

A Critical Analysis of the U.S. “Pivot” toward the Asia-Pacific: How Realistic is Neo-realism?

Rong Chen *

Introduction

At the time of writing, the U.S. had its highest-ranking military delegation in over two years, led by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey, visiting Beijing. The mission was intended to conduct sensitive bilateral negotiations at the highest level in China, having been received by President Xi Jinping and members of China’s Central Military Commission. This visit took place during a period of heightened tension in northeastern Asia, characterized by nuclear tests and other provocative actions of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), and the escalating territorial dispute between China and Japan over Diaoyu Island. It underscored the importance of Sino-U.S. bilateral relations, and encouraged students of the region to reflect on the strategic significance and policy implications of the U.S. pivot toward the Asia-Pacific, which is the key factor of the strategic context of the region.

In the Fall of 2011, the Obama Administration announced that it would expand and intensify the U.S. role in the Asia-Pacific region, and that “the center of gravity for U.S. foreign policy, national security, and economic interests is shifting towards Asia,”¹ a move that was later to be labeled as the U.S. “pivot” or “rebalancing” with respect to Asia. Since then, “the U.S. pivot to Asia” (hereafter referred to as “the U.S. pivot”) has been the subject of discussion by many analysts, theorists, and policy practitioners in the U.S., China, Asia and elsewhere. There are many articles analyzing the reasons why the United States undertook this strategic readjustment or “rebalancing” that ask the following question: What are the implications of this shift on the Asia-Pacific region, and especially on emerging powers in the region such as China and India? However, these questions are not the topic of this essay.

Although the officially stated fundamental goal underpinning the U.S. pivot is “to devote more effort to influencing the development of the Asia-Pacific’s norms and rules,” and “deepen U.S. credibility in the region at a time of fiscal constraint,” the move has raised considerable controversy.² For some observers, the U.S. pivot is not only a response to the growing significance of the Asia-Pacific region to the United States’ interests, but also a response to the increasing power of China.³ To some degree, the U.S. pivot has triggered some distrust and may cause negative consequences in the region,

* The author is an associate research fellow at the China Institute for International Strategic Studies.

¹ Mark E. Manyin, et al., *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration’s “Rebalancing” Toward Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 28 March 2012), 6; available at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>.

² *Ibid.*, summary.

³ *Ibid.*, 2

but from another perspective it is understood as extending strategic reassurance to U.S. allies and partners in the region. However, more than one year after the announcement of the realignment of U.S. policy, the overall state of relations between the U.S. and China has generally been fairly smooth. So, what was the purpose of the U.S. pivot? Do Chinese analysts and strategic thinkers and commentators really understand it, or correctly interpret it? It is these key questions that this essay addresses.

This article will identify and critically assess the debate among realist scholars in the U.S. (where the realist tradition in both academia and policy circles is strongest) as to whether or not the U.S. is balancing China, as the approach of defensive realism suggests, or seeking to maintain its dominance in the region, as offensive realism contends. This article aims to achieve three objectives. First, by focusing on the U.S. pivot as a case study, it seeks to identify and critically assess debates among Western realist scholars as to whether or not the U.S. is balancing/containing China or whether the U.S. is seeking regional hegemony. Is there a gap between how realist international relations theorists conceptualize the pivot and its strategic effects and the reality of its effects? Second, the article informs the ongoing debate about the utility of international relations theory and academic studies for the policy-practitioner world. Third, it is hoped that this essay may contribute to shaping Chinese perceptions/misperceptions of U.S. strategic intent, and so modify Chinese policy responses. In other words, it tests the extent to which neo-realist theory shapes, informs, and justifies real-world strategic and policy choices. In order to achieve these objects, this paper is split into six parts. Following this introduction, the second section takes a close look at the evolution of the U.S. pivot to Asia. The third part reviews the literature on key proponents of defensive and offensive realist propositions and studies. The fourth section is application of the theory to the pivot toward the Asia-Pacific, the fifth part offers an assessment of results, and the final draws conclusions from the study.

The United States' Pivot to Asia

The United States has been a Pacific power since the nineteenth century. After the end of World War II, the U.S. placed significant emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region, including establishing alliance relationships, maintaining a military presence, and playing a role in important developments in the region.⁴ The Obama Administration's approach of a pivot to Asia is not fundamentally different from that of its predecessor. For example, under the administration of George W. Bush, the U.S. emphasized strengthening

⁴ Evan A. Feigenbaum, "Strengthening the U.S. Role in Asia," *CFR.org* (16 November 2011); available at <http://www.cfr.org/asia/strengthening-us-role-asia/p26520>. The U.S. established a network of bilateral alliances, known as the San Francisco System, after the Second World War. Most of these partnerships emerged at the onset of the Cold War, including agreements with Australia (1951), New Zealand (1951), the Philippines (1951), South Korea (1953), Japan (1954), and Thailand (1954). See Kevin Placek, "The San Francisco System: Declining Relevance or Renewed Importance?" *Quarterly Access* 4:1 (Summer 2012): 15-20; available at <http://www.aiaa.asn.au/qa/qa-vol4-issue1/759-the-san-francisco-system-declining-relevance-or-renewed-importance>.

relations with its Asian allies and establishing partnerships with India and Indonesia, among others. The Obama Administration has continued all those efforts.

At the beginning of the Obama Administration, a series of high-level diplomatic visits to the Asia-Pacific region foreshadowed the emergence of the pivot policy. In February 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made her first overseas trip to Asia, an event that also represented the first visit by a sitting Secretary of State to the ASEAN Secretariat. She attended the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in July with the statement that the U.S. was “back in Southeast Asia.”⁵ In November 2009, President Obama participated in the Seventeenth Annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders’ meeting in Singapore and visited the Philippines, Indonesia, China, Japan, and South Korea.

The trend continued in 2010 and 2011. In March 2010, Obama made his second Asia trip, this time visiting Guam, Australia, and Indonesia. The first bilateral Strategic Dialogue between the U.S. and the Philippines concerning maritime awareness and security was held in January 2011. And there was an inaugural round of Asia-Pacific Consultations in Honolulu, hosted by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai in June 2011. By the fall of 2011, the policy of the Obama Administration became clear through a series of announcements⁶ that described a “pivot” or “rebalancing” with respect to the Asia-Pacific region, including Secretary Clinton’s article “America’s Pacific Century,” and her subsequent public remarks.⁷ In his November 2011 address to the Australian Parliament, Obama stated that “after a decade in which we fought two wars that cost us dearly, in blood and treasure, the U.S. is turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia Pacific region,”⁸ and the goal of this turn is to ensure that the U.S. “will play a larger and long-term role in shaping the region and its future.”⁹

In addition, there are two military issues that highlighted the U.S. pivot. One is the U.S. Department of Defense’s Strategic Guidance issued in January 2012, which stated

⁵ Hillary Rodham Clinton, Press Conference at the ASEAN Summit in Phuket, Thailand, 22 July 2009; available at www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/july/126320.htm.

⁶ Tom Donilon, “America is Back in the Pacific and Will Uphold the Rules,” *Financial Times* (27 November 2011); available at <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/4f3febac-1761-11e1-b00e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2RMSU2pkO>; and Office of the White House Press Secretary, “Fact Sheet: The East Asia Summit,” 19 November 2011; available at www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/19/fact-sheet-east-asia-summit.

⁷ Hillary Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century,” *Foreign Policy* (November 2011); available at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century?page=full; and Hillary Rodham Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century,” remarks delivered at the East-West Centre, Honolulu, 10 November 2011; text available at www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/11/176999.htm.

⁸ Office of the White House Press Secretary, “Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament,” speech delivered at the Parliament House, Canberra, Australia, 17 November 2011; available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

that the U.S. “will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region” and identified China and Iran as threats that “will continue to pursue asymmetric means to counter our power projection capabilities.”¹⁰ The second one is the announcement of U.S. Secretary of Defense Panetta at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2012, which announced that “by 2020 the Navy will re-posture its forces from today’s roughly 50/50 percent split between the Pacific and the Atlantic to about a 60/40 split between those oceans. That will include six aircraft carriers in this region, a majority of our cruisers, destroyers, Littoral Combat Ships, and submarines.”¹¹

When we examine the pivot in greater depth, we can identify several steps taken by the U.S. since the fall of 2011. These include:

- Announcing new troop deployments to Australia, new naval deployments to Singapore, and new areas for military cooperation with the Philippines
- Stating that, notwithstanding reductions in overall levels of U.S. defense spending, the U.S. military presence in East Asia will be strengthened and be made “more broadly distributed, more flexible, and more politically sustainable”
- Joining the East Asia Summit (EAS), one of the region’s premier multinational organizations, and securing progress in negotiations to form a nine-nation Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement (FTA).¹²

According to the Obama Administration, the reason for the pivot lies in three major developments. First, The Asia-Pacific region is more and more important to the United States’ economic interests, and China is of particular importance to the nation’s economic future. Second, the United States’ ability to project power and the freedom of navigation in the region may be challenged by China, in light of its growing military capabilities and its claims to disputed maritime territory. Third, U.S. allies in Asia-Pacific doubt the United States’ commitment to the region, taking into consideration the U.S. government’s budget cutting, particularly the defense budget.¹³

However, many observers have argued that the most important impetus explaining the pivot is the growing U.S. perception of a potential military and political challenge from China. The U.S. alliances in Asia are primarily politico-military in nature, and the most significant elements of the U.S. pivot have been in the military realm, although the Obama Administration has declared that the pivot includes diplomatic, economic, and

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, January 2012), 2, 4; available at http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Defense, News Transcript, “Remarks by Secretary Panetta at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore,” 2 June 2012; available at <http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=5049>.

¹² Manyin, et al., *Pivot to the Pacific*, 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

cultural aspects. Therefore, the U.S. fear of losing its military supremacy in the Asia-Pacific appears to be the primary explanation for the pivot.¹⁴

From a U.S. perspective the pivot represents an attempt to reassure its allies and other countries, while dissuading China from using military means to solve its disputes with its neighbors, such as squabbles over maritime territory in the South and East China Seas, thus contributing to an easing of tensions. However, from a Chinese perspective, such moves appear to be an attempt to contain China's development in the region and to divide China from its neighbors. This could in turn encourage China to become more determined to develop protectionist capabilities and more reluctant to be responsive to U.S. economic concerns, such as market access for U.S. firms to the Chinese market. As for China's neighbors, most of them are not willing to "choose" between the U.S. and China, since China is often their largest trading partner, and is the dominant economic power in the region.

Realist Theories

As was noted above, the U.S. pivot appears to exemplify the classical realist security dilemma; as such, it serves as a good case study to apply the assumptions of realist IR theory, given that this theory claims to have a strong purchase on reality.¹⁵ Realism is one of the dominant paradigms of international relations theory. It tends to "emphasize the irresistible strength of existing forces and the inevitable character of existing tendencies, and to insist that the highest wisdom lies in accepting, and adapting oneself to these forces and these tendencies."¹⁶ It is based upon four propositions. First, there is no hierarchical political rule in the international system, and states exist in anarchy. States must arrive at relations with other states on their own, and have to rely on "self-help" for protection and prosperity.¹⁷ What's more, the international system exists in a state of constant conflict. Second, states are the only relevant actors that matter. The states are both those that affect international politics, and those that are affected by international politics.¹⁸ Realists focus mainly on great powers, because "these states dominate and shape international politics and they also cause the deadliest wars."¹⁹ Third, all states within the system are unitary, rational actors. They tend to pursue self-interest, and they strive to obtain as many resources as possible. Fourth, the primary concern of all states is survival. States build up militaries in order to survive, which may lead to a security dilemma. That is, increasing one's security may bring along even greater instability, since

¹⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵ Jack Donnelly, "The Ethics of Realism," in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 150.

¹⁶ E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1962), 10.

¹⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 111.

¹⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 17.

¹⁹ Ibid.

the opposing power may build up its own military in response. Thus, security becomes a zero-sum game.

Although the primary realist tenets are derived from earlier writings, such as Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*, Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, and Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*, realism took shape as a formal field of academic research after World War Two. Realist theories can be divided into three main camps, which differ in terms of explaining state action: classical realism, structural/neo-realism, and neo-classical realism.²⁰ Structural/neo-realism can be further divided into approaches emphasizing defensive and offensive alternatives.

Classical realism is also called "human nature realism." The classical realist states that it is fundamentally the nature of man that pushes states to act in a way to maximize their power.²¹ Hans J. Morgenthau is one of the most important representatives of the classical school. His landmark book *Politics Among Nations* argues that states seek as much political power as possible because they are social institutions, and therefore follow the drives of human nature. Given the assumption that people will experience a conflict of interest in their pursuit of power, the goal of politics is to achieve "the realization of the lesser evil rather than of the absolute good."²² This "lesser evil" is pursued through a quest for the balance of power, in which states try to maintain an existing equilibrium or construct a new equilibrium.²³

Neo-realist thought is derived from classical realism, but its focus is on the anarchic structure of the international system, instead of human nature. Kenneth Waltz first advanced it in his book *Theory of International Politics*, which builds on his 1954 book *Man, the State, and War*. Neo-realists believe that structural (or international system) constraints are more important than agents' (states) strategies and motivations. Neo-realists use structural analysis, which suggests state behavior is a product of the structure of the system itself and the imperatives that flow from it. Neo-realism uses structure to explain recurrence in international politics despite different actors.²⁴

Neo-realists mention three possible systems, according to the number of great powers within the international system. A unipolar system contains only one great power, a bipolar system contains two great powers, and a multipolar system contains more than two great powers. Neo-realists conclude that a bipolar system is more stable than a multipolar system, because balancing can only occur through internal balancing, as there is no possibility to form alliances with other great powers.²⁵ Because there is only internal

²⁰ A leading proponent of this camp is Fareed Zakaria. See, for example, Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).

²¹ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed., brief edition (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 4.

²² *Ibid.*, 4

²³ *Ibid.*, 184.

²⁴ Joseph K. Clifton, "Disputed Theory and Security Policy: Responding to the 'Rise of China'," undergraduate thesis completed at Claremont McKenna College, Spring 2011; available at http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/141.

²⁵ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 132–33.

balancing in a bipolar system, rather than external balancing, there is less opportunity for miscalculation and therefore less chance of a war between the two great powers.²⁶

Neo-realists agree that the structure of international relations is the primary influence on how states go about seeking security. However, there is disagreement among neo-realist scholars as to whether states merely aim to survive or whether states want to maximize their relative power. The former represents the ideas of Waltz and the school of defensive realism, while the latter represents the ideas of John Mearsheimer and the approach of offensive realism.

Defensive realism is one of the structural realist theories that explains the manner in which the structure of the international system influences state behavior.²⁷ Defensive realism predicts that the anarchy of the international system causes states to become obsessed with security. In order to overcome the inevitable “security dilemma,” states will try to preserve the balance of power and “maintain their position in the system,” instead of gaining power through offensive actions.²⁸ Moreover, great powers should avoid attempting to increase their power too greatly, because “excessive strength” may cause other states to form alliances against them, leaving them in a worse position than before.²⁹

There are two ways in which states can balance power: internal balancing and external balancing. Internal balancing means that states grow their own capabilities by increasing their domestic sources of power, such as economic growth and/or increasing military spending. External balancing occurs as states enter into alliances to check the power of more powerful states or alliances. According to defensive realism, should a state begin to create a power imbalance, other states should balance against this rising power by forming a counter-coalition and increasing their domestic sources of power. This also means that achieving a balance of power instead should be states’ primary goal, instead of pursuing the maximization of power. “Band-wagoning” and other power-seeking policies increase instability, because they make the option of waging a preventive war more attractive, which is contradictory to the goal of security. States will

²⁶ Ibid., 133.

²⁷ Prominent defensive realists include Stephen Walt, Kenneth Waltz, and Stephen Van Evera. See Stephen Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), *Revolution and War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), and *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), *Theory of International Politics*, and *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008); and Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

²⁸ John H. Herz, “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 2:2 (January 1950): 157-80; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126.

²⁹ Kenneth Waltz, “The Origin of War in Neorealist Theory,” in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 40.

seek power as a means to ensure their security through the balance of power. Gaining power is not an end in itself.³⁰

Offensive realism is another approach under the rubric of structural realism, one that is primarily associated with John Mearsheimer. It adopts the same structural formulation as does Waltz's defensive approach, but draws different conclusions about state behavior and international outcomes. Defensive realism claims that states are restrained in their pursuit of power, and they only seek power to the extent that it creates a balance. Offensive realism, on the other hand, claims that states are insatiable for power. As Mearsheimer puts it, "A state's ultimate goal is to be the hegemon in the system."³¹ In the offensive realist understanding, states do not believe that maintaining a balance of power alone will provide security, because states have the ability to attack each other. They have little proof of other states' benign intentions, and any state can cheat the system at any time. States are always potential dangers to each other. The only way for a state to maximize its security and therefore maximize its chance of survival is to maximize its power, since a powerful state is less likely to be attacked and more likely to win a war if it is attacked.³²

Mearsheimer's offensive realism draws a much more pessimistic picture of international politics as being characterized by dangerous inter-state security competition that is likely to lead to conflict and war.³³ The offensive realist approach intends to fix the "status quo bias" of Kenneth Waltz' defensive realism theory.³⁴ While both offensive and defensive realists argue that states are primarily concerned with maximizing their security, they disagree over how much power is required to do so. While defensive realism suggests states are status quo powers, seeking only to preserve their respective positions in the international system by maintaining the balance of power, offensive realism claims that states are in fact power-maximizing revisionists with consistently aggressive intentions.³⁵ Indeed, in offensive realism the international system provides great powers with strong incentives to resort to offensive action in order to increase their security and ensure their survival.³⁶ The international system characterized by anarchy leads states to constantly fear each other and resort to self-help mechanisms to provide for their survival.³⁷

In order to alleviate this fear of aggression, states always seek to maximize their own relative power, measured by material capabilities. As Mearsheimer puts it, "they look

³⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 62.

³¹ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 21.

³² *Ibid.*, 33.

³³ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁵ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126; and Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 21.

³⁶ Sten Rynning and Jens Ringsmose, "Why Are Revisionist States Revisionist? Reviving Classical Realism as an Approach to Understanding International Change," *International Politics* 45 (2008): 26.

³⁷ John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History* 105:690 (2006): 160.

for opportunities to alter the balance of power by acquiring additional increments of power at the expense of potential rivals.”³⁸ He also notes, “The greater the military advantage one state has over other states, the more secure it is.”³⁹ States seek to increase their military strength to the detriment of other states within the system, with hegemony—being the only great power in the state system—as their ultimate goal.⁴⁰ Mearsheimer summed up this view as follows: “Great powers recognize that the best way to ensure their security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power. Only a misguided state would pass up an opportunity to be the hegemon in the system because it thought it already had sufficient power to survive.”⁴¹ Accordingly, offensive realists believe that a state’s best strategy to increase its relative power to achieve hegemony is to rely on offensive tactics. Provided that it is rational for them to act aggressively, “great powers will likely pursue expansionist policies, which will bring them closer to hegemony. While global hegemony is nearly impossible to attain due to the constraints of power projection across oceans and retaliation forces, the best end game status states can hope to reach is that of a regional hegemon dominating its own geographical area.”⁴² This relentless quest for power inherently generates a state of “constant security competition, with the possibility of war always in the background.”⁴³ Only when great powers achieve regional hegemony will they become status quo states.

The most distinctive difference between defensive and offensive realism is that offensive realism holds that hegemony is the ultimate aim, while defensive realism claims that state survival can be guaranteed without hegemony. To defensive realists, “security increments by power accumulation end up experiencing diminishing marginal returns where costs eventually outweigh benefits.”⁴⁴ Under a state of anarchy in the international system, there is a strong tendency for states to engage in balancing—states shouldering direct responsibility to maintain the existing balance of power—against power-seeking states, which may in turn succeed in “jeopardiz[ing] the very survival of the maximizing state.”⁴⁵ This argument also applies to state behavior towards the most

³⁸ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 24.

³⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19:3 (1994-1995): 11–12.

⁴⁰ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 21 and 29.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴² Mearsheimer, “China’s Unpeaceful Rise,” 160; and *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 141. See also Keir A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander, “Waiting for Balancing Why the World Is Not Pushing Back,” *International Security* 30:1 (2005): 111–12; and Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, “Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally Against the Leading Global Power?” *International Security* 35:1 (2010): 11.

⁴³ Mearsheimer, “False Promise,” 12.

⁴⁴ Glenn H. Snyder, “Mearsheimer’s World – Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay,” *International Security* 27:1 (2002): 154.

⁴⁵ Peter Toft, “John J. Mearsheimer: An Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8 (2005): 390.

powerful state in the international system, as defensive realists note that an excessive concentration of power is self-defeating, in that it will trigger balancing countermoves.⁴⁶

Offensive realism, therefore, paints the darkest picture of a rising power and growing instability. A rising power will not simply wish to create a new, stable balance of power that is tilted somewhat more in its favor. Instead, it will actively seek to accumulate as much power as possible at the expense of its potential rivals. Other great powers will see the potential for a peer challenger or even a hegemon, and will wish to halt the rising power while they still have the chance.⁴⁷ Great power conflict in these situations is likely, and at the very least one would expect the undesirable results associated with significant power competition, such as proxy wars, arms races, and drain on national economies. For Mearsheimer and other offensive realists, China currently fits this role as a dangerous rising power.

To conclude, offensive and defensive realists differ on whether or not states must always be working to maximize their relative power ahead of all other objectives. While the offensive realist believes this to be the case, some defensive realists believe that the offense-defense balance can favor the defender, creating the possibility that a state may achieve security.⁴⁸ Some defensive realists also differ from their offensive counterparts in their belief that states may signal their intentions to one another. If a state can communicate to another state that its intentions are benign, then the security dilemma may be overcome.⁴⁹ Finally, many defensive realists believe that domestic politics can influence a state's foreign policy, while offensive realists tend to treat states as black boxes.⁵⁰

Application of the Theory to Practice in the Asia-Pacific Region

Having surveyed the realist tradition, and in particular the varieties of neo-realist thinking, this section will now analyze the U.S. pivot in terms of the applicability of their theories. Defensive realists such as Stephen Walt, who has written extensively on this topic, assumes that the U.S. and China can coexist and cooperate peacefully through balancing, although the level of uncertainty derived from their direct, bilateral conflicts

⁴⁶ Yuan-Kang Wang, "Offensive Realism and the Rise of China," *Issues & Studies* 40:1 (2004): 177.

⁴⁷ The literature on power transition theory and the notion of "rear-end collision" is extensive. See A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1968); Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); David Rapkin and William Thompson, "Power Transition, Challenge and the (Re)Emergence of China," *International Interactions* 29:4 (2003): 315–42; and Steve Chan, "Exploring Puzzles in Power-Transition Theory: Implications for Sino-American Relations," *Security Studies* 13:3 (2004): 103–41.

⁴⁸ Charles Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann, "What is the Offense-Defense Balance?" *International Security* 22 (Spring 1998): 44–82.

⁴⁹ Charles Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help," *International Security* 19 (Winter 1994–95): 50–90.

⁵⁰ Stephen Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy* 110 (Spring 1998): 29–45.

remains high. However, offensive realists such as Mearsheimer see competition for hegemony between the two countries in the Asia-Pacific region, which may lead to a future conflict.

Walt has projected the outcome of the trends in U.S.-China economic, military, and energy rivalries this way: “If China is like all previous great powers, including the U.S., its definition of ‘vital’ interests will grow as its power increases – and it will try to use its growing muscle to protect an expanding sphere of influence.” He contends that “given its dependence on raw material imports (especially energy) and export-led growth, prudent Chinese leaders will want to make sure that no one is in a position to deny them access to the resources and markets on which their future prosperity and political stability depend.” Moreover, “This situation will encourage Beijing to challenge the current U.S. role in Asia. Over time, Beijing will try to convince other Asian states to abandon ties with America, and Washington will almost certainly resist these efforts. An intense security competition will follow.”⁵¹ Walt compares the situation of a rising China in the twenty-first century to that of the U.S. in the nineteenth century.⁵² He draws on the thinking of George Kennan, the architect of containment of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, to explain U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific in this century.⁵³

Some scholars hold that the U.S. should be alarmed by the continued tensions between China and Japan over Diaoyu/ Senkaku Island.⁵⁴ As Anna Morris notes, “The radar episode foreshadowed a situation in which momentary confusion could turn into a live-fire exchange, and it is not clear how much restraint either side would exercise. The costs of Sino-Japanese confrontation—disruption to the global economy, the high possibility of being drawn into conflict, and the loss of Chinese cooperation on a host of critical issues, including nuclear proliferation in North Korea and Iran—would be painfully high for the US.”⁵⁵

Other leading realist theorists have also commented on the U.S. pivot to the Asia-Pacific. Randall Schweller contends that the future of Sino-U.S. interactions may fall into three modes: China could fight against U.S. hegemony; the two powers could act coop-

⁵¹ Michael Richardson, “China’s Thirst for Oil and Gas,” *Canberra Times* (18 June 2012); available at <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/opinion/chinas-thirst-for-oil-and-gas-20120617-20hwj.html>.

⁵² Stephen M. Walt, “Dealing With a Chinese Monroe Doctrine,” *The New York Times* (2 May 2012); available at <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/05/02/are-we-headed-for-a-cold-war-with-china/dealing-with-a-chinese-monroe-doctrine>.

⁵³ See Stephen M. Walt, “Explaining Obama’s Asia Policy,” *Foreign Policy* (18 November 2011); available at http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/18/explaining_obamas_asia_policy.

⁵⁴ This is actually a group of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea. It is called Diaoyu Island by China, and Senkaku Island by Japan.

⁵⁵ Anna Morris, “The U.S. Pivot to Asia: Will the Senkakus be its First Challenge?” *Eurasia Review – RSIS Commentaries*, No. 053/2013 (3 April 2013); available at <http://www.eurasiareview.com/09042013-the-us-pivot-to-asia-will-the-senkakus-be-its-first-challenge-analysis/>.

eratively; or China could try to gain as much as possible under U.S. hegemony before it has the ability to shape a world order on its own.⁵⁶

The offensive realist discourse is led by John Mearsheimer. He has cast doubts on the strategic effects of China's rapid development. He contends that China cannot rise peacefully, and that the U.S. and China might end up in an escalating strategic competition.⁵⁷ Mearsheimer believes that China will decide to pursue regional hegemony, and so chase the U.S. out of Asia: "A wealthy China would not be a status quo power but an aggressive state determined to achieve regional hegemony."⁵⁸ For security reasons, it will want to be the dominant power in Asia; therefore, "intense security competition" between the two powers is destined.⁵⁹ China would also attempt to establish a sphere of influence in Asia that might extend over Southeast and Central Asia.⁶⁰

As the U.S. does not tolerate peer competitors, neo-realist theory contends that it will form a balancing coalition with countries in the region to contain China.⁶¹ To this end, "Washington hopes to work with China's neighbors to put together a balancing coalition that will contain China and prevent it from dominating Asia the way the U.S. dominates the Western Hemisphere." One of the most important members of the coalition is Japan. "Washington has been pushing Japan to improve its military forces and act more assertively, because the U.S. is increasingly worried about growing Chinese power, and wants Japan to play a key role in checking China if it adopts an overly ambitious foreign policy."⁶² As an offshore balancer, Mearsheimer contends that the U.S. would keep its forces outside the region, not "smack in the centre of it. ... The US would put boots on the ground ... only if the local balance of power seriously broke down and one country threatened to dominate the others. Short of that, America would keep its soldiers and pilots 'over the horizon.'"⁶³

He also reminds us that multi-polarity can be competitive or conflictual, since there are more potential adversaries in a multi-polar system. "Potential great powers see opportunities to maximize their position militarily if inequalities unbalance systemic equi-

⁵⁶ William Choong, "America's Clout: That Shrinking Feeling," *The Straits Times* (6 November 2011); available at <http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=209350>.

⁵⁷ Goh Sui Noi, "Positive Spin to China's Muscle Flexing," *The Straits Times* (12 October 2010); available at http://www.viet-studies.info/kinhte/positive_spin_to_china.htm.

⁵⁸ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 402.

⁵⁹ John W.H. Denton, "Ambitious China Need Not Be an Emerging Problem," *The Australian* (28 December 2010); available at <http://theaustralian.newspaperdirect.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>.

⁶⁰ Amitav Acharya, "Georgian Crisis: Lessons from Asia," *The Straits Times* (7 October 2008); available at <http://www.amitavacharya.com/?q=content/georgian-crisis-lessons-asia>.

⁶¹ Noi, "China's Muscle Flexing."

⁶² Sang-ho Song, "U.S.-Japan Alliance Grows for Asia-Pacific Security Balance," *The Korea Herald* (8 July 2012); available at www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20120708000302.

⁶³ John J. Mearsheimer, "Pull Those Boots off the Ground," *Newsweek* (30 December 2008); available at <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2008/12/30/pull-those-boots-off-the-ground.html>.

librium.”⁶⁴ Therefore, Mearsheimer believes there will be severe security competition—with a possibility of war—between the U.S. and China if the Chinese economy keeps on growing rapidly. He further argues that it is because the U.S. has acted as an offshore balancer through transatlantic cooperation that Europe has been able to avoid a major war since 1989.⁶⁵

How, then, does China view the U.S. pivot? Does it perceive the pivot in realist terms? A review of Chinese responses to the U.S. pivot can clarify our understanding of this issue. At an official level, China has responded relatively cautiously and positively. In remarks during his February 2012 trip to the United States, Vice President Xi, who is now the President of the People’s Republic, said “China welcomes a constructive role by the U.S. in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific,” while “at the same time, we hope the U.S. will respect the interests and concerns of China and other countries in this region.”⁶⁶ When we move past diplomatic rhetoric and examine the Chinese responses to the U.S. pivot, we can uncover four categories of focus: the overall strategic implications on U.S.-China relations; U.S. military strategy; U.S. military presence; and South China Sea disputes. Let us examine each set of responses in turn.

The Pivot’s Strategic Implications

With regard to addressing the strategic implications of the pivot on Sino-U.S. relations, Le Yucheng, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister, has stated: “We hope the U.S. can play a constructive role in this region, and that includes respecting China’s major concerns and core interests. The Pacific Ocean is vast enough to accommodate the coexistence and cooperation between these two big countries. ... In my view, the U.S. has never left the Asia-Pacific, so there is no ‘return’ to speak of. China does not want to and cannot push the U.S. out of the Asia-Pacific.”⁶⁷ This statement is very typical in tone and content in addressing the strategic implications of the U.S. pivot for Sino-U.S. relations from Chinese official sources. “The constructive role played by the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific,” as well as the mention of U.S. respect for the “interests and concerns of

⁶⁴ Paul Gillespie, “‘Polarities’ Old Hat in Newest of World Orders,” *The Irish Times* (25 September 2010); available at <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-25948378.html>.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Wu Jiao, “China Welcomes US Role in Asia-Pacific Region,” *China Daily* (16 February 2012); available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/16/content_14618271.htm.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P.R. China, “The Rapid Development of China’s Diplomacy in a Volatile World,” Address by Assistant Foreign Minister Le Yucheng at the “Seminar on China’s Diplomacy in 2011 and its Prospect,” held at China Foreign Affairs University, Beijing, 18 December 2011; available at www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjby/zygy/gyhd/t890675.htm.

other parties in the Asia-Pacific, including China” are often emphasized.⁶⁸ The two sides are also often encouraged to “develop a relationship featuring mutual benefit, win-win and sound interaction between emerging and established powers.”⁶⁹

In addition, press conference statements usually contain mild criticisms of the expansion of U.S. military deployments and the strengthening of its alliance relationships. One of the typical examples is as follows: “At present, peace, cooperation, and development is the general trend of the times and common aspiration of people in the Asia-Pacific region. All parties should be committed to safeguarding and promoting peace, stability, and development in the Asia-Pacific. It is unfitting to artificially single out a military and security agenda or intensify military deployment and alliance.”⁷⁰

By contrast to these official governmental responses from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and People’s Liberation Army (PLA), there are many articles and commentaries in the Chinese government and military media that are more explicitly critical of the U.S. pivot and that more explicitly understand the pivot in terms that are familiar from the realist tradition of international relations scholarship. Chinese commentators believe that the United States’ actions can be explained by a U.S. desire to sustain American dominance in the Asia-Pacific. Wang Tian argues: “China’s rise is one of the main reasons behind the eastward shift of [the] U.S. global strategic focus. Due to the weak U.S. economic recovery and China’s growing economic and political clout, Americans are becoming increasingly worried that a rising China may pose a major threat to their country.”⁷¹ Major General Luo Yuan, a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and deputy secretary-general of the Chinese Society of Military Science, also understands the United States’ motives through the realist prism,⁷² and Wang Fan, a professor of the Chinese Foreign Affairs Institute, also views the pivot as an attempt to contain China.⁷³ Therefore, according to this under-

⁶⁸ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P.R. China, Regular Press Conference, 4 June 2012; available at www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t939675.htm. See also Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P.R. China, Regular Press Conference, 31 May 2012, available at www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t939538.htm, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P.R. China, Regular Press Conference, 14 November 2011, available at www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t878946.htm.

⁶⁹ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P.R. China, Regular Press Conferences, 31 May 2012 and 14 November 2011.

⁷⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P.R. China, Regular Press Conference, 4 June 2012. See also Ministry of National Defense, P. R. China, Regular Press Conference, 28 June 2012; available at http://www.mod.gov.cn/photo/2012-06/28/content_4381068.htm.

⁷¹ Wang Tian, “U.S. Uses ‘Hedging’ Strategy to Deal with China’s Rise,” *People’s Daily* (26 December 2011); available at <http://english.people.com.cn/90780/7688310.html>.

⁷² Luo Yuan, “China Should Stay Calm, Alert about U.S. Strategy Adjustments,” *PLA Daily* (12 January 2012); available at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90883/7702723.html>.

⁷³ See Wang Fan, “U.S. Should Back up Its Proclaimed ‘Good Intentions’ in Asia-Pacific With Action,” *Xinhua News Agency* (12 June 2012); available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-06/03/c_131628241.htm.

standing, the U.S. needs to counterbalance Chinese influence, “because only China’s rise can pose a potential challenge to U.S. hegemony.”⁷⁴

The Pivot and U.S. Military Strategy

With regard to Chinese interpretations of the pivot’s implications with respect to the United States’ military strategy, many comments emerged following the publication of the U.S. Defense Strategy Review report in January 2012.⁷⁵ The wording of the statements issued by the Chinese Ministry of National Defense in response to questions from the press was very restrained. Ministry of National Defense spokesperson Geng Yansheng stated that China has “paid attention to” the strategic defense guidelines and will “closely watch out for” the influence of the new U.S. policy shift on the security situation of the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large.⁷⁶ In contrast, remarks by PLA analysts in PLA media have been much more critical, suggesting that the U.S. pivot represents a return to Cold War-style thinking. According to these remarks, the United States regards China as a threat, and will formulate its national security plans on the premise of this threat assessment.⁷⁷

The Pivot and U.S. Military Presence

With regard to comments that addressed the issue of the United States’ military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, in answering questions about the announcement of the rotational deployment of U.S. Marines to Darwin in Australia, MFA spokespersons reiterated “China’s commitment to peace and stability in the region” and urged other countries to “make constructive efforts in building a harmonious and peaceful Asia-Pacific region.”⁷⁸ By comparison, military spokespersons addressed the deployment more critically, describing it as “an expression of a Cold War mentality” and as being against the “trend of peace, development, and cooperation.”⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Zhong Sheng, “Goals of U.S. ‘Return to Asia’ Strategy Questioned,” *People’s Daily* (18 October 2011); available at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7620216.html>.

⁷⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership.”

⁷⁶ Ministry of National Defense, P.R. China, Press Briefings, “U.S. Should Treat China and Chinese Military Objectively and Rationally: Defence Ministry,” 10 January 2012; available at http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2012-01/10/content_4336374.htm.

⁷⁷ See Lin Zhiyuan, “What Sort of Message Does the New U.S. National Defence Strategy Convey?” *Liberation Army Daily* (7 January 2012); available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2012-01/08/c_122552246.htm.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P.R. China, Regular Press Conferences, 5 April 2012, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t921455.htm>; 27 March 2012, available at www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t918577.htm; 17 November 2011, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t879769.htm>; and 10 November 2011, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t876744.htm>.

⁷⁹ Ministry of National Defense, P.R. China, Regular Press Conference, 30 November 2011, available at http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2011-11/30/content_4347180.html.

The Pivot and Disputes in the South China Sea

Responses from the Chinese side connecting the U.S. pivot to the status of disputes in the South China Sea have been comparatively strong. Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai said that the “United States is not a claimant state to the dispute,” “so it is better for the United States to leave the dispute to be sorted out between the claimant states.” He suggested that, “if the U.S. does want to play a role, it may counsel restraint to those countries who’ve been frequently taking provocative action.”⁸⁰ Some Chinese observers assert that the South China Sea disputes are used by the U.S. as an excuse to enhance its military presence and support its pivot in the region.⁸¹

Assessment

When we reflect on how Western scholars and IR theorists understand the significance of the U.S. pivot in terms of their own theoretical inclinations, what can we discern? As a general point, it is clear that both offensive and defensive neo-realist IR theorists evaluate the significance of the U.S. pivot in terms of expected realist behavior – for them, the theory explains the practice. Indeed, although official statements from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs are careful to express mild disapproval and not attribute the pivot to competitive behavior, it is also clear that the “commentariat” in China brings a realist understanding to current events in the Asia-Pacific region, as was noted above.⁸² Therefore, a combination of offensive and defensive realism may better explain the U.S. pivot than other alternative explanations.

Neo-realists argue that their theories, which place an emphasis on changes in power distribution, explain the reasons behind the U.S. pivot. For realists, the international system is governed by power politics. Neo-realism, in particular, is primarily concerned with the structure of the international system, with a special emphasis on the international distribution of power. It is commonplace to note that in recent years, the world power distribution is shifting from West to East, and China is the biggest variable. The sustained economic growth of China and Asia, combined with the Western economic downturn since the 2008 global financial crisis, has accelerated this process of power redistribution, a trend that continues. According to “Global Trends 2030: Alternative

⁸⁰ Edward Wong, “Beijing Warns U.S. About South China Sea Disputes,” *New York Times* (22 June 2011); available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/23/world/asia/23china.html?_r=0.

⁸¹ See Zhong Sheng, “U.S. Should Not Muddy the Waters Over the South China Seas,” *People’s Daily* (20 March 2012); available at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/102774/7762724.htm>.

⁸² The most authoritative voice in Party newspapers is in “editorial department articles.” “Editorials” and “commentator articles” are also considered as authoritative voices, but are of less importance. Articles by “Zhong Sheng,” which is the homophone of “Chinese voice” from the government, can be considered as quasi-official articles. Other low-level commentary and signed articles, which are the reflection of the popular views of the Chinese people, can not be considered as official voices, although they represent the voices of civil society and academia.

Worlds,” published by the U.S. National Intelligence Council in December 2012,⁸³ there will be a dynamic shift of power by 2030 from the U.S. and Europe to Asia, which would be a reversal of the West’s rise in the eighteenth century and a transition of the distribution of the world’s wealth and power to Asia.⁸⁴ Although interpretations of the meaning and magnitude of this power shift differ, the overall assumption is that it reflects the relative decline of the U.S. and the West against Asia’s (mainly China’s) strong rise.

This shift of the distribution of power in the Asia-Pacific region may lead to changes in relations among regional countries. The U.S., as the predominant regional power, with its outstanding economic, military, and diplomatic influence, is afraid that emerging powers such as China will challenge its leading role in the region. If the U.S. hews to the realist line, these actions could impair the United States’ interest in the region, since all states have strong incentives to increase their relative share of power at the expense of their competitors. Therefore, the U.S. is pursuing policies that can contain or engage China, which explains the reasons behind the U.S. pivot to the Asia-Pacific.

The second phenomenon that reflects the realist tradition is the specific steps that the U.S. has taken that emphasize military power and alliances. Realists believe that states cannot afford to trust another state’s peaceful intentions. In order to ensure their own survival, they have to build up their military strength or seek to establish alliances to check the rising power of other states. In the case of the U.S. pivot, although it claims to be a comprehensive approach, including diplomatic, economic, cultural, and military elements, the most striking and concrete elements have been in the military realm.

The U.S. has made plans to substantially increase its military presence in the Asia-Pacific. By 2020, the U.S. is to have 60 percent of its naval forces stationed in the Pacific, up 10 percent from 2011. By 2016, the U.S. will station 2,500 Marines in northern Australia. The U.S. is also working to build and strengthen its military relationships with its Asia-Pacific allies in order to counter China’s influence. U.S. efforts in engaging India in Afghanistan, encouraging Burma, and encouraging Japan, India, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines to “bandwagon” have increased in intensity. The U.S. is also seeking to normalize relations between Japan and South Korea. All these actions underline a carefully constructed “offshore balancing” role, and demonstrate a realist logic put into practice.⁸⁵

Since realism is a powerful tool that helps explain some elements of the reality of the U.S. pivot, we can ask, Which branch of neo-realism—offensive realism or defensive realism—best explains the U.S. pivot? The major difference between offensive and defensive realism is that offensive realism holds that a state’s ultimate goal is to be the he-

⁸³ U.S. National Intelligence Council, “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds,” December 2012; available at <http://info.publicintellgence.net/GlobalTrends2030.pdf>.

⁸⁴ Ken Jimbo, “Dynamics of Power Shift from U.S. to China – Asia-Pacific Security and Japan’s Foreign Policy,” *Japan Foreign Policy Forum* 13–15 (March–April 2013); available at <http://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/en/archive/no13/000445.html>.

⁸⁵ Sumantra Maitra, “U.S. Foreign Policy: Back to Realism,” *International Affairs Review* (13 January 2013); available at <http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/453>.

gemon in the system. In order to achieve that, the state should gain as much power as possible at the expense of other states. The defensive realists believe that maintaining the balance of power will bring more security. A state does not need more power than the amount that can preserve the balance. Rather than an either/or answer, a combination of the two might provide the best explanation. In the case of the U.S. pivot, it seems that offensive and defensive realism have an explanatory utility for different policy areas. For example, in the area of military actions, offensive realism is more persuasive, since the military option, which can sustain U.S. hegemony in the Asia-Pacific, has been the first, and most demonstrative foot that Washington has put forward in implementing the pivot.

Aside from the exercise of military power, the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP) is another example of how the U.S. works to establish economic hegemony in the region and to exclude China from the Asia-Pacific trade group (or only to include China if it plays by rules written in Washington). China has been one of the strongest proponents of the ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+6 models, and is considered as a hub for multi-country manufacturing.⁸⁶ The TPP, proposed by the U.S. and based on the model of past U.S. Free Trade Agreements, set the bar of membership so high that China cannot reach the standards in the short run.

On the other hand, according to offensive realism, cooperation is very difficult to achieve and maintain, due to the fact that states are constantly evaluating the relative gains of different courses of action, and are afraid of being cheated: "Consequently, an offensive realist state does not consider cooperation to be a serious strategic option."⁸⁷ Comparatively, defensive realism believes that cooperation is another option for resolving conflicts of interest, instead of necessarily having them end up in actual conflicts. Under many circumstances, states can overcome the obstacles posed by anarchy to achieve cooperation and avoid certain conflicts.⁸⁸ In this sense, the U.S. pivot can be explained better by defensive realism, since the U.S. seeks cooperation and coordination on many regional issues with China.

What is more, in some areas—such as the strengthening of U.S. alliance relations and dominating the establishment of multi-lateral regional mechanisms—both defensive and offensive realism are reflected. On one hand, these actions aim at strengthening the United States' hegemon status in the region by establishing an exclusive system to marginalize China, which is more in line with the expectations of offensive realism. On the

⁸⁶ J.F. Hornbeck and William H. Cooper, *Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) and the Role of Congress in Trade Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 14 January 2013), 16; available at <http://www.nationalaglawcenter.org/assets/crs/RL33743.pdf>.

⁸⁷ Tang Shiping, "From Offensive Realism to Defensive Realism: A Social Evolutionary Interpretation of China's Security Strategy," paper presented at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technical University, Singapore; available at www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/SSIS/SSIS003.pdf. See also Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 21, 33, 51–53.

⁸⁸ Robert Jervis, "Realism, Neo-liberalism and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate," *International Security* 24:1 (1999): 42–63.

other hand, these steps also serve as a means to steer and regulate China's behavior in U.S.-dominated mechanisms and maintain the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific, which is more in keeping with the tenets of defensive realism. The U.S. attitude to the Sino-Japanese island dispute is another example of this "dual use" tendency. The U.S. encourages Japan's provocative actions, such as purchasing the disputed island, because this can be used as a way to balance China's influence and contributes to U.S. efforts to maintain hegemonic status in the region, achieving the central goal of offensive realism. At the same time, the U.S. is not willing to see the conflict turn into a war, which would be against U.S. interests. Keeping the island dispute as a status quo and preventing the dispute from escalating into a war is more of defensive realistic thinking. In sum, neither offensive nor defensive realism by itself can explain the U.S. pivot. A combination of these two realism theories may offer more explanatory power.

The second assessment is that *how* the pivot is understood matters as much as *what* it actually entails. The U.S. pivot is the subject of intense contemporary discussion. The United States is trying to contain a fast-developing China, and China is pushing back. It seems that a clash is coming. But when we look at what has really occurred, in reality we see a relatively slow process unfolding rather than a sudden shock. The U.S. does not have one more formal ally than it had before, and the percentage of the U.S. Navy dedicated to the region will not rise to 60 percent until 2020.

Concerning the issue of China's increasing economic and military strength, China has no intention to drive U.S. influence out of Asia. Instead, as was quoted previously from a Chinese official, "the breadth of the Pacific has enough space for the two big countries. China welcomes the U.S. to play a constructive role in regional peace, stability, and prosperity."⁸⁹ In reality, we see a marriage between an influential long-standing theory that focuses on power shifts and power distribution and its strategic implications with events unfolding on the ground. Torrential discourse and rhetoric in which many commentators and analysts discuss fine theoretical distinctions may also influence people's perception of reality. Therefore, the perception of the announcement of power changes and pivots generates a response that carries as much weight as the changes themselves.

So why does the perception of the pivot and its strategic implications, especially in its military aspects, vary so widely between the U.S. and China? The reasons can be summarized as follows. First of all, the Asia-Pacific area is a region burdened by a heavy history. The states in the area are very sensitive to military build-ups, due to a history of external invasion. To the Western countries, the dispute between China and Japan over Diaoyu Island is more of a legal issue. But to the Chinese people, it is an issue charged with emotion. It recalls the Chinese memory of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, and Japanese attitudes toward its neighbors during World War Two. Japan's appeal for the island is a signal to China that Japan does not recognize its historical role as

⁸⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P. R. China, "Xi Jinping Accepts a Written Interview with the Washington Post of the U.S.," 2 February 2013; available at www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t904674.htm.

an aggressor, and therefore it may make the same mistake of invading in the future. The Cold War in the Asia-Pacific region was not cold at all, but rather a shooting war, with conflicts including the Korean War, the French colonial war in Indochina, and then the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The DPRK still considers the Cold War to not be over.

Second, the Asia-Pacific is the region with the highest risk of military conflict in the world. The globe's only two separated countries, China (Chinese mainland and Taiwan) and Korea (South Korea and DPRK), are in the region. The region is plagued by a variety of intense land and maritime territorial disputes, including those between China and Japan, Japan and Russia, and India and Pakistan. Besides, there are increasing terrorist threats in the region. Of nine *de facto* nuclear weapon states, five are players in the Asia-Pacific region (China, U.S., Pakistan, India, and DPRK), and one (DPRK) is still conducting nuclear tests. In this circumstance, any actions or moves in the military sphere can potentially cause unexpected consequences. Thus, Asian countries tend to interpret military-related policies in a more highly charged way than do most Western countries.

In addition, cultural differences between West and East influence perceptions. Unlike Westerners, who tend to emphasize specific facts and details, Easterners pay more attention to the overall trend or tendency of an issue. We can see an example from daily life. When writing an address on an envelope, Westerners usually put the street number in the first line and the country sent to in the last line, while Chinese do this in reverse. When the U.S. announced its redeployment, China did not calculate the exact number of personnel redeployed in the Asia-Pacific region; rather, it considered those deployments as an increased U.S. military presence at its front door.

Therefore, Western perceptions can be very different from what China perceives. The mid-nineteenth-century history of China, which was characterized by internal turmoil and foreign aggression, still holds such strong sway over the Chinese people that their aspiration for peace and prosperity is much stronger than Westerners imagine. Besides, there is little sign showing that China is pursuing regional hegemony or a sphere of influence of either the coercive or benign kind. There is no Chinese move in Asia that seeks to exclude the U.S. Therefore, history is a channel through which we can understand what is happening.⁹⁰

From the above analysis, we may conclude that, due to different conventions, history, and social experience, the Asian countries' perception of the U.S. pivot is different from that of the Western countries. However, this constructed perception is of the same importance as what is really happening. We can apply constructivist thinking in this aspect.

The third assessment is that U.S. strategic decision makers appear to be using realist means (reallocation of military resources and renovation of politico-military alliances and partnerships) to realize idealist ends. This essay has used realist approaches to analyze the U.S. pivot. However, some may argue that the U.S. cannot be regarded as a realist power, because of the frequent U.S. tendency to legitimize international actions by

⁹⁰ Yongjin Zhang and Barry Buzan, "The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5:1 (Spring 2012): 3–36.

claiming a basis in liberal values, such as human rights and promoting democracy. Indeed, it has been argued that realism has never been a popular school of thought in the U.S., because it goes against their basic values about themselves and the outside world.⁹¹ As John Mearsheimer put it, “Americans are utopian moralists who press hard to institutionalize virtue, to destroy evil people, and eliminate wicked institutions and practices.”⁹² So most U.S. foreign policy discourse is usually expressed in the language of liberalism.

Examining the U.S. pivot, we can find an enormous amount of liberal rhetoric. Commenting on the U.S. pivot to Asia, former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asserted that the “heart of the strategy” is “our support for democracy and human rights.” She explained that “[democracy and human rights] are not only my nation’s most cherished values; they are the birthright of every person born in the world. They are the values that speak to the dignity of every human being.” And in his first trip to Asia, new U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said, “We must use our Pacific partnership to build a region whose people can enjoy the full benefits of democracy, the rule of law, universal human rights, including the freedom of expression, freedom of association, and peaceful assembly, freedom of religion, conscience and belief.”⁹³

From the U.S. perspective, what the U.S. does—such as moving military assets to the Asia-Pacific, creating partnerships, and strengthening alliances in the region—is done in order to strongly engage China to emerge as a “responsible stakeholder” in a stable, liberal, and democratic international order. So the United States’ justification of their actions and strategic purpose would be “we are using realist means to idealist ends.”

The final assessment is that employing realist thinking to explain U.S. policies in the Asia-Pacific may be to use old theoretical frameworks that are not fit for the purpose, that do not fully take into account the complexity of contemporary developments. Since the beginning of the new century, profound and complex changes have taken place in the world. The global trends toward economic globalization and multi-polarity are intensifying, cultural diversity is increasing, and an information society is fast emerging. As the pace of globalization accelerates, the world has become more interconnected and interdependent. At the same time, the conglomeration of power possessed by a state is being distributed to many actors such as NGOs, non-state actors, and international organizations. States are no longer the only actors in the international arena.

Realist theories, including offensive and defensive ones, have been thoroughly applied to the Cold War era, where great powers competed with each other, and there was almost no common interest between them. However, realism by itself has a difficult time explaining the reality today, given that there is no military confrontation between the U.S. and China, and that there are profound levels of economic interdependence between the two actors, particularly in the role that Western markets play in driving

⁹¹ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 23.

⁹² Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-edged Sword* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1996), 63.

⁹³ U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, “Remarks on a 21st Century Pacific Partnership,” Japan, 15 April 2013; available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/04/207487.htm>.

China's breakneck economic development. Besides, the U.S. needs China's cooperation and support in numerous international issues, such as anti-terrorism, non-proliferation, and climate change. Therefore, military conflicts are the first thing that both the U.S. and China are trying to avoid, since a stable and prosperous Asia is the biggest common factor in the interests of both countries.

As to the question of whether China wants to be an offensive country and a hegemon in the Asia-Pacific, the answer is negative. China has demonstrated self-restraint and a willingness to be constrained by others. Since the 1980s, China has increased its involvement in many international organizations and institutions. This demonstrates that China believes that the current international security mechanism established and supported by the U.S. is in its own self-interest. China wants to be part of the existing system and, at the same time, benefit from it.

Besides, China's ultimate goal is national rejuvenation. China wants to achieve the "China Dream" of being a peaceful and prosperous key actor in the twenty-first century. China has pursued a strategy of maintaining amicable relationships with its neighbors, mostly through reassurance and confidence building. This strategy reduces the level of anxiety among neighboring countries about China's rise, thus helping to alleviate the security dilemma between China and regional states. Even if China perceives the U.S. pivot as a threat, China's response is rational, and in line with what China believes it must do to reach its goals. In addition, establishing military blocs and alliances is not conducive to regional integration, and it is more difficult to adapt to the diversified reality of the Asia-Pacific region. If the realist theories are applied further to the U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific, it may lead to intensified competition between the U.S. and China, which will be unfavorable to both countries.

Conclusion

This article has examined the "U.S. pivot or rebalancing to Asia," including its diplomatic, economic, cultural, and military elements. It highlighted the contested nature of the pivot by identifying and critically assessing debates among Western scholars in the realist tradition as to whether or not the U.S. is balancing China, as defensive realism suggests, or seeking to maintain its dominance in the region, as offensive realism postulates. By reviewing the different varieties of realist theories and analyzing the application of the theories to the U.S. pivot, the essay argues that realist theory has some purchase on the reality of Asia-Pacific security politics. First, the combination of offensive and defensive realism does help us to better understand the U.S. pivot—both its intentions and likely outcomes. Second, in order to arrive at the fullest understanding, we must also accept that how the pivot is understood matters just as much as what it actually entails. Realism *per se* must be informed by constructivist thinking. Constructivist neo-realism provides the best analytical lens. Third, U.S. strategic decision makers appear to be using realist means (reallocation of military resources and renovation of politico-military alliances and partnerships) to realize idealist ends.

This article encourages us to reflect further on the uses and abuses of theory in international relations. Stephen Walt has written that "theory is an essential tool of state-

craft.”⁹⁴ Many policy debates are based on competing theoretical claims. The debate over how to respond to the “rise of China” hinged in part on competing forecasts about China’s intentions. Those who advocated for the containment of China argued that, since “China is the only potential hegemon,” and could “take the form of dominance through threat,”⁹⁵ the U.S. should adopt a policy of containment. Their opponents argued that, because of the increasing levels of economic interdependence, the U.S. and China can avoid military conflict, and that absolute gains, instead of a zero-sum situation, are possible through engagement. These disagreements arose in part because of fundamentally different views between neo-realism and neo-liberalism.

History shows that sometimes “good theory” leads to good policy. For example, “the theory of deterrence articulated in the 1940s and 1950s informed many aspects of U.S. military and foreign policy during the Cold War, and it continues to exert a powerful impact today.”⁹⁶ On the other hand, relying on a “bad theory,” as well as the analysis that flows from this perspective, may lead to unwise policy decisions, which may then pave a road to foreign policy disasters. For instance, neo-conservatism led the George W. Bush administration into two wars and impaired the United States’ image and comprehensive national capabilities.

With these reflections in mind, this essay concludes with three key points. First, the U.S. pivot provides a contemporary example of realist IR theory informing strategy and policy. Second, policy practitioners should appreciate that a combination of theoretical approaches provides the best tool for analysis, and that through helping to sort and sift through a deluge of facts and opinion, such a combined approach can provide fixed reference points and analytical clarity. Third, practitioners and policy makers themselves should guard against becoming prisoners of the paradigms theories propose. Does the application of realist theory take into account the complexity of contemporary developments, particularly the heavy burden of historical experiences and divergent cultural understandings? As Yongjin Zhang and Barry Buzan caution, we may need to “develop greater historical and cultural sensitivity to the evolution of international orders and their transformations in world history” and “historicize the past as a way to understanding the present as problematic and the future as contingent on history.”⁹⁷

At the time of writing, the U.S. has its highest-ranking military delegation in two years visiting Beijing, and is currently conducting sensitive bilateral negotiations at the highest level. This visit, as was noted in the introduction, underscores the importance of Sino-U.S. bilateral relations and encourages us to reflect on the strategic significance and policy implications of this study. First, the U.S. pivot to Asia is a strategic policy adjustment, one that is still under development. The U.S. and China should focus more on increasing strategic trust and trying to respect each other’s core interests and major concerns, rather than on using provocative rhetoric. Second, maintaining stability and

⁹⁴ Stephen M. Walt, “The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (2005): 23-48.

⁹⁵ Mearsheimer, “China’s Unpeaceful Rise”, 163.

⁹⁶ Walt, “The relationship between theory and policy in international relations”, 28

⁹⁷ Yongjin Zhang and Barry Buzan, “The Tributary System,” 4.

prosperity in the Asia-Pacific is the biggest common interest of the U.S. and China. Both countries should work cooperatively to create an environment conducive to achieving this common goal. Third, the U.S. has been one of the most important actors in shaping the positive environment in Asia in the past fifty years by establishing international security mechanisms. China has benefited from this development, and wishes to continue to play its role in it instead of challenging it. Both countries need to enhance understanding through dialogue and confidence-building measures. Fourth, the next decade will be a period of restructuring global power, the focus of which will be the Asia-Pacific region. Neither the U.S. nor China is fully prepared for this change at this point. Achieving a win-win situation through cooperation and coordination is the ultimate goal, as well as the only way to adapt to this change.

Bibliography

- Acharya, Amitav. *Georgian Crisis: Lessons from Asia*. The Straits Times, 2008.
- Carr, E. H.. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. 2nd. ed. London: Macmillan, 1962.
- Chan, Steve. "Exploring Puzzles in Power-Transition Theory: Implications for Sino-American Relations." *Security Studies* 13, no. 3 (2004): 103-41.
- Choong, William. "America's Clout: That Shrinking Feeling." *The Straits Times* (2011).
- Clifton, Joseph K.. *Disputed Theory and Security Policy: Responding to the 'Rise of China'*. Claremont: McKenna College, 2011.
- Clinton, Hillary Rodham. "Press Conference at the ASEAN Summit in Phuket, Thailand." In *ASEAN Summit*. Phuket, Thailand, 2009.
- Clinton, Hillary. "America's Pacific Century." *Foreign Policy* (2011).
- Denton, John W. H.. "Ambitious China Need Not Be an Emerging Problem." *The Australian* (2010).
- Donilon, Tom. "America is Back in the Pacific and Will Uphold the Rules." *Financial Times* (2011).
- Donnelly, Jack. "The Ethics of Realism." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, 150. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Fact Sheet: The East Asia Summit*. Office of the White House Press Secretary, 2011.
- Fan, Wang. *U.S. Should Back up Its Proclaimed 'Good Intentions' in Asia-Pacific With Action*. Xinhua News Agency, 2012.
- Feigenbaum, Evan A.. *Strengthening the U.S. Role in Asia*. CFR.org, 2011.
- Gillespie, Paul. "'Polarities' Old Hat in Newest of World Orders." *The Irish Times* (2010).
- Glaser, Charles, and Chaim Kaufmann. "What is the Offense-Defense Balance?" *International Security* 22 (1998): 44-82.
- Glaser, Charles. "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help." *International Security* 19 (1995): 50-90.
- Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*. U.S. National Intelligence Council, 2012.
- Herz, John H.. "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* 2, no. 2 (1950): 157-80.

Hornbeck, J. F., and William H. Cooper. *Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) and the Role of Congress in Trade Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2013.

Jervis, Robert. "Realism, Neo-liberalism and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate." *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 42-63.

Jiao, Wu. "China Welcomes US Role in Asia-Pacific Region." *China Daily* (2012).

Jimbo, Ken. *Dynamics of Power Shift from U.S. to China – Asia-Pacific Security and Japan's Foreign Policy*. Japan Foreign Policy Forum, 2013.

Kerry, John. *Remarks on a 21st Century Pacific Partnership*. Tokyo, Japan: U.S. Secretary of State, Tokyo Institute of Technology, 2013.

Levy, Jack S., and William R. Thompson. "Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally Against the Leading Global Power?" *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 11.

Lieber, Keir A., and Gerard Alexander. "Waiting for Balancing Why the World Is Not Pushing Back." *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 111-12.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-edged Sword*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1996.

Maitra, Sumantra. *U.S. Foreign Policy: Back to Realism*. International Affairs Review, 2013.

Manyin, Mark E.. *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2012.

Mearsheimer, John J.. "China's Unpeaceful Rise." *Current History* 105, no. 690 (2006): 160.

Mearsheimer, John J.. "Pull Those Boots off the Ground." *Newsweek* (2008).

Mearsheimer, John J.. "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1995): 11-12.

Mearsheimer, John J.. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: Norton, 2001.

Morgenthau, Hans J.. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 6th, brief edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1993.

Morris, Anna. "The U.S. Pivot to Asia: Will the Senkakus be its First Challenge?" *Eurasia Review—RSIS Commentaries* 053 (2013).

Organski, A. F. K., and Jacek Kugler. *The War Ledger*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Organski, A. F. K.. *World Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: Knopf, 1968.

Placek, Kevin. "The San Francisco System: Declining Relevance or Renewed Importance?" *Quarterly Access* 4, no. 1 (2012): 15-20.

Rapkin, David, and William Thompson. "Power Transition, Challenge and the (Re)Emergence of China." *International Interactions* 29, no. 4 (2003): 315-42.

Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament. Canberra, Australia: Office of the White House Press Secretary, 2011.

Remarks by Secretary Panetta at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, News Transcript, 2012.

Richardson, Michael. "China's Thirst for Oil and Gas." *Canberra Times* (2012).

Rynning, Sten, and Jens Ringsmose. "Why Are Revisionist States Revisionist? Reviving Classical Realism as an Approach to Understanding International Change." *International Politics* 45 (2008): 26.

Sheng, Zhong. *Goals of U.S. 'Return to Asia' Strategy Questioned.* People's Daily, 2011.

Sheng, Zhong. *U.S. Should Not Muddy the Waters Over the South China Seas.* People's Daily, 2012.

Shipping, Tang. *From Offensive Realism to Defensive Realism: A Social Evolutionary Interpretation of China's Security Strategy.* Nanyang Technical University, Singapore, 2012.

Snyder, Glenn H.. "Mearsheimer's World – Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay." *International Security* 27, no. 1 (2002): 154.

Song, Sang-ho. "U.S.-Japan Alliance Grows for Asia-Pacific Security Balance." *The Korea Herald* (2012).

Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2012.

Tian, Wang. *U.S. Uses 'Hedging' Strategy to Deal with China's Rise.* People's Daily, 2011.

Toft, Peter. "John J. Mearsheimer: An Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8 (2005): 390.

U.S. Should Treat China and Chinese Military Objectively and Rationally: Defence Ministry. Ministry of National Defense, P. R. China, 2012.

Van Evera, Stephen. *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

- Walt, Stephen M.. "Dealing With a Chinese Monroe Doctrine." *The New York Times* (2012).
- Walt, Stephen M.. "Explaining Obama's Asia Policy." *Foreign Policy* (2011).
- Walt, Stephen M.. "International Relations: One World, Many Theories." *Foreign Policy* (1998): 38.
- Walt, Stephen M.. "The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations." *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (2005): 23-48.
- Walt, Stephen M.. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Walt, Stephen. *Revolution and War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Walt, Stephen. *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2005.
- Waltz, Kenneth N.. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979.
- Waltz, Kenneth. "The Origin of War in Neorealist Theory." In *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, 40. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Waltz, Kenneth. *Man, the State, and War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1954.
- Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics, and Realism and International Politics*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Wang, Yuan-Kang. "Offensive Realism and the Rise of China." *Issues & Studies* 40, no. 1 (2004): 177.
- Wong, Edward. "Beijing Warns U.S. About South China Sea Disputes." *New York Times* (2011).
- Xi Jinping Accepts a Written Interview with the Washington Post of the U.S.*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P. R. China, 2013.
- Yuan, Luo. *China Should Stay Calm, Alert about U.S. Strategy Adjustments*. PLA Daily, 2012.
- Zakaria, Fareed. *The Post-American World*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2008.
- Zhang, Yongjin, and Barry Buzan. "The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice." *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5, no. 1 (2012): 3-36.
- Zhiyuan, Lin. *What Sort of Message Does the New U.S. National Defence Strategy Convey?*. Liberation Army Daily, 2012.