean.org/asean/external-relations/china/item/asean-china-dialogue-relations>.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

China through ASEAN as ASEAN serves as a forum to promote peace, security, and stability in the Asia-Pacific and seems to showcase a non-bias since it does business with China just as it does the US. Through the lens of diplomacy, the US engages with not only its allies such as the Philippines and Japan, but through organizations like ASEAN. Though containment could be conjectured from the recent enhanced security agreement with the Philippines, containment cannot be assumed from the US diplomatic interactions with ASEAN as ASEAN has ties with China. This relationship may indicate that ASEAN does not necessarily lean East or West, but intends to remain neutral and promote peace. Therefore, ASEAN would be an ineffective avenue to counter China since China has interests invested into ASEAN. Unlike the Cold War where NATO was a staunch organization backed by the US in countering Soviet aggression in Europe, ASEAN's purpose is not to counter aggression but to diffuse and resolve disputes to ensure that peace is upheld in the greater Asia-Pacific. Thus, the US diplomatic dialogue in ASEAN is anything but containment.

While the Philippines, Japan, and other allied nations such as Australia enjoy US support that may or may not be intended to counter the PRC, it is certain that not all Asian multilateral organizations will be opposed to China such as ASEAN. US diplomatic ties with the Philippines and Japan have a vested interest in security while diplomatic ties to ASEAN are simply economical and for nation-to-nation engagement. In addition to analyzing US relations with the Philippines and Japan, it is also worth investigating what US diplomatic measures are currently used in dialogue with China.

In an August 2013 *Congressional Research Service* report by Susan Lawrence, there is a section discussing the US Department of State's measures in reaching out to China. In her report, Lawrence highlights the State department's uses of social network sites, blogging, and

radio stations as mediums for informing the Chinese public about US policies.¹⁴¹ While the PRC censors some of the information transmitted through these outlets, the US provides the tools necessary to circumnavigate the censors through technology such as “proxy servers and other tools.”¹⁴² Other forms of diplomacy have included increased visas to members of China, Brazil, and Mexico with the goal of establishing “jobs and spur economic growth.”¹⁴³ Though the US and China seem to be competitive on defense and military dominance, the US engagement over economics and freedom of the press also showcases a desire to avoid the guise of containing China, but engaging with them while staying true to US values.

US Asia-Pacific Diplomacy and Realist, and Smart Power Theories

Similar to the previous portion of this paper that discussed current military engagement with the PRC and implications of Vietnam’s ease of the arms embargo, the information gathered discussing current US diplomacy is not all-inclusive; it is only a snapshot. The points covered in regards to diplomacy were US-Philippine and Japan defense improvements, US reaction to the PRC’s artificial ADIZ over the Senkakus, US and China relations with ASEAN, and other diplomatic measures currently employed by the US with respect to China. The updated agreements between the US, Philippines, and Japan regarding security align under realist theory as they add to security in Asia-Pacific as well as the security of the US. Additionally, the US actions to fly B-52s into the ADIZ is in support of Japan can be categorized under realist theory. The flight conveyed a message of not only remaining true to Japan’s defense, but that the US will not let other nations claim illegal ownership over the domains of global commons including air and maritime domains. In alignment with realist theory, the US not only ensures the security

¹⁴¹ Susan V. Lawrence, “US-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues,” *Congressional Research Service*, August 1, 2013, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41108.pdf>, p.12.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, p.12.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p.12.

of Japan, but also conveys it still holds the upper hand. Yet, the US relations with ASEAN, an entity that does business with the US and China, and US diplomatic measures such as ensuring freedom to information through blogs and issuing visas to the Chinese for the goal of spurring economic prosperity, those actions do not fit the realist model as it seems the interests of the US and China are both in developing ties with other countries with the intent of gaining more wealth.

The US work with ASEAN would not fall into realist theory; the US is not trying to contain China through interactions with ASEAN. ASEAN is a conduit that simply works to ensure peace and stability among nations with a stake in Asia-Pacific. Therefore, it is unlikely ASEAN has any intention of trying to contain China as opposed to work with them. Also, the US actions to ensure China's citizens have uninhibited access to blogs and information does undermine China's ability to control and censor media however, the US also wants to encourage the Chinese to come work in the US as mentioned earlier evidenced by issuing of visas. This practice of diplomacy is more in alignment with smart power theory as it is the US attempting to continue talking to China through means of sharing its information and welcoming its citizens to take part in the US economy. The US ability to bypass PRC sensors and encourage Chinese citizens to come work in the US is also a sign that the US may be trying to advertise that the American has a better life to offer than China itself. Overall, these practices do not totally reflect containment under realist theory, but engagement under smart power theory as a tool to enhance cooperation with other nations.

Economics Between China and the US

When the military-to-military aspect of China and the US is set aside, the US diplomatic involvement with China is extremely significant and goes beyond engaging the PRC in media and job growth. The diplomatic involvement touches onto a significant commonality between the two nations: economics. In Susan Lawrence's report, the US and China hold the "first and second (respectively) largest (economies) in the world."¹⁴⁴ In regards to the relative countries' status as trading partners, trade data from 2012 indicates that the US was China's top trading partner and China was the US's second largest (next to Canada).¹⁴⁵ Based on data from 2013, China held the spot as "largest foreign holder of US Treasury securities, holding \$1.32T."¹⁴⁶ Though it is only a small cross-section, the idea is that China and the US are heavily interdependent when it comes to trade and their respective economies. Like several other nations, the two can agree on pursuing money and wealth for their respective nations. Yet, this is also a point of contention between the two countries as the US experiences cyber-theft espionage emanating from China just as China tracks cyber-attacks from the US.¹⁴⁷ While it seems that China might be committing business espionage on the US, Lawrence's report partially implies that the cyber intrusions are more focused on US Defense networks and less on US businesses. Though it is uncertain if this is really the case, it is possible because China similarly experiences cyber intrusions in its Ministry of National Defense and China Military Online that supposedly are traced to the US.¹⁴⁸

In regards to trade and the two nations' respective economies, both nations are mutually benefited from each other. China invests in the US and the US is financed by China. The gains for China in this relationship have amounted to a surplus but the surplus cannot be spent on

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p.32.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p.32.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p.32.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p.34-35.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p.35.

China itself.¹⁴⁹ Lawrence's report indicates that US economists' understanding of China's economic policies are that China "does not allow foreign currency to be spent in China" therefore, China has to spend its surplus elsewhere.¹⁵⁰ When compared to the Cold War, the US never participated in any trade with the Soviets until the early 1980s as the purpose of US strategy was to contain their spread and eventually cause their nation to collapse.¹⁵¹ In a sense, the cyber warfare between the two entities demonstrates another avenue for the US to check China's power and maintain superiority in addition to prevention of business espionage. Based on that reasoning, the US is exercising containment on the grounds of not only military capabilities at sea and air, but through the cyber domain aligning with the NSS, QDR, and PACOM strategy. On the front of economics, there is a lot more engagement between the two.

China has a lot of money invested into the US; US Treasury securities, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), consumer products to include computers and computer parts, communications equipment, audio and video equipment, apparel, and other miscellaneous items.¹⁵² In 2011, China's holdings in US Treasury securities stood at \$1,174B.¹⁵³ Wayne Morrison's *Congressional Research Service* report also indicates that China has more money invested into US Treasury securities than it does FDI.¹⁵⁴ According to Morrison, the cumulative FDI through 2009 was \$791M.¹⁵⁵ The significance of this data indicates that it would not be in the interests of the PRC or US to develop an adversarial relationship because each member's economy is dependent on the other. This economic and trade relationship between the two countries also

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p.38.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.38.

¹⁵¹ "United States Relations With Russia: The Cold War," *State.gov*, accessed November 8, 2014, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/fs/85895.htm>.

¹⁵² Wayne M. Morrison, "China-US Trade Issues," *State.gov*, September 30, 2011, accessed November 8, 2014, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/175869.pdf>, p.7.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.12.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p.14.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p.14.

highlights a significant deviation from the Cold War in that where the US did not do business directly with the Soviet Union, the US and China have binding economic ties. Since the US is greatly financed by China, an adversarial relationship would only aggravate the ability for the US to sort itself out of its current debt as well as delay any progress of reducing the US deficit. Conversely, China depends on the US for business even though its own economic system does not allow for spending the dividends and profits from US investment.¹⁵⁶ In this situation, the only reasonable course of action for the US is to not contain PRC economics but to continue engaging with them while trying to develop other methods of reducing the US deficit. Thus, unlike the Cold War where the US could afford to economically compete with the Soviets, the US economy is tied to the Chinese economy in such a way where China plays the role of a major stockholder that the US cannot lose. Overall, the grounds of economics show no major signs of containment being enacted by the US against China, but rather a lot of continuous engagement between the two as they have shared interests in building up their wealth.

Economics, Realist Theory, and Smart Power Theory

Between military posture and diplomacy, economics as an instrument of power literally binds the US and China together. As mentioned from previous information regarding US-China economic relations, both economies are interdependent. In spite of differences such as human rights and territorial boundaries, China and the US have a significant lot invested into their economic goals: flourishing economies. Through the lens of Realist theory and the Cold War strategy, Asia-Pacific strategy in economics is very different from the Cold War as the US did not do business with the Soviets but its own allies. The US is not in a financial position to

¹⁵⁶ Susan V. Lawrence, "U.S.-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues," *Congressional Research Service*, August 1, 2013, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41108.pdf>, p.38.

outspend China like the Soviets, but is in a position where China is an investor. Therefore, the US cannot bolster its security from China and other nations with an economy that is receiving support from the PRC.

When the US-China economic relations are viewed under the lens of Smart Power theory, economics is a national instrument of power that can be used at the US disposal for improving security and stability in Asia-Pacific. The US cannot afford to place money into resources to contain China's economic growth based on its current state and the two economies are too linked together that it is unprofitable to both the US and China to divide themselves. Even though China is unable to spend the dividends made from investment in the US due to US dollars being a foreign currency, it holds a significant stake by being one of the top investors in the US. Since economies and the drive to gain wealth function as grounds of mutual interests, the US economic posture with respect to China uses the economy to ensure security and cooperation. Therefore, unlike containment of the Soviets using all instruments of power, the US and China dialogue in economics for the benefit of both nations. This utilization of Smart Power is also an indicator of engagement.

V. Conclusion

Summary

Since 2011, the US shifted its focus from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific simply because of changing dynamics in the globe, especially China's growth in not only economic power, but also military power. In the past, the US always had a focus and interest in the Asia-Pacific region as demonstrated by the several military bases staked in Japan, South Korea, Guam, and sites open for rotational and/or transiting presence such as in Australia, and US

involvement in South China Sea and East China Sea disputes. However, the Obama administration made more overt tones that it was more interested and determined to give more attention to nations in the region to aid in peace and stability in Asia-Pacific. The impression provided by Mark Manyin's report would give reason to believe that the US would want to contain China's growth if the region goes unchecked by the US.¹⁵⁷

A reason for the US to also focus on Asia-Pacific would be that China's military also aims for A2/AD capabilities preventing freedom of movement in the region by not only military players, but civilian players as well. Blockading access to global commons could also negatively shape the region, therefore the US reset its focus to Asia-Pacific. The "pivot" to the Pacific is mostly interpreted as a means of containing China similar to the strategy developed by George Kennan and implemented against the Soviet Union. Current events such as the government decisions found in Manyin's report would give reason to believe that the focus on the Asia-Pacific region was mostly targeted to China. The literature on the subject ranges from recommendations of what the US should do concerning Asia-Pacific strategy based on speculation and/or the current strategic environment.

The major themes found in the literature review include engagement, containment or a combination of the two as far as how to handle China. The Cold War strategy was aimed at containing the Soviets; the Obama administration's new focus on Asia-Pacific and the ideas it has for the region have given the impression of containing the PRC's growth. The purpose of this paper was to determine what is similar, if anything, about the Asia-Pacific strategy when compared with the Cold War strategy. The research design called for qualitative research

¹⁵⁷ Mark E. Manyin et.al., "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia," *Congressional Research Service*, March 28, 2012, p.10, accessed September 6, 2014, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>, p.7.

analyses of current government documents and actions in the Asia-Pacific region, analysis of the government actions through the lens of realism and smart power theories. Specific focus was given to investigating military posture and capability in the region, diplomacy, and economics. The information gained was analyzed through realism and smart power as a means of determining whether Asia-Pacific strategy is presently exercising containment. Realist theory was used as the theory that closely matched the Cold War strategy, therefore if government actions could be catalogued as following realist theory, then it would imply containment. Smart power theory was used in determining if US actions in the region were more in alignment with engagement. This is due to the fact that smart power uses all instruments of power including but not limited to military, diplomatic and economic measures to achieve objectives.

The limitation of the research is that Asia-Pacific strategy decisions are being made daily causing changes in the strategic, operational, and tactical levels due to national level choices. None of the research implicated a belief that matches the domino theory. That is to say, none of the information collected implies that if the PRC is not contained, then Asia-Pacific will become prey to “red” influence. The information captured in this paper is only a very small sample of what the US government is doing in regards to Asia-Pacific. In order to keep within the scope of this paper, research gained information on military posture and capability included not only the US efforts of flying B-52s through the Chinese ADIZ over the Senkakus, but significant changes in military posture. The change in posture includes inviting China to participate in major Asia-Pacific exercises such as RIMPAC and their observer role in COBRA GOLD. Additionally, the US easing of the arms embargo to Vietnam opened the possibilities for enhancing military capability of the Vietnamese was noteworthy in this report under military posture and capability.

When the military interactions with China are compared to the Cold War military interactions with the Soviet Union, the engagement with China makes the Asia-Pacific strategy very different from containment as military efforts are also to build trust between the two nations. The strategy of containment worked to prevent Soviet influence and growth; engagement is used to diffuse tension and unify nations. When viewed under the lens of realist theory, current military interactions do not entirely fit the image of realist principles. In the present, the US enhances its own security but not in the way of build-up and isolation towards the Soviets. Instead, the US-Chinese military interactions in Asia-Pacific match the description of Joseph Nye's "Smart Power" where all instruments of national power are utilized achieve national gains. Overall, the current events discussed in this paper regarding military interactions between the US and Chinese indicate that engagement is indeed taking place between the two however, with light efforts of containment such as in the case of the B-52s transiting through China's ADIZ over the Senkakus. Thus, Asia-Pacific strategy with respect to military posture and capability is very different from the US military's posture towards the Soviets.

When diplomacy was examined, the elements extracted from current events show that the recent updated defense pacts between the US and Philippines, and the desire for updated US-Japan defense allows speculation for containment as both the Philippines and Japan experience struggles with the PRC in the South China Sea and East China Sea. It is possible that both of these nations with strong ties to the US could mean containing the PRC's military as well the US State Department's attempts to bypass Chinese censors though the intentions are positive in trying to pass information that is available to others.¹⁵⁸ However, it is offset because both the PRC and the US work through a neutral conduit, ASEAN. The US engages with ASEAN and so

¹⁵⁸ Susan V. Lawrence, "US-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues," *Congressional Research Service*, August 1, 2013, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41108.pdf>, p.12.

does China; ASEAN does not serve as a medium for taking sides, but to ensure Asia-Pacific nations remain peaceful. When compared against containment, diplomacy measures catalogued as smart power over realist theory based on the intentions of the US. They are not meant to contain China's growth, but to interact with it on a level that opens up avenues for business and financial gain while still maintaining security in Asia-Pacific via Japan and the Philippines. Similar to the military posture, the diplomatic effort is one of engagement with elements of containment.

In regards to US-China economic relations, the information gained for this paper indicated that though the media shows struggle and distrust between the two, the research shows they are two capitalist systems that desire to gain more wealth. This is a major departure from containment because in the Cold War, it would be an odd occasion for the US to open the business door with the Soviet Union. In the present, the US experiences financial struggles and it receives significant financial investments from China. This follows the tune of smart power as the nation is using economics as an instrument of power for dialoguing with China. Yet, there is an imperative to do this because both economies have become interdependent. Additionally, economics is everything because whether it is dollars or yuan, money is needed to obtain the resources for security and survival. While economics can be used to enhance US security while also containing the PRC, the current US-China relations on economics does not match that at all because of the dependency between the two. Therefore, economics as an instrument of power and a plane for engagement indicate that Asia-Pacific strategy is truly built to be one of engagement in accordance with President Obama's NSS.

Recommendations

As the US continues to combat the Islamic State in the Middle East, deal with Russia's invasion of Crimea, and continue focusing on Asia-Pacific, the US will still have to monitor China in the Far East. The evidence gathered for this report seems to point that though there are efforts reflecting containment, the Obama administration, the DOD, the State Department, and other agencies are engaging with China and talking with them as a means of ensuring not only national, but global security. The biggest unifying theme between the two is the fact that there is no pay-off for the US containing China because China plays the role of one of the US's major stockholders in the US economy. Simply, the US cannot afford to build distrust with China through containment if the US desires to have a reliable source of financial support.

It is necessary for not only the US military, but also the US as a whole to ensure it still has the ability to defend itself. However, if the US government intends to use the military and other instruments of national power to contain the PRC, then it will only add to the conflicts erupting around the world such as the threat of the Islamic State in the Middle East and Russia's incursions into Crimea. A balance of developing trust while ensuring US security must be achieved and the research shows that engagement with small touches of containment can develop such a balance. Unfortunately, trust and transparency will never be achieved. Nations benefit when developing and employing secret capabilities as opposed to revealing them during competitions for power. Thus, as long as the US desires to maintain an upper hand on China, then China has no incentive to open up on its internal operations.

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