

Identity Politics and the US Rebalance to Asia: American and Northeast Asian Perspectives

Rosemary Foot

St Antony's College, University of Oxford, U.K.

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The East Asia Institute
#909 Sampoong B/D, 158 Euljiro
Jung-gu, Seoul 04548
Republic of Korea
Tel. 82 2 2277 1683
Fax 82 2 2277 1684



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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to provide a fuller understanding of the perspectives of Japan, the ROK, and Taiwan on the US rebalance strategy. In particular, it explores the basis of the difference in approach to that strategy and argues that difference arises from both the distinctive international identities that regional actors have set out to promote, as well as from the multi-layered nature of the rebalance strategy itself. The implications of this for intra-alliance coordination as well as for relations with China — two key elements of the rebalance — are also examined in order to show the complexities associated with America's successful promotion of this strategy.

The Obama administration's 'rebalance' strategy to Asia, introduced in some detail by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as the 'pivot' in October 2011,¹ has attracted much scholarly and policy attention. Of particular note have been the Southeast Asian dimensions of that policy which has resulted in a markedly larger US diplomatic and strategic presence in the sub-region.² Somewhat less well-covered have been the crucial Northeast Asian responses to the rebalance — that is, the perspectives of US formal and informal allies in Northeast Asia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Taiwan. The longstanding and multi-faceted nature of US-Northeast Asian ties underlines their importance to the successful enactment of the US strategy. Their status as consoli-

* First draft March 2016: please do not quote or cite without permission.

¹ Hillary Clinton, 'America's Pacific Century', *Foreign Policy*, 11 October 2011 at foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/.

² Note, for example, the unprecedented meeting in the US between President Obama and all ASEAN state leaders (Sunnylands summit, California, February 2016).



dated democratic political entities, and powerful global trading nations, together with their extensive security ties with the United States make it crucial to understand their perspectives on the rebalance and their perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks that it entails. They matter even more to the policy's successful enactment to the extent that they coordinate with each other and complement US moves, as well as send a coherent message of support for the policy's central aims.

However, rather than strong and complementary signals of support, instead there are subtle differences in response among the three Northeast Asian actors, and little in the way of intra-alliance coordination between the two US allies, Japan and the ROK. Taiwan, of course, has not been a formal ally of America's since 1979, but it too demonstrates a nuanced approach to managing a relationship with Washington that is crucially supportive of its continuing independent existence at the same time that it maintains extensive and generally stable ties with Beijing. Mainstream international relations theories, particularly neo-realism, are not helpful to explaining these differential outcomes in response. That approach assumes sameness in behaviour on the part of political actors facing shifts in the balance of power. Realists would predict that as China has become a strategically more powerful and assertive actor in the Asia-Pacific region, the bonds between the US and its Northeast Asian partners would become more similar in form and the ties between US allies in the region firmer. As already noted, these features are not prominent.

One factor that helps to explain the variegation in response of the local actors is that each of the parties has used the rebalancing strategy to move its own wider foreign and strategic policy agenda forward, agendas that reflect their respective international identities. It is argued here that the lens of identity is particularly valuable in helping us to understand the differing levels of alignment with US goals as well as the failure of the local states sometimes to act in tandem. There are two main dimensions to this. First, the way that identities are constructed in Northeast Asia tends to reinforce notions of 'Self' and 'Other' — in other words, the identities that are extant have the effect of reinforcing difference. Second, the central tenets of America's own identity as a Pacific power — an identity that is reflected in the multi-layered design of the rebalance — expands opportunities for the expression of Northeast Asian difference. In ways that are presumably unintended, the rebalance strategy's main dimensions have provided avenues for the development of a variegated response on the part of local actors.

In what follows, the draft paper will first elaborate the importance of identity politics and the ways that identity concerns can help to explain the policy positions of political actors. Next it uses the identity lens as a way of exploring the main features of the US rebalance strategy. It shows how that strategy has shifted in emphasis over time in order better to reflect America's Pacific identity. One other consequence of that shift in emphasis is that the US rebalance may have begun to align more closely with what the US perceives to be Northeast Asian priorities. Third, the paper turns to the Chinese government's perspective, in order to elucidate the broader context in which Northeast Asian states formulate their policies. Fourth, the essay shows how Northeast Asian political actors have leveraged the layered nature of the US rebalance strategy to reflect their own identity concerns. I argue that the layered nature of the rebalance not only allows Northeast Asian actors to reinforce international identities of importance to their wider foreign



policy goals, but also provides the opportunity to develop subtly different relationships with Beijing that reflect these wider policy objectives.

The Politics of International Identity

Explorations of international identity draw on the constructivist approach to IR theorizing. They emphasize that interests are not fixed but are shaped by ideational forces. In these circumstances, material power is experienced as a social fact and thus can attract approval or dismay depending on where the materially powerful are cast along the continuum of friend or enemy.³

The construction of identity is a process that helps us account for who we are. In general terms, unless a particular identity carries with it certain negative attributes, having a stable collective identity enhances a sense of well-being for individuals within collective groupings and at the state level can help to generate a domestic consensus behind policy positions. Viewed from an international systemic perspective, stability in a state's identity aids transparency and predictability, and contributes to global order by helping the self and external others to adopt and recognize patterns of behaviour. In this sense, identity functions to enable or to constrain particular courses of action. It offers some guidance and places some limits on the agenda of policy choice.

Terms such as great power, middle power, normal power, civilian power, or developing country — all roles that have been referenced in Northeast Asia — when used in the discourse of political elites and when accepted by the wider society, shape a domestic understanding of a state's identity. They also give clues as to how that state is likely to act in the international arena. If those identity labels are understood and accepted by external actors then this can have the function of reducing areas of uncertainty and conflict in foreign relations and help to stabilize a sense of self.

Two forms of contestation matter in terms of the politics of identity: first, as many authors have noted, state identities are often constructed in opposition to other states. Indeed, put more boldly still, Linus Hagstrom and Karl Gustafsson have argued that 'demarcations between domestic and international, identity and difference, or Self and Other, are exactly what *constitute* identity.'⁴ As noted earlier, this binary form of identity construction is particularly prevalent in North-east Asia where states use labels such as democratic or authoritarian, pacifist versus aggressive, law-abiding versus law-breaking, to construct particular senses of Self and Other.

³ For a constructivist account, see Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For work that deals more explicitly with questions of identity, see for example David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2nd edn. 1998); Ivor B Neumann, 'Self and other in international relations,' *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol 2: 2, 1996, pp. 139-174); Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

⁴ Linus Hagstrom and Karl Gustafsson, 'Japan and identity change: why it matters in International Relations,' *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 28: 1, March 2015, p. 5. See also David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), esp. pp. 19-22.



Second, there can be domestic contestation about the nature of a state's identity. Some states, such as China, may hold dual identities of great power and developing country with one or other taking precedence at particular policy moments. Postwar Japan has been engaged in an existential debate about its place in the world that has long revolved around questions of identity. Labels such as pacifist or 'normal' power, victim or aggressor state, have dominated domestic debate. The Republic of Korea (ROK) identifies itself in opposition to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), but also increasingly since the advent of democratic rule and OECD status, as a middle-power that is rule-abiding and capable of acting as an intermediary between contesting political actors. In reference to Japan, it has been keen to ensure that Japan atones for its past colonial identity and the subordinate, colonial, status that it imposed on Korea. Taiwan's identity debate focuses on ethnicities, in particular on questions that relate to a sense of being Taiwanese or Chinese or both and what that means in terms of relations with the outside world and with the PRC in particular. While these differences in the nature of the internal debate shape differences in policy response, in each case disputes of these kinds require particular actors or interest groups within these societies to mobilize support for a particular identity. This requires a rhetorical appeal to some so-called intrinsic value associated with the state, or results in referencing forms of behaviour engaged in by foreign interlocutors — and foreign competitors or rivals in particular — that can be argued to require acceptance of one or other of the identities that are being internally debated.

In what follows, I aim to show how adoption of the lens of identity helps us to understand current policy positions in Northeast Asia towards the US rebalance, as well as to explain why that rebalance strategy has shifted in emphasis over time.

The US Rebalance to Asia

The US rebalance to Asia has been built upon a particular US narrative about its role in the Asia-Pacific region. A recent manifestation of this narrative came in September 2015 on the anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Pacific, but it is one that has appeared in many US policy documents connected with the rebalance and with US Asia-Pacific policy more broadly. Indeed, it has become an accepted framing across all major government departments. As Secretary of State John Kerry put it in a press statement in September 2015, the United States 'has been a proud partner in the Asia-Pacific region's astonishing rise from the devastation of war,' to a region that is the 'engine for global economic growth' and that has 'lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty.' He went on: 'The United States will continue to deepen its active engagement in the region as a resident Pacific nation, working with allies and partners to strengthen the institutions, networks, rules, and good practices that promote stability and prosperity.'⁵ The August 2015 De-

⁵ John Kerry, 'On the 70th Anniversary of the End of World War II in the Pacific', Washington DC, 2 September 2015.



partment of Defense Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy reiterated that for ‘70 years, [the] U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region has played a vital role in undergirding regional peace, stability, and security’ enabling ‘tremendous prosperity and economic growth.’⁶ This long-standing meme that the US has acted as the benign hegemon that guarantees peace, prosperity and stability, that has no outstanding territorial claims in the region, and continues to provide both public security as well as public economic goods, is a role that US officials constantly reference. It also appears to have wide-ranging acceptance in large parts of the region, at least among governing elites.⁷

Unsurprisingly, then, given the level of bureaucratic consensus behind this depiction of the role the US has played as a Pacific power, it has shaped the US rebalance to Asia and accounts for and reinforces its multidimensional nature. As outlined in then US Secretary of State’s Hillary Clinton’s article in *Foreign Policy* magazine in 2011 it comprises six major ‘lines of action’: ‘strengthening bilateral security alliances; deepening our working relationship with emerging powers, including with China; engaging with regional multilateral institutions; expanding trade and investment; forging a broad-based military presence; and advancing democracy and human rights.’⁸ Certainly, there were clear antecedents to this policy, or as Hugo Meijer puts it, we can witness, ‘cumulative evolution — rather than radical discontinuity — from previous American foreign policies in the Asia Pacific’.⁹ Nevertheless, the consolidation of various threads of past policies came about because of a stated belief in the Obama administration that the United States had to maintain a primary position in a region that it recognized had become the key to global prosperity, that was undergoing strategic change, and to this point had remained stable predominantly because of the central role that the US had played in the region’s security architecture. After a decade or more of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the constraints imposed by a contraction in its resources, the United States needed to think afresh about how to regain regional states’ confidence in its commitment to this dynamic Asia-Pacific region at a time of strategic uncertainty and transition. Not surprisingly, this required a repackaging of longer-standing aims.

As noted earlier, the rebalance has three main components: the political, economic and military. In terms of diplomatic engagement, we have witnessed large numbers of visits on the part of Obama administration officials and at the highest levels, from the President downwards.¹⁰ Representation at multilateral meetings has been reliably consistent, with the notable exception of Pres-

⁶ US Department of Defense, *The Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy: Achieving U.S. National Security Objectives in a Changing Environment*, Washington DC, 21 August 2015.

⁷ For an interesting argument about the sources of this acceptance in Southeast Asia see Natasha Hamilton-Hart, *Hard Interests, Soft Illusions: Southeast Asia and American Power*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

⁸ Hillary Clinton, ‘America’s Pacific Century’, *Foreign Policy*, 11 October 2011 at foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/.

⁹ Hugo Meijer, (ed.) *Origins and Evolution of the US Rebalance Toward Asia*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2015), p. 15. See also Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: Norton, 2015), pp. 248-251.

¹⁰ Phillip C. Saunders in ‘China’s Rising Power, the U.S. Rebalance to Asia, and Implications for U.S.-China Relations’, *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 15:3, Sept. 2014, has tabulated this increase at note 16, and at pp. 28-29.



ident Obama's absence from the APEC Summit in 2013 because of a budgetary crisis at home that led to a partial US government shutdown. The administration has also courted the ASEAN states in particular, signing the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, appointing an ambassador to the ASEAN Secretariat based in Jakarta, and beginning participation in the East Asia Summit. The US-ASEAN relationship was raised to a 'strategic partnership' in November 2015, and in February 2016, President Obama and ASEAN leaders held a summit at Sunnylands in California. More unexpectedly, the United States has also offered itself as a facilitator of multilateral discussions on the sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea, and has pressed for conclusion of a Code of Conduct, much to China's irritation.

However, despite these and other irritations in Sino-US ties, the political dimension of the rebalance has also included increased dialogue with the Chinese government, and the search for areas of cooperation at a time of heightened strategic competition. As it has with other countries of the region, the US has engaged in several high-level meetings with Chinese counterparts, including presidential summits, the enhancement of military-to-military relations, and a focus on the Strategic and Economic Dialogue meetings. At the November 2014 Summit in Beijing, and again in Washington DC in September 2015, the US highlighted areas of cooperation in the relationship: over Iran, climate change, Ebola, and Afghanistan.

On the economic front, there have been two major developments in US policy: first, signature of the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement in 2011 which Philip Saunders describes as 'the most significant agreement of its kind since the North American Free Trade Agreement,'¹¹ and secondly, the advancement of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement involving 12 parties and including from the region Brunei, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia (and from the wider region, Australia and New Zealand). Many of these countries count China as their major trading partner, but the willing involvement of these countries in the TPP negotiations suggests support for reducing levels of dependence and the diversification of trade, as well as for boosting the US position in the region. Their involvement also gives credence to the US statements that it is a resident Pacific power with rightful engagement in the Asia-Pacific region including through its economic linkages. The TPP was finally initialed in October 2015, though faces the tough challenge of ratification in the 12 member states, not least in the US Congress, which promised a rough ride for the agreement even before seeing all of its terms.

Predictably, the military dimension of the rebalance has received a great deal of attention in the literature on the topic.¹² Various initiatives followed swiftly on the heels of the enunciation of the rebalance, including the overarching goal to reposition the US navy from a 50/50 split between the Pacific and Atlantic to a 60/40 split; the transfer of several elements of US forces based in Okinawa to Guam, mainland Japan and Hawaii; the rotation of US marines into Darwin; the upgrading of US missile defences; the sending of littoral combat ships to Singapore; and signature of a ten-year Enhanced Defence Cooperation agreement with the Philippines that also allows for a

¹¹ Saunders, 'China's Rising Power,' p. 30.

¹² Some of it has been highly critical. See Robert S. Ross, 'The Problem with the Pivot,' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91: 6, Nov/Dec 2012.



US rotational presence. In January 2016, the Philippines Supreme Court voted in a 10-4 decision to approve US stationing of its troops and weapons at Filipino bases.¹³ In 2015, the US renegotiated the US-Japan Defence Guidelines agreement, and signed the US-India Defence Framework. The US has also relaxed its arms embargo on Vietnam and signed a Joint Vision statement with the country in June 2015. More striking still has been the visit of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Nguyen Phu Trong, to the United States from 5 to the 10 July 2015 where he met with President Obama and other senior administration officials.

On the eve of Ashton Carter's first trip to Asia in 2015 as Secretary of Defense, he described in great detail the next phase of the rebalance. This involves the provision of 'high-end capabilities' in the air and at sea, enhanced joint military training, the improvement of maritime domain awareness, and promotion of trilateral cooperation, mentioning US-Australian-Japanese efforts in this regard.¹⁴ At the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore in May 2015, before the region's governing elites, he repeated some of these details, working also to convince his audience that the rebalance will outlast the Obama era since it 'enjoys strong bipartisan support.'¹⁵ However, his overall goal in this speech was to indicate that the introduction of enhanced capabilities should not give the impression that the US rebalance is mainly about the military aspects. Rather he, like US Secretary of State John Kerry in various of his speeches, has tried to point up that vital to the rebalance has been the other two pillars — diplomatic engagement particularly through regional multilateral institutions, and the economic dimension, primarily through the TPP. The military dimension is directed towards ensuring, he said, that the 'fulcrum of the global economy' maintains its position as one of the 'fastest growing regions in the world.'

Indeed, if we compare Clinton's early enunciation of the pivot with statements by Kerry in 2014, and in July 2015 by Daniel Russel (the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs), it is clear that the economic and political aspects of the rebalance have become steadily more, not less, prominent, despite rising tensions in the Sino-American relationship in particular with respect to the South China Sea and freedom of navigation issues. As Kerry described the 'four specific opportunities that define the rebalance' in November 2014, it is about 'the opportunity to create sustainable economic growth; ... powering a clean energy revolution that will help us address climate change; reducing tensions and promoting regional cooperation by strengthening the institutions and reinforcing the norms that contribute to a rules-based, stable region; ... empowering people throughout the Asia-Pacific to live with dignity, security, and

¹³ Javier C. Hernandez and Floyd Whaley, 'Philippine Supreme Court Approves Return of U.S. Troops', 13 January 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/13/world/asia/philippines-us-military.html>.

¹⁴ Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, 'Remarks on the Next Phase of the U.S. Rebalance to Asia', McCain Institute, Arizona State University, 6 April 2015.

¹⁵ Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, 'A Regional Security Architecture where Everyone Rises', IISS, Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, 30th May 2015. This assumption of the rebalance's resilience is strongly supported in Scott W. Harold 'Is the Pivot Doomed? The Resilience of American's Strategic "Rebalance"', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol 37: 4, (Winter 2014), pp. 85-99. Harold agrees that it 'enjoys widespread support both within the bureaucracy and across much of the mainstream political spectrum.'



opportunity.¹⁶ Russel in July 2015 continued these themes of cooperative security and the maintenance of sustained development. As he put it: ‘For the last seven decades, we’ve worked with allies and partners in the region to build *shared prosperity and shared security*. In the last six-and-a-half years, in particular, we’ve invested in building cooperative relations with *every* country in the region [emphasis added]. This is the rebalance.’¹⁷

What these later explications of the policy have in common is a desire to emphasize and reinforce the idea of the United States not solely as a deterrent force but an all-round contributor to the peace and prosperity of the region. This has required elevation of the non-military dimensions of the rebalance, to ensure it is not perceived as mainly militaristic in intent, and importantly is not ‘all about China’. Clearly the policy does have a lot to do with China’s rise and perceived growing assertiveness especially with respect to its maritime sovereignty disputes, and the US agreements with the Philippines and Vietnam in particular reflect that. Moreover, certain policy statements and strategy documents tend to reinforce the China angle to the neglect of other goals of the rebalance.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in part because of stated regional preferences to avoid polarizing rivalry between the United States and China, as well as crucial interdependencies between the various major states, US officials have continued to point to the prospects for and areas of cooperation in the US-China relationship that provide some basis for stabilizing relations at a time of transition. Even as China increases its efforts to turn reefs into islands, and its statement that it intends to build features on those it controls that support ‘necessary military defence’, the US State Department has maintained a discourse that attempts to balance concerns in the military domain with structural efforts to sustain contact and even cooperation. Thus, while Russel’s 2015 statement included sharp criticism of China’s South China Sea policies, his remarks on his hopes for the region’s prosperous and stable future were inclusive of China, much as Kerry’s had been in November 2014. Russel also reminded his audience of Obama’s ‘20 some-odd meetings with the Chinese President or Premier’; and contact via ‘the Strategic and Economic Dialogue and an alphabet soup of other consultations.’ Russel claimed that with these meetings the US had ‘put a floor under the relationship so it can withstand tensions or even a crisis.’¹⁹

Thus, we have three pillars associated with the US rebalance strategy, and the indications are that, over time, the economic and diplomatic dimensions have come to hold a more prominent and better-integrated place in the strategy. There is also a desire to show that any state’s associa-

¹⁶ John Kerry, ‘Remarks on US-China Relations’, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC, 4 November 2014.

¹⁷ Daniel R. Russel, ‘Remarks at the Fifth Annual South China Sea Conference’, Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 21 July 2015.

¹⁸ Of relevance here is the US Department of Defense Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy of August 2015, which has a strong China focus. Obama too has been guilty of over-emphasizing the China angle in his statements exhorting Congress to give him Trade Promotion Authority, and then to ratify the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement. See too ‘Remarks by Ambassador Michael Froman at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars’, Washington DC, 13 January 2016.

¹⁹ Russel, ‘Remarks.’ This claim, as at February 2016, is being put to the test after Chinese stationing of anti-ballistic missiles on Woody Island.



tion with the rebalance does not imply outright antagonism towards the PRC given that the US government itself finds it possible to cooperate with the Chinese government in a number of policy areas. This layered policy should, then, give America's allies considerable room for manoeuvre in their responses to it.

However, this room for manoeuvre is affected by two factors in particular: first, by Chinese reactions to the rebalance and the levels of pressure Beijing puts on its neighbours in this policy domain. Second, it is also shaped by the wider policy agendas of these states as they seek to leverage various aspects of the rebalance strategy to fit better with policy preferences of their own.

I deal first with Beijing before turning to the major focus of this research paper: the perspectives of Japan, the ROK, and Taiwan.

China's Reaction to the Rebalance

The official Chinese reaction to the rebalance has been negative. The Xi government in particular has tried to promote an identity for China in response to the rebalance that emphasizes its role in creating security cooperation among all Asian states and in promoting 'win-win' economic development. This is set against the US role at the centre of alliances that Beijing avers divides Asia into friends and enemies. China's great power status, an identity that has had far greater prominence since President Xi Jinping has come into office, is understood to require behaviour indicating an ability and willingness to contribute to regional public goods, especially in the economic areas. For this reason, 'One Belt, One Road' has come to be projected as the signature policy of the Xi administration, together with establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).²⁰

The Chinese government has made three main arguments in reference to the rebalance. The broad umbrella complaint is that the US pivot to the region has had a seriously destabilizing effect — a statement that hits directly at the US depiction of its substantive contribution to the region. First, the Chinese government has described the rebalance mostly as a form of containment, reminiscent of the Cold War.²¹ US alliance partners have been particularly subject to this complaint because these alliances were forged in the 1950s and China does not accept that their conceptual underpinnings have been transformed since that era. From Beijing's perspective, their longevity contrasts with what it claims is a growing trend that favours cooperative security mechanisms through multilateral frameworks.

²⁰ For an interesting insight into a Chinese debate on this policy see "'One Belt, One Road': China's Great Leap Outward," *China Analysis*, June 2015, European Council on Foreign Relations.

²¹ One recent study, however, produced by the Foreign-Ministry affiliated think tank, The China Institute of International Studies, has focused on US 'hedging' rather than 'containment' on the grounds that China's resurgence creates new opportunities of benefit to US interests as well as challenges to those interests. See Ruan Zongze, et al., *The Twilight of a Feast on Power: The U.S. 'Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific and China's Countermeasures*, (in Chinese) Beijing: Current Affairs Press, 2015).



President Xi, at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Shanghai in May 2014 emphasized cooperative security particularly strongly. This could be interpreted as a Chinese device to undercut America's comparative advantage in the security field in the region. So too could the Chinese move to upgrade the Xiangshan Forum on security from a biennial meeting at track two level to a track one and a half meeting held annually. As Xi put it in Shanghai: 'One cannot live in the 21st century with the outdated thinking from the age of Cold War and zero-sum game. We believe that it is necessary to advocate common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in Asia. We need to innovate our security concept, establish a new regional security cooperation architecture, and jointly build a road for security of Asia that is shared by and win-win to all.' Even more pointedly, Xi added: 'in the final analysis, it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia. The people of Asia have the capability and wisdom to achieve peace and stability in the region through enhanced cooperation.'²²

With respect to the economic dimension of the rebalance — the TPP — the Chinese government initially also had very little to say that was positive, mainly depicting this as a strategic and political project to keep China down, and not an economic advance that is designed to aid the region's prosperity. Nevertheless, subsequently, the Chinese rhetoric has softened. The Central Party School's biweekly publication, *Study Times*, together with various Chinese officials, have indicated interest in joining the grouping at some point in the future.²³ At the same time, China has been promoting the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and also the Free Trade Agreement of the Asia Pacific notably at the APEC summit in Beijing in November 2014. However, neither of these can develop wholly independently of a fully-ratified TPP, given the overlap in memberships.

However, as noted earlier, the most important of China's policy developments that has a bearing on the US rebalance is the 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) initiative, as well as the establishment of the AIIB. At the 2014 APEC summit, President Xi announced a \$40 billion Silk Road Fund, as well as a capital input of \$100 billion for the AIIB. OBOR's focus on trade and investment promotion plus infrastructure development in areas crying out for the connectivity that such development can bring reinforces the sense of China as a power able to provide regional public goods on a scale that goes beyond that promised by the TPP — were the latter ever to be fully enacted. A Chinese-Eurasian region of influence is said to be in the making.

²² President Xi Jinping, 'New Asian Security Concept For New Progress in Security Cooperation. Remarks at the Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia,' Shanghai, 21 May 2014. http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml.

²³ For example, at a Brookings Institution meeting, China's head of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank repeated China's interest in joining the TPP. See 'Building Asia's new bank: An address by Jin Liqun, president-designate of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank,' 21 October 2015. See also Ben Blanchard, 'China communist party paper says country should join U.S.-led trade pact,' *Reuters*, 25 October 2015. An Editorial, 'Successful global trade agreements require China's participation,' in *Global Times*, 6 October 2015, stressed that China should not get anxious about the conclusion of the TPP agreement since it would not achieve its goals without China's participation.



Second, in reference to the central US claim that the rebalance promotes and maintains regional stability, the Chinese make a ‘moral hazard’ argument. The claim here is that regional states such as Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam, have been emboldened in promoting their maritime sovereignty disputes in the East and South China seas based on the understanding that the United States will support them were they to end up in a military clash with China.²⁴ At the 2010 ARF meeting, Secretary Clinton for the first time indicated that the United States had a national interest in peaceful resolution of the South China Sea issue, a policy change that the Chinese later linked to the rebalance. They deemed that change in US policy to be highly significant in its geostrategic implications. With respect to the 2015 revised Defence Guidelines between the United States and Japan (see below), Chinese commentators have argued that these guidelines provide further evidence that the US alliance is no longer a restraint on Japan but actually is promoting policies that raise the levels of security threat and of instability in the region. Moreover, a majority view is that the US rebalance strategy is encouraging Tokyo to enhance its offensive military capabilities as well as policies countering China. In this respect, and unlike in the past, the US is said to be “‘unleashing” Japan to confront China.”²⁵

However, more constructively, a third aspect of the Chinese reaction has been directly related to its attempt to promote and have affirmed its great power identity. This effort also is designed to stabilize Sino-American ties, basically through the call for the two states to build a ‘new era in great power relations’, one that recognizes each sides’ ‘core interests’ and treats those interests with respect. Indeed, according to Duchatel and Puig, this Chinese response is the ‘main answer to the US rebalance’ and is based on China’s self-image as a great power no longer biding its time, or keeping a low profile in keeping with a developing country status. Crucially, Beijing perceives this formulation as a way of managing the power transition between the United States and China, which these authors claim nearly all Chinese scholars and think-tankers believe is moving in China’s direction and will be realised ‘in the years or decades to come.’²⁶ In the meantime, the search is on for areas of cooperation or coincidences of interest in the relationship with the United States, with policies towards Afghanistan, climate change, and an ITA agreement depicted as recent manifestations of this ability to cooperate. Military to military ties have also deepened, and China agreed to take part in RIMPAC for the first time in 2014, and will probably do so again in 2016.

Thus, both the United States and China have tried to retain and reinforce a sense that the two countries cooperate as well as compete. The complex nature of this relationship, in turn, has had other important effects in Northeast Asia. For America’s regional allies, the layered nature of the rebalance strategy has allowed them to emphasize particular dimensions of the policy that help

²⁴ Saunders, ‘China’s Rising Power, the U.S. Rebalance to Asia,’ esp. pp. 39-41; Mathieu Duchatel and Emmanuel Puig, ‘Chinese Reactions to the US Rebalance toward Asia: Strategic Distrust and Pragmatic Adaptation’ in Meijer (ed.) *Origins and Evolution*, p. 132.

²⁵ Bonnie Glaser and Brittney Farrar, ‘Through Beijing’s Eyes: How China Sees the US-Japan Alliance’, *The National Interest*, 13th May 2015.

²⁶ Duchatel and Puig, ‘Chinese Reactions to the US Rebalance toward Asia’, esp. p. 130.



with the promotion of their particular international identities. The dual nature of US relations with China also enhances the range of their possible responses to a more powerful China.

I turn now to an exploration of these Northeast Asian responses and show how the lens of identity aids an understanding of the differences in policy among US allies.

Japanese Identity Debates and the US Rebalance

Linus Hagstrom and Ulv Hanssen have argued rightly for the centrality of identity issues in ‘both the analysis and the conduct of Japan’s international relations in the post-war period’ with debate surrounding fundamental questions as to what kind of country Japan is and contestation around the question of what it ‘should aspire to become.’²⁷ Andrew Oros agrees. He has argued in reference to the contemporary period that ‘public debates about Japan’s identity are at the center of all of the central security policy issues Japan faces today.’ He also stresses that ‘Japan’s long-standing security identity of domestic antimilitarism’ is ‘under siege to a degree not seen since its creation over 50 years ago.’²⁸

The advent of the post Cold War era sharpened Japan’s focus on the question of its international status and its concomitant relational identity, the debate turning on the question of whether it should maintain its position as a ‘civilian power’ — pacifistic and anti-militarist — or become a ‘normal country’ able and willing to play a larger independent role in protecting its own security and that of its major ally. That debate took on greater intensity as Japan entered a period of prolonged economic stagnation, designated in one commentary in 2002 as ‘the deepest slump of any developed economy since the Great Depression.’²⁹ This undercut a vital part of Japan’s post war sense of self as a strikingly successful economic model to be emulated. The Republic of Korea gained OECD status in 1996 in the midst of this Japanese decline, and threatened that by 2017 it would achieve GDP per capita rankings that outstripped Japan’s.³⁰ Equally or perhaps more distressing still was the shock of China pushing Japan from second to third place in the world economy rankings in 2010.

Inevitably, this preoccupation with identity has spilled over into the elite and public responses to the US rebalance. With a party in power in Japan that is committed to the advancement of the country as a ‘normal’ rather than a ‘pacifist’ or ‘civilian’ power, the LDP’s reaction to the rebalance, particularly to its military dimensions, has been the most positive of all cases considered here. The government’s ability to advance this identity through the rebalance is undoubtedly aid-

²⁷ Linus Hagstrom and Ulv Hanssen, ‘The North Korean abduction issue: emotions, securitisation and the reconstruction of Japanese identity from “aggressor” to “victim” and from “pacifist” to “normal”’, *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 28:1, 2015, p. 86.

²⁸ Andrew L. Oros: ‘International and Domestic Challenges to Japan’s postwar Security Identity: “norm constructivism” and Japan’s new “proactive pacifism”’ *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 28: 1, 2015, p. 143, p. 140.

²⁹ Quoted in Brad Glosserman and Scott A. Snyder, *The Japan-South Korea Identity Clash: East Asian Security and the United States*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 23.

³⁰ Alexander Bukh, ‘Shimane Prefecture, Tokyo and the territorial dispute over Dokdo/Takeshima: regional and national identities in Japan’, *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 28: 1, 2015, p. 62.



ed by a close and convergent strategic relationship with the United States based on fears about a hostile North Korea armed with nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and a resurgent China with which Tokyo has on-going sovereignty disputes and a generally tense and difficult relationship. The Abe government has also stressed the country's democratic and law-abiding credentials — implicitly identifying itself in contradistinction to China — in order to enhance its appeal to a number of its neighbours, as well as to the United States and other democratic countries.

The Japanese government's moves that have aligned it with the rebalance have come in three main areas. First, it has decided to engage in internal balancing — that is to build up the country's own defence capabilities; second, to forge a more equal alliance relationship with the United States (including participation in the economic centre-piece of the rebalance, the TPP); and third, to move to enhance ties with other US partners and allies in the wider Asia-Pacific, especially India and Australia, as well as various Southeast Asian states. Prime Minister Abe has visited all member states of ASEAN, and some on more than one occasion.³¹

Thus, Japan increased its defence budget for the first time in 11 years in January 2013, published its first national security strategy document in December 2013, and in July 2014 embarked on a review of its Constitution, particularly Article 9, in order to allow Japan to engage in limited forms of collective self-defence. The re-interpretation of the Constitution is designed to ensure that Japan's Self-Defence Forces (SDF) will be able to assist a 'foreign country in a close relationship with Japan' provided three conditions are satisfied: the attack represents a threat to Japanese people's right to 'life, liberty and pursuit of happiness'; all other means to reply to the attack have been exhausted; and any force used is limited 'to the minimum extent necessary.' The SDF's logistical support to friendly countries can also be expanded, and constraints on the roles Japan's forces play in UN Peace Keeping Operations will be relaxed. Japan also revised its arms export policy in 2014, and this has had a notable impact on its defence relationship with the Philippines and Vietnam (see below).

External security changes have also accompanied these internal developments. US troops levels in Japan were increased in 2013, and there were agreements to cooperate in areas such as cyber security and to station advanced US aircraft plus a new missile defence radar in Kyogamisak.³² A particularly significant development in Tokyo's relationship with Washington was the April 2015 signature of the revised 'Guidelines for Defense Cooperation'. As the first revision since 1997, these guidelines are designed to allow for a flexible response to a range of regional and global se-

³¹ John Nilsson-Wright and Kiichi Fujiwara describe Abe as having undertaken a 'punishing schedule of overseas trips.' See 'Japan's Abe Administration: Steering a Course between Pragmatism and Extremism,' London: Chatham House, September 2015, p. 7.

³² Xenia Dormandy with Rory Kinane, *Asia-Pacific Security: A Changing Role for the United States*, Chatham House Report, April 2014, p. 11. See also the list of deployments referred to in the 'Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee: A Stronger Alliance for a Dynamic Security Environment, 27th April 2015' signed by Minister for Foreign Affairs Kishida, Minister of Defense Nakatani, Secretary of State Kerry, and Secretary of Defense Carter, Section 3, page 4. The deployments include US Navy P-8 maritime patrol aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, an upgraded amphibious transport ship, and in 2017 a more advanced aircraft carrier together with Marine Corps F-35B aircraft.



curity challenges, to find ways of enhancing security and defence cooperation in both the global and regional spheres, as well as to explore all avenues for the realignment of US forces in Japan. Regionally, for example, the guidelines refer to ‘Partner Capacity Building’ with the aim of building the security capacities of regional states. In terms of bilateral ties, in exchange for direct support of the US rebalancing policy, Japan has obtained stronger US commitments to its defence. For example, in a Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee accompanying signature of the new guidelines, the rebalance was referenced directly in the context of an ‘ironclad U.S. commitment to the defense of Japan, through the full range of U.S. military capabilities, including nuclear and conventional.’ In response, the Japan side noted that it ‘highly values U.S. engagement in the region’ and both parties ‘reaffirmed the indispensable role of the Japan-U.S. Alliance in promoting regional peace, security, and prosperity’ — a rhetorical formulation that mirrors directly the central tenets behind the US rebalance strategy. Of major importance to Japan, that Joint Statement also included an unequivocal pledge that the Senkaku islands, ownership of which is in dispute with China, are covered ‘within the scope of the commitments under Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security’.³³

Beyond the strengthening of ties with the United States, Japan has adopted various other measures which signal an attempt to be a more active strategic player in the Asia-Pacific region. For example, it has deepened defence, development assistance and political ties with India, Australia and some of the ASEAN countries. Manila, was given ten patrol ships in 2013, and Abe visited Australia in 2013, where he gave an unprecedented address for a Japanese Prime Minister before a joint sitting of the Australian parliament. The India-Japan relationship has also notably deepened with the Japanese emperor making a first visit to India, and then Prime Minister Abe in January 2014 being welcomed as the chief guest at India’s Republic Day celebrations³⁴ In August 2015, Japan donated one of its fishing patrol vessels to the Vietnamese Fisheries Resources Surveillance Force, the first of six planned donations. A month later it extended \$832million in infrastructure aid to Vietnam, plus coast guard ships and equipment.³⁵

Where it has been less successful is in deepening intelligence and security ties with the Republic of Korea. Here, again, identity issues have been to the fore in preventing reconciliation at a time of strategic uncertainty. Notwithstanding the November 2015 summit between Prime Minister Abe and President Park, together with the December 2015 compensation agreement and Japanese apology associated with the Korean WWII sex-slave issue, the relationship remains distrustful. It remains far less developed than to be expected between two countries firmly allied with the United States and concerned about North Korean and Chinese developments.

³³ Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee, 27 April 2015, p. 1. Earlier statements on the Senkakus (the Diaoyu from China’s perspective) had been somewhat more equivocal. See John Kerry, for example, 14 April 2013 at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/04/207483.htm>.

³⁴ Dormandy with Kinane, *Asia-Pacific Security*, p. 10. President Obama was Prime Minister Modi’s guest at the January 2015 celebration.

³⁵ John Boudreau, ‘Japan to Give Vietnam Boats, Equipment Amid China’s Buildup’, Bloomberg News, 16 September 2015.



That weaker degree of Japanese alignment with the US strategy is not matched, however, in the economic realm, with the Japanese Cabinet's formal decision to bring Japan into the TPP negotiations in July 2013.³⁶ In the process, Abe confronted directly Japan's agricultural sector, especially rice farmers who have been long leery of a more open trade relationship with direct competitors such as US farmers. Tokyo has also accelerated FDI into ASEAN alongside a more frequent schedule of visits to the region at the highest levels. Though there are good economic reasons (primarily to do with the increased cost of labour in China) behind this investment decision, the deterioration in political relations between Beijing and Tokyo and hostility towards Japanese evinced in the nationalist protests in China in recent years have reinforced the perceived need to realign the investment portfolio.

That serious downturn in relations with China has been notable since the beginning of the twenty-first century, with Tokyo's 2008 Defence White Paper stating unequivocally that 'Japan is apprehensive about how the military power of China will influence the regional state of affairs and the security of Japan.'³⁷ Bilateral ties worsened from 2010 after the arrest of a Chinese trawler captain in disputed waters, the 2012 Japanese nationalization of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, Chinese establishment of an Air Defence Identification Zone covering the East China Sea, and Prime Minister Abe's visit in December 2013 to the Yasukuni Shrine. As Shogo Suzuki has argued, these disputes have been used as fuel for the identity arguments that have been prominent in Japan with claims that a 'weak' Japan is being 'bullied' by an aggressive, irrational China that rejects Japan's value system and ignores international rules.³⁸

Yet, despite this heightening of tension, and Japan's engagement in internal and external balancing behaviour, the relationship with China bolsters evidence that Japan's identity debate is not resolved. This is in part because Japan's militarist past — which some involved in the debate fear could be revived as a result of Constitutional reinterpretation — evokes the sense of China as victim rather than aggressor or bully. Second, there is the US identity as regional stabilizer for the Japanese government to negotiate. The Obama administration has shown a determination to ensure alignment with the full range of the China-related goals of the US rebalance and this has meant putting direct pressure on Tokyo to dampen down the tensions in its ties with Beijing. Indeed, more broadly it has pressured Abe to eschew aspects of his revisionist agenda, for example describing the 2013 Yasukuni visit as a 'disappointment'.³⁹ (Similarly, it has put pressure on Tokyo to repair its relationship with Seoul over the 'history' issue).⁴⁰ As Obama put it at a joint press conference with

³⁶ For detailed analysis see William H. Cooper and Mark E. Manyin, 'Japan Joins the Trans-Pacific Partnership: What are the Implications?' CRS Report for Congress, R42676, 13 August 2013 at www.crs.gov.

³⁷ Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2008*, p. 3, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2008.html.

³⁸ Shogo Suzuki, 'The rise of the Chinese "Other" in Japan's construction of identity: Is China a focal point of Japanese nationalism?' *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 28:1, 2015, pp. 95-116.

³⁹ John Nilsson-Wright and Kiichi Fujiwara, 'Japan's Abe administration: Steering a Course between Pragmatism and Extremism', London: Chatham House Research Paper, September 2015, p. 3.

⁴⁰ On the sidelines of nuclear security summit in the Hague in 2014, US officials worked hard to bring Prime Minister Abe and President Park together with President Obama. The United States also encouraged the December 2015 agreement to resolve the sex slaves' issue – a major conflict hanging over from the Pacific War. See



Xi in November 2014: ‘we actively encourage our friends and allies in the region to foster a strong and cooperative relationship with China.’ He went on: ‘we applaud the lowering of tensions between China and Japan. We think that’s good for the region and good for both countries.’⁴¹

Efforts to lower tensions and maintain some areas of communication with China are, of course, boosted by the economic fundamentals that tie together the two largest East Asian economies. If sustained, they will help to underpin the development potential of a region that the US government constantly notes is vital for the health of the global economy. China became Japan’s largest trading partner in 2008, Japan’s exports to China rose 11 percent over the year 2012 to 2013 and Japan’s imports from China increased more than 30 percent over the same period. In 2014, two-way trade had reached \$340 billion, and the stock of Japanese investment in China had reached \$100 billion in 2014, that is \$30 billion more than the next largest investor — the United States.⁴² Richard Katz has described the economic interdependence between China and Japan as an economic version of mutual deterrence helping to preserve the ‘uneasy status quo.’ He went on to note that some ‘60-70 percent of the goods that China imports from Japan are the machinery and parts that China needs to make its own products,’ products that it mainly sells to the developed world and particularly to the United States.⁴³ The US, Japanese, and Chinese economies are interlocked in ways that make it essential for those ties to remain strong so that this ‘dynamic region’ remains the ‘fulcrum of the global economy’ as Obama officials have often emphasized. With the obvious slowdown in China’s economy taking hold from 2014, Japanese investment has become even more important to China. But if Abe’s ‘three arrows policy’ is to make any significant progress, then the China market is going to remain of crucial importance to Japan and continuing growth in both these major economies will remain critical to the health of the US and global economies. The US rebalance strategy encourages continuing Japanese attention to those economic ties with China.

Deputy Secretary of State, Antony J. Blinken’s remarks on the US-Japan-ROK Trilateral Press Conference, Tokyo, 16 January 2016, praising that agreement.

⁴¹ ‘Remarks by President Obama and President Xi Jinping of China in Joint Press Conference’, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 12 November, 2014.

⁴² Shiro Armstrong, ‘Sino-Japanese economic embrace is warm enough to thaw the politics,’ *East Asia Forum*, 27 September 2015.

⁴³ Richard Katz, ‘Mutual Assured Production: Why Trade Will Limit Conflict Between China and Japan,’ *Foreign Affairs*, July-August, 2013. See also Justin McCurry, ‘Why Will Japan and China Avoid Conflict? They need each other’ in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 5 February 2014. In addition, there have been meetings between Chinese and Japanese officials in Tokyo, visits by Japanese business delegations to Beijing, and meetings during the Boao Forum in southern China. Zachary Keck, ‘China and Japan Seek Détente?’ *The Diplomat*, 16 April 2014. The most significant political change in the Abe-Xi era was the handshake and 25-minute meeting between President Xi and Prime Minister Abe at the APEC summit in November 2014 and then the somewhat friendlier exchange in Jakarta in April 2015. Preceding the tense 2014 meeting was signature of a four-point agreement on improving China-Japan relations. See ‘Frosty Meeting at APEC Could be Start of Thaw Between China and Japan,’ *New York Times*, 10 Nov. 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/11/world/asia/leaders-of-china-and-japan-hold-long-awaited-meeting-htm>. However, an invitation to Abe to visit China in September 2015, on the heels of China’s parade to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific, was not followed through.



However, beyond these two factors there are areas of Japan's domestic debate that the US is less well-placed to influence and which show the limits of Tokyo's alignment with the US re-balance goals. This is particularly so in the context of the reinterpretation of the Japanese Constitution under Abe's second premiership and the legislation that allows for collective self-defence, legislation that the US has publicly endorsed as vital to the continuing development of the US-Japan alliance. Despite an expressed majority view among the public in support of maintaining close ties with the United States, these security laws have generated a great deal of public opposition, including criticism of their constitutionality, resulting in a serious drop in the approval rating of the Japanese cabinet.⁴⁴ Some 62.4% of the public rejected passage of the security legislation during the 2015 Diet session and only 29.2% supported immediate passage.⁴⁵

Moreover, regional reactions to this reinterpretation of Article 9 and general Abe Cabinet reactions to wartime atrocities have generated particularly difficult relations with South Korea as noted earlier. Good stable ties between Seoul and Tokyo are deemed in the United States as highly beneficial to the rebalance strategy, but those desires can only take ROK-Japanese reconciliation so far. China too has perceived the constitutional reinterpretation negatively: Beijing depicts it either as a consequence of US pressure to make the alliance effective beyond Korean Peninsula contingencies, or an indication of a militaristic and nationalist turn in Japanese domestic politics. Thus, despite the threatening nature of the security environment in Northeast Asia, there remains strong resistance at the domestic level to some of the policies we associate with Prime Minister Abe. As Oros has argued, the 'long-standing security identity of domestic antimilitarism...thoroughly pervades both the framing of Japan's national security debates and the institutions of Japan's postwar security policy-making process.'⁴⁶

Indeed, Abe's speech on 14 August 2015 commemorating the 70th anniversary of the ending of the Pacific War illustrates well the tensions over the Japanese government's contemporary reading of its identity. Marked by oblique language and passive constructions, the statement sets out to appeal both to Abe's conservative constituency as well as to broader public opinion concerned about any further undermining of the pacifist identity embodied in Japan's Constitution. The statement associates the current Japanese government with official past apologies, but makes no clear statement of its own on this topic. It takes responsibility for past aggressions but wants to lift the burden of contrition on the 80% of the current population born after 1945. Significantly, the speech generated a response from the Japanese Emperor who used language that went beyond the sentiments of contrition that the Prime Minister expressed: the emperor expressed 'deep remorse' for Japan's wartime behaviour, whereas in the past he had confined himself to expressing

⁴⁴ An Asahi poll put that support in July 2015 at only 37%. Quoted in Nilsson-Wright and Fujiwara, 'Japan's Abe Administration,' p. 14.

⁴⁵ These figures are quoted in Brad Glosserman, 'Keep Abe's Remarks in Perspective', PacNet no. 50, 17 August, 2015. See also 'Demonstrators decry Abe's military plans in largest march yet,' *Financial Times*, 1 September, 2015. For a longer discussion of Japanese public attitudes on questions of security see Paul Midford, *Rethinking Japanese Public Opinion and Security: From Pacifism to Realism?* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁴⁶ Oros, 'International and domestic challenges,' p. 140.



‘deep sorrow’. The equivocations in Abe’s official speech, made on behalf of his Cabinet, feed into a Japanese position on the rebalance that undercuts improvement of ties with South Korea as well as the stabilization of tensions with China, and indicate continuing serious differences in Japan about the wisdom of adopting collective self-defence.

The Republic of Korea — Finding a Route Through the US Rebalance

The Republic of Korea’s responses to the US rebalance strategy are, perhaps, even more complicated than those of Japan because it too has been engaged in an identity debate that is historically rooted but which has emerged more strongly as a result of Korea’s growing soft and material power at a time when its region has been undergoing a significant transition. In a broad sense, Seoul has been supportive of the US rebalance given the strategy’s emphasis on sustaining America’s longstanding alliance relationships in East Asia and the prominence given in Obama administration statements on maintaining strong ties with South Korea in particular. Seoul faces very real threats from North Korea, and uncertainties associated with China’s resurgence. January 2016 saw the fourth test of what Pyongyang described as a ‘hydrogen bomb’ followed in February by a ballistic missile test. Though ties with China broadly have warmed, the two countries have sovereignty disputes, overlapping claims in their respective Exclusive Economic Zones, as well as in their Air Defence Identification Zones. Most importantly, policies towards the DPRK do not always align.⁴⁷ For example, after North Korea’s fourth nuclear test, President Park Geun-hye called on Beijing to step up its efforts to reverse the DPRK’s nuclear weapons programme.⁴⁸ As at the time of writing, the Park government is in active discussions with the United States to set up the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system (THAAD). China has criticized this discussion, criticism that is much resented in South Korea, as is any Chinese pressure that indicates disapproval of Seoul’s alliance with the United States, a partnership forged during the Korean War and that has lasted over 60 years.

That ROK-US alliance in some respects has lately become more wide-ranging and stronger than in earlier decades. In 2013 the two sides described it in grand terms, as ‘an anchor for stability, security, and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, in the Asia-Pacific region, and increasingly around the world.’⁴⁹ The 2009 US-ROK Joint Vision Statement looked to the future of a reunited

⁴⁷ Jae Ho Chung and Jiyoung Kim in fact note ‘seven domains’ that generate friction. See ‘Is South Korea in China’s Orbit? Assessing Seoul’s Perceptions and Policies,’ *Asia Policy*, no. 28, January 2016, p. 130, <http://asiapolicy.nbr.org>.

⁴⁸ Choe Sang-hun, ‘South Korea Presses China for More Aggressive Action on the North,’ 13 January 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/14/world/asia/south-korea-china-nuclear.html>. In a televised address President Park stated ‘China has repeatedly said publicly that it would not tolerate North Korea’s nuclear weapons’, adding ‘I think China is fully aware that if such strong will is not matched by necessary measures, we cannot prevent fifth and sixth nuclear tests by the North or guarantee real peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.’

⁴⁹ ‘Joint Declaration in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America by President Barack Obama of the United States and President Park Geun-hye



and peaceful Korean Peninsula built on ‘the principles of free democracy and a market economy’,⁵⁰ and there was nothing in that statement to imply the end of the US-ROK alliance under a unified Korea. In 2011, Seoul and Washington signed a landmark free-trade agreement that deepened their ties beyond the security domain and which helped to propel ambitions that underlie the multilateral TPP agreement.

On the other hand, despite its decision to strengthen ties with America, the ROK also has to consider the implications of China’s emergence as its largest trading partner. Moreover, while it might be critical of Beijing’s failure to deal firmly with Pyongyang, it recognizes that Beijing plays a crucial and unique role in dealing with North Korea. China distrusts moves that it believes makes the alliance effective beyond Korean peninsula contingencies, seeing those developments as potentially directed at Beijing. It is for this reason that it particularly dislikes the THAAD system, voicing its disapproval directly to Seoul and perceiving it as a prime example of an enhanced capability that could eventually be taken beyond Korean Peninsula necessities and used against China itself.

Thus, Seoul understands that a serious rise in Sino-American tension will constrain Seoul’s room for policy manoeuvre and have negative consequences for diplomatic moves towards Korean reunification. As Chaesung Chun perceives it, South Korea is caught between the United States and China and will ‘suffer not only from an all-out confrontation but also from small, procedural disagreements based on strategic mistrust.’⁵¹ All of these factors encourage Seoul to be alert to Chinese pressures but also to build a cooperative relationship with Beijing where it can, and work to find ways of ameliorating Sino-American tensions and strategic rivalry. One response has been for President Park to meet more often with President Xi Jinping than with any other foreign leader and to favour him with her participation in China’s ceremony to mark the end of World War II.

How then does the identity lens figure in this complex range of policy considerations for the ROK government? In fact, it is crucial to shaping the policy agenda. Identity questions suggest a way forward in dealing with these policy dilemmas especially since contemporary identity arguments are historically-rooted and resonate more strongly as a result. Over the last two decades or so, the ROK has had a desire consciously to be seen as having adopted a middle-power strategy, a strategy that comes directly from a strategic culture that has long-depicted Korea as a ‘shrimp among whales,’ and thus for geopolitical reasons particularly vulnerable to great power rivalry. According to Andrew O’Neil, though there are historical underpinnings to this policy, middle power identity began to crystallize for South Korea from the early 1990s marked by rhetoric that stressed the ROK was ‘a regional power with global interests.’ The building of multilateral institu-

of South Korea’, 7 May 2013, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/07/joint-declaration-commemoration-60th-anniversary-alliance/>. The statement went on to aver a joint goal to ‘strengthen and adapt our Alliance to serve as a linchpin of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and to meet the security challenges of the 21st century.’

⁵⁰ ‘Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea,’ Washington DC: Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 16 June 2009.

⁵¹ Chaesung Chun, ‘US Strategic Rebalancing to Asia: South Korea’s Perspective’, *Asia Policy*, No. 15, January 2013, p.15.



tions in East Asia in the 1990s helped advance this objective as did ROK membership of the United Nations from 1991. With enhanced standing and material capabilities in the contemporary era (it became an OECD member in 1996), this middle power identity, O’Neil states, has become ‘more prominent and substantive in scope.’⁵² It has also come to be seen in Seoul as more necessary given the centrality that this identity accords to muting great power rivalry, particularly that between the United States and China.

What does it mean for South Korea to act as a middle power? According to Sook-Jong Lee et al, the role could include acting as a ‘convener, facilitator, mediator, and “balancer”.’ The government might position itself as an ‘agenda-setter, a norm-setter, or a co-architect’.⁵³ In terms of the specific agenda that Lee et al see as necessary for Seoul to explore it includes such challenging topics as ‘cyber security, the environment, regional trade and security architectural frameworks, and maritime disputes,’⁵⁴ all issues that are regionally important, but also need to be addressed successfully if a prime goal of Korea is to work to ensure the smooth functioning of the China-US relationship.

President Park Geun-hye’s administration has put forward several proposals intended to give further substance to this middle-power status, though her administration seems to have distanced itself rhetorically from the concept. Most important among these is her Northeast Asian Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), subsequently referred to as the ‘Seoul process’. First enunciated during her electoral campaign, its focus more latterly has been described as the multilateral management of functional issues such as nuclear energy and nonproliferation and also eventually the regional maritime disputes. Park has also proposed a China-ROK-US trilateral dialogue, and in a press conference in Seoul with John Kerry, the South Korean foreign minister underlined the benefits to be gained from the holding of the Korea-Japan-China foreign minister meetings.⁵⁵ Going beyond East Asia, Park has also launched a ‘Eurasia Initiative’ that envisages ‘making Eurasia into a single united continent, a continent of creativity and a continent of peace.’⁵⁶

When referring to these proposals, the Park administration has tried to point up their ‘synergy’ with the US rebalance strategy. Park has also spoken of where she and Obama could act as ‘co-architects’ of policies that would help sustain regional peace and stability. However, as Snyder and Woo argue, despite possible compatibilities between NAPCI and the rebalance, there are ‘also potential obstacles that may ultimately prevent the United States and South Korea from working together on a regional security agreement in East Asia or Northeast Asia.’ These obstacles include the ROK belief that the US-ROK alliance is compatible with the multilateralism envisaged in the

⁵² Andrew O’Neil, ‘South Korea as a Middle Power: Global Ambitious and Looming Challenges’, in Scott A Snyder (ed.) *Middle-Power Korea: Contributions to the Global Agenda*, (Council on Foreign Relations Press, June 2015), pp. 81-82.

⁵³ Sook-Jong Lee, Chaesung Chun, Hyejung Suh, and Patrick Thomsen, *Middle Power in Action: The Evolving Nature of Diplomacy in the Age of Multilateralism*, East Asia Institute, April 2015, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Lee, et al. *Middle Power in Action*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ ‘Joint Press Availability with Republic of Korea Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se,’ 18 May 2015.

⁵⁶ O’Neil, ‘South Korea as a Middle Power,’ p. 85.



Seoul process, whereas China views that alliance as a Cold War relic that undermines security cooperation. In addition, difficult relations between Japan and South Korea affect negatively the prospects for multilateral security cooperation, as does Japan's more firmer insistence on value-based diplomacy that seeks to form links between democratic Asia-Pacific states — a network that inevitably exclude China.⁵⁷ Then there are the actions of North Korea itself that are working to push the Park government towards closer security ties with the United States. Thus, a middle power policy that seeks to promote multilateralism, and underpin stability in Sino-American ties puts South Korea at odds with the rebalance strategy were both the United States as well as Japan be unsuccessful in building and maintaining areas of cooperation and policies of inclusion with Beijing.

These tensions in policy aims have been described as part of South Korea's 'hedging strategy' with respect to Beijing. As Kuik Cheng-Chwee has noted, Seoul has tried to balance support for Beijing by joining the AIIB and entering into a bilateral FTA, but also has not been afraid to speak out on China's implementation of its ADIZ and has objected to its criticisms of THAAD. Looking to the future, Kuik notes that Seoul could 'selectively accommodate Beijing's preferences for CICA', while upholding the ROK-US alliance as 'the bedrock of its external strategy.' As Kuik describes what has happened so far (writing before the fourth DPRK nuclear test), 'Seoul has opted to hedge by not taking sides and by adopting a bundle of deliberately ambiguous measures aimed at keeping its options open.'⁵⁸

However, despite the merits of Kuik's arguments, these moves could also be seen as evidence of a somewhat more assertive form of local state agency, illustrative of a long-standing South Korean desire to map out its own role in global and regional politics that allows it as much policy autonomy as possible. It is this objective of autonomy that best describes Seoul's response to the US rebalance. In putting this identity objective central, we can better understand why its approach differs from the Japanese government's. For the current Japanese government, a tighter alignment with the United States is key to promoting its own identity concerns whereas the ROK would prefer something looser than that.

The Taiwan Exception? Living on the Edge of the Rebalance

The US government has a longstanding informal alliance with Taiwan and close societal and economic ties. However, Clinton's October 2011 *Foreign Policy* article neglected mention of the island, only making up for that absence in Hawaii a month later. There, she referred to America's 'strong relationship with Taiwan, an important security and economic partner.'⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Scott Snyder and Woo Jung-yeop, 'The U.S. Rebalance and the Seoul Process: How to Align U.S. and ROK visions for Cooperation in East Asia', CFR Working Paper, January 2015, esp. pp. 5-7.

⁵⁸ Kuik Cheng-Chwee, 'Introduction: Decomposing and Assessing South Korea's hedging options', The ASAN Forum, 11 June 2015.

⁵⁹ Clinton, 'America's Pacific Century', Hawaii, 10 November 2011, at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/11/176999>.



Some scholars, especially those that focus on geo-strategic issues involving Taiwan, were exercised by that relative neglect of Taiwan. They perceive a raised importance for the island in current security circumstances because of its location between the two US allies embroiled in testy sovereignty disputes with Beijing — Japan and the Philippines. Of direct strategic concern to Washington, Taiwan is part of the PRC's first island chain and under Beijing's control the island would be able to provide 'bases, harbors, and radar emplacements useful for outward power projection.'⁶⁰ According to Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang, Taiwan has watched America's rebalance strategy closely and has welcomed that reengagement even if there are concerns about the rebalance's fiscal sustainability as well as recognition of the major challenge that the TPP poses to many Asian economies.⁶¹ As the former KMT President Ma Ying-jeou stated to former US national security adviser General James Jones in June 2012: 'the U.S. has consistently been an important force for stability in Asia...Taiwan not only welcomes this [rebalancing] development, but also desires to further strengthen its interaction with the United States on the economic, trade, security, and cultural fronts.'⁶²

Despite this welcome for the rebalance, it has also been argued that there is 'precious little sign' of Taiwan being included on the security side of the pivot and neither was it invited to take part in the TPP negotiations, though joining does not require statehood.⁶³ Though Clinton in her November 2011 speech in Hawaii referred to Taiwan as an important security and economic partner, the next part of her statement demonstrated a desire to keep the island somewhat at arms length: she applauded the 'progress that we have seen in cross-Strait relations between China and Taiwan during the past three years and we look forward to continued improvement so there can be peaceful resolution of their differences'.⁶⁴ More recently, in May 2015, Susan Thornton, Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, faced with the prospect of a DPP victory in the January 2016 presidential election, noted both the areas in which the United States and Taiwan work together, as well as Taiwan's contribution to the resolution and management of important global issues. But a major part of her message noted that: 'an important ingredient' of close US-Taiwanese cooperation in recent years 'has been the stable management of cross-Strait ties'. Thornton went on, 'we have an abiding interest in the preservation of cross-Strait stability, and this interest informs our approach to cross-Strait issues... We have welcomed

⁶⁰ June Teufel Dreyer, 'What does the US focus on Asia mean for Taiwan?' in Shihoko Goto, (ed.) *Taiwan and the U.S. Pivot to Asia: New Realities in the Region?* Washington DC, Wilson Center, 26 February 2013, p. 7.

⁶¹ Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang, 'Taiwan in an Asian "Game of Thrones",' *Asia Policy*, no. 15, January 2013, p. 18.

⁶² Huang, 'Taiwan', pp. 18-19.

⁶³ Michael B. Yahuda, 'Foreword,' in Peter C. Y. Chow, *The US Strategic Pivot to Asia and Cross-Strait relations*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014), p. x. Steven Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, (Manchester: Polity Press, 2015), pp. 162-163.

⁶⁴ Clinton, 'America's Pacific Century,' Hawaii, 10 November, 2011.



the steps both sides of the Taiwan Strait have taken in recent years to reduce tensions' and she reiterated the US governmental hope that 'constructive dialogue' would continue.⁶⁵

Those US sentiments, reflective of its identity as stabilizer of the Asia-Pacific region, were given particular attention at a time of high cross-Strait tension when the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) first came to power, and encouraged the subsequent KMT government in its decision to improve political and economic relations with the PRC. By the end of 2014, this had resulted in the signature of 23 ROC-PRC agreements or MOUs predominantly in the economic and social areas. These included an important Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement in June 2010, as well as accords on tourist visits, direct air and sea travel, postal and telecommunications, and product standards.⁶⁶ Some 40% of Taiwan's exports go to the mainland, and Hong Kong and the PRC have received about 75% of all Taiwanese outbound foreign direct investment between 1979 and 2011. Indeed, all this implies a concern less with the US rebalance than with negotiations for a (distant) future as a part of a Chinese state.⁶⁷ One other element that reinforced this Chinese identity was the Ma Ying-jeou agreement to hold an informal meeting in Singapore in November 2015 with Xi Jinping.

Significant too, however, is that the US's indirect approach to deepening its ties with Taiwan fits better not only with America's own identity concerns but also with the island's goal to maintain, in the meantime, a de facto independent existence in global politics. For the new President, Tsai Ing-Wen, and her supporters, that independence is viewed as a long term if not permanent goal. Those indirect approaches include areas that bolster many of the central tenets of Taiwan's policy, namely US support for the island's participation in international organizations, increasing contacts at senior official levels, allocation of visa-waiver status for visits to the United States, and interest in resuming discussion on a Trade and Investment Framework.⁶⁸ Boosting Taiwan's continuing independence also requires US authorization of arms sales, a topic that is more difficult to finesse, however, in the context of a rebalance that seeks to maintain military-to-military discussions and other forms of cooperation with the PRC counterpart.⁶⁹ One way of helping to finesse those competing goals was the US decision to announce an arms sales package valued at \$2 billion in December 2015, a good month or so before Taiwan's 2016 presidential election.

For the KMT, that goal of de facto rather than de jure separation from the mainland was best approached through building on the so-called '1992 consensus,' an agreement between the cross-

⁶⁵ Susan Thornton, 'Taiwan: a Vital Partner in East Asia', Remarks at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 21 May 2015.

⁶⁶ Sebastian Heilmann and Dirk H. Schmidt, *China's Foreign Political and Economic Relations*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), pp. 133-137; Steven Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, (Manchester: Polity Press, 2015), p. 157.

⁶⁷ June Teufel Dreyer argues that, in fact, Taiwan is not that interested in the rebalance and has placed far more emphasis on developing its ties with Beijing. See, 'What does the US Focus on Asia Mean?', pp. 9-10.

⁶⁸ Scott L. Kastner, 'US Rebalancing: Implications for Taiwan's Security and Stability across the Taiwan Strait', in Chow (ed.) *The US Strategic Pivot to Asia*, p. 103; Thornton, 'Taiwan'.

⁶⁹ Shirley A. Kan, 'Taiwan: Major U.S. Arms sales since 1990', Congressional Research Service, RL30957, 29 August 2014, www.crs.gov.



Strait interlocutors that there is ‘one China’ but with a meaning that differs between the two sides. For the DPP, the emphatic successor to the KMT in the 2016 Presidential election, it is more circumspect with respect to that agreement, preferring to bundle it inside other developments. As the new Taiwanese President, Tsai Ing-wen, has put it: while she understands that maintaining the status quo ‘represents mainstream public opinion’, she believes cross-Straits relations must rest on the ‘historical fact’ of the 1992 discussions, together with the island’s ‘current constitutional order...the accumulated results of the more than 20 years of cross-strait negotiations, exchanges and interactions’ as well as ‘Taiwan’s democratic principles and the will of the Taiwanese people.’⁷⁰

Despite these nuanced differences between Taiwan’s two main political parties, what is clear is that both are seeking to find a way to respond to fundamental questions concerning the island’s international identity.⁷¹ These questions are reflected in the Taiwanese people’s recorded preference for maintaining the status quo in relations with Beijing, where status quo means neither unification nor an outright call for independence. As polls show, ‘70 to 80 percent of Taiwan’s populace regularly rejects the Chinese principle of one country, two systems....[and] over 60 percent...approves of adhering to the status quo’. And while over 20 percent favour independence, the ‘number of advocates of unification with the PRC has continued to decline over the last decade’ and this despite the increased contact and improved economic and political atmosphere.⁷² Indeed, some in Taiwan perceived the Ma administration to have gone too far in forging those ties with the mainland and in undercutting the slow move towards a Taiwanese separate identity built on its democratic practices and freedoms. For example, the student-led ‘Sunshine Movement’ in 2014 demonstrated successfully against the conclusion of a cross-Strait trade in services agreement that it saw as the further subordination of Taiwan to mainland rule. With some 60.6% of islanders self-identifying as Taiwanese in 2014 (up from 48.4% in 2008), the presentation of the putative services agreement as an attack on Taiwanese sovereignty obviously had the potential to widen the appeal of those opposed to the deal.⁷³

Thus, the US effort at maintaining an informal alliance with Taiwan, and Taipei’s indirect relationship with the rebalance, satisfies an immediate Taiwanese and US desire for a form of independence that does not invite a coercive PRC response.⁷⁴ But in broader political terms, it also allows time for the steady development of a Taiwanese identity separate from that of the main-

⁷⁰ Tzou Jing-wen, *Liberty Times* reporter, ‘The Interview’ courtesy of the DPP/DC office, at <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/focus/paper/951154>, 16 February 2016.

⁷¹ For an important recent discussion of the complexity of these identity debates see Yana Zuo, *Evolving Identity Politics and Cross-Strait Relations*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2016.)

⁷² Sebastian Heilmann and Dirk H. Schmidt, *China’s Foreign Political and Economic Relations*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), p. 132. Shelley Rigger reports that ‘at least half oppose unification under any circumstance.’ She also notes that ‘China-skepticism in Taiwan is strong.’ See keynote address, Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 14 September 2015.

⁷³ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, p. 126.

⁷⁴ For a valuable discussion of the complexity of maintaining stability in relations among all concerned parties see Scott L. Kastner, ‘Is the Taiwan Strait Still a Flash Point?’ *International Security*, Vol. 40:3, Winter 2015/16, pp. 54-92.



land — an identity preference that some two-thirds of the population holds. Were a Taiwanese government decide to adopt more revisionist aims and start to push this to a more formal political level, then this would risk a PRC response that could brutally cut short the political opportunity for consolidating that separate identity. Moreover, it would also undercut the notion that the United States, via the three communiqués and TRA, as well as its policy of dual deterrence, has provided an enabling environment for the peaceful progression of PRC-ROC ties. In this respect, it would also strike directly at the US identity concerns at the heart of its rebalance strategy.

Conclusion

This paper has used a focus on identity and identity politics to try to understand the bases of the differences in policy among Northeast Asian actors. It also has aimed to show that despite political and economic similarities among these actors, and the need to make policy choices in the same systemic environment, the layered nature of the US rebalance strategy has allowed for that differentiated response. Indeed, I have suggested that the US administration has been reasonably well-attuned to some of the policy preoccupations of its allies, especially the importance of the links between economic development and state security in Northeast Asian perspectives. Thus, the US has tried to shift the narrative away from an emphasis on the military aspects of the rebalance to include stronger reference to the economic and diplomatic dimensions.

The objective in this draft paper has also been to de-emphasize the tendency in IR to focus on outcomes in world politics, and instead to illuminate *process*. A focus on process implies outcomes remain to be determined, contingent decisions are often taken, and these decisions have a fluidity to them that leaves some room for policy manoeuvre. We could think of the Northeast Asian perspectives examined in this paper as moving along a continuum that at one end records reasonably close alignment between US and allied goals, while the other reflects a deliberate distancing between the rebalance strategy and local policy objectives. For Japan, close alignment with nearly all dimensions of the US rebalance strategy has been particularly important for the promotion of the Abe government's identity concerns. For the ROK, however, its middle-power strategy has led it to explore a more median role as potential mediator and facilitator. It appears more anxious about a possible breakdown in the Sino-American relationship than does Japan, dictated in part by China's central role in Korean peninsula issues, as well as its significant economic ties with South Korea.

For the informal ally, Taiwan, that distancing from the US rebalance is even greater — a position that both the United States as well as Taiwan currently recognize as being the most sensible strategy to adopt. They both use cross-Strait cooperation in identity-related ways. The United States prioritizes productive cross-Strait ties to reinforce its depiction of itself as a force for peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Taiwan acknowledges this depiction, and can also use its emphasis on status quo and stability to provide time for the building of a distinct Taiwanese iden-



tity. This pattern may not hold for long, however, given the inherent tensions between the two competing identities.

Overall, this draft paper highlights three factors with respect to the US rebalance in Northeast Asia that invite further attention: first, and the most obvious point, is the extreme difficulty associated with managing all the moving parts, and keeping in play all dimensions of the rebalance. This requires great acuity and subtlety on the part of the region's leaders. Policies towards China are particularly difficult to manage because not only are they built on a deterrence framework, but also are designed to allow for a cooperative relationship to survive. Second is the extent to which the US rebalance strategy evolves in response to Northeast Asian preferences. The suggestion made here — and to be examined more closely during my visit to the region — is that there has been a mutuality in the relationship between the US rebalance and local actors. Local actors have used their understanding of the layered nature of the US rebalance strategy to promote broader policy goals connected with their desire to embed a particular international identity at a time of change, and the US has been reasonably sensitive to those aims. Finally, the degree of alignment between US and Northeast Asian approaches depends greatly on the actions of the two states that most complicate the workings of the rebalance strategy in its Northeast Asian dimensions — namely, China and North Korea. The actions of these two states — positive or negative — now and in the future will affect the weight accorded to the various facets of the rebalance strategy, adding a further layer of complexity and contingency to the decisions that all involved actors are compelled to take. ■



Author's Biography

Rosemary Foot

St Antony's College, University of Oxford, U.K

Rosemary Foot was elected to an Emeritus Fellowship of St Antony's College in October 2014. She is a Senior Research Fellow at Oxford's Department of Politics and International Relations and a Research Associate at the Oxford China Centre.

Previously Professor of International Relations, and the John Swire Senior Research Fellow at St Antony's College, she has been a Fellow of the College since 1990. She was Senior Tutor from 2003-2005, and was Acting Warden of the College from January-October 2012.

In 2014, she held the Visiting Sir Howard Kippenberger Chair in Strategic Studies at the University of Victoria in Wellington, New Zealand, and a Visiting Fellowship at the Nobel Institute, Oslo, Norway.

She has been an American Council of Learned Societies/Fulbright Scholar at the East Asian Institute, Columbia University, in 1981-82; a visiting exchange scholar at the People's University in Beijing in 1986; a visiting fellow at the Center for International Studies, Princeton University in 1997; Visiting Kiriya Professor for Pacific Rim Studies at the Center for the Pacific Rim, University of San Francisco in 2002; a Visiting Fellow at the Belfer Center, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University from January to June 2006, the Visiting S. Rajaratnam Professor of Strategic Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore from August to November 2006; and Visiting Scholar at the Dr Seaker Chan Center, Fudan University in Shanghai in September 2013.

Professor Foot studied at the University of Essex (1972), the London School of Oriental and African Studies (1973), and the London School of Economics and Political Science where she completed a PhD degree in 1977. She then took up a post as Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Sussex, in the School of English and American Studies, acting as Sub Dean of the School from 1985 and 1987. She moved to Oxford in 1990.

Professor Foot was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1996.

Selected Publications:

Professor Foot's most recent publication is *The Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia*, co-edited with Saadia M. Pekkanen and John Ravenhill (Oxford University Press, 2014). In 2013, her edited book *China Across the Divide: The Domestic and Global in Politics and Society* (Oxford University Press) was published, and 2011 she co-authored *China, the United States, and Global Order* (Cambridge University Press) with Andrew Walter.

She is also author of several other books and monographs, including *Framing Security Agendas: US Counter-Terrorist Policies and Southeast Asian Responses* (East-West Center, Washington



D.C., 2008); *Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism in America's Asia Policy* (Routledge, 2004); and *Rights Beyond Borders: the Global Community and the Struggle over Human Rights in China* (Oxford University Press, 2000). Earlier books have covered US-China relations, and US policy during the Korean War.

She has co-edited a number of other works, including *Does China Matter? A Reassessment* (Routledge, 2004, with Barry Buzan); *Order and Justice in International Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2003, with John L. Gaddis and Andrew Hurrell); and *US Hegemony and International Organizations* (Oxford University Press, 2003, with Neil MacFarlane and Michael Mastanduno).

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- Young-Hwan Shin, the Executive Director of EAI Fellows Program
Tel. 82 2 2277 1683 (ext. 107) fellowships@eai.or.kr
- Typeset by Young-Hwan Shin

