

The U.S. Foreign Policy in East Asia

Peculiar Relationship: Why Yellow Light with China is Inevitable and Essential

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Abstract

As of today, where does the complex and consequential relationship between the United States and China stand? Relations between the two nations are enormously complex and broad now, from security, trade, and broader economic issues, to the environment and human rights. In fact, various periods of history are marked by equilibrium or disequilibrium²: Gilpin also demonstrated in his book *War and Change in World Politics* that international political change is the result of efforts of political actors to change the international system in order to advance their own interests.³ Whether or not China - claiming itself as a peacefully rising state - intended to change the ideological landscape of the international politics, its "rise" has certainly become a hot potato for the last few decades. After more than 30 years of its fast-paced economic growth, China is now the second-largest economy in the world after the United States. With its developing global strategic clout, China is now extending its reach not only economically but also militarily, especially in the South China Sea, in addition to its enormous leap in military technology. Whether to contain China as a threat or accommodate it as a rising superpower is an inevitable question that the U.S. policy makers should answer. Hence, this paper argues in support of the balance-of-power theory by suggesting that the U.S. policy makers should make a sensible diplomatic strategy of balancing its position towards China: maintaining a strategically critical policy of yellow light with Beijing. At the end of the day, working together is hard and frustrating, but not working together is worse.

¹ Master in International Security '14, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver

² Viotti & Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, Pearson, 2012.

³ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press; Reprint edition, 1983.

The U.S.-China Relations at the Crossroad: Highs and Lows

With hundreds of policy issues from agriculture to cyber space joining American and Chinese interests, even with close look into some of the key issues, no convincing pattern emerges between two countries. One of the most dangerous or uncertain risks posed by Washington's confusion over deterrence lies in the avoidance of a choice one way or the other about the strategy when it comes to China.⁴ Realist adherents, especially power-transition theorists, see the international system hierarchically ordered, with the most powerful state dominating the rest and that war may be more likely when states are relatively equal, particularly when the differential growth in two states' economies brings a challenger close to the reigning hegemon's power.⁵ Thucydides also argued that the differential growth in power of the various states in the system causes a fundamental redistribution of power in the system.⁶ However, at the status quo, globalization and interdependence between states cannot be ignored and this is why balance of power is at the core of realist thought which inevitably embraces interactions among states. Moreover, it is also the reality of the U.S.-Chinese relations which should not be blindsided by thoughtless pursuit of deterrence and containment.

According to Viotti, although peaceful engagement has become more prominent in US relations with China since the 1970s and the Russian Federation since its entry on the world stage in 1992, in the minds of American policymakers containment has remained an important part of their strategic calculus.⁷ Snyder defines deterrence as in one deters another party from doing something by the implicit or explicit threat of applying some sanction if the forbidden act is performed, or by the promise of a reward if the act is not performed: thus conceived, deterrence does not have to depend on military force.⁸ In case of the U.S.-Chinese relations - where numerous internal and external factors constantly facilitate and contain the foreign policy of two states - it is tightly tangled in the complex web of national interests which coincide especially in economic arena. Some scholars argue that deterrence is a nonissue for the Sino-U.S. relations because the two states' economic interdependence precludes military conflict.

⁴ Richard Betts, "The Lost Logic of Deterrence: What the Strategy that won the Cold War Can - and Can't - Do Now," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2013).

⁵ Viotti & Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, Pearson, 2012.

⁶ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press; Reprint edition, 1983.

⁷ Paul Viotti, *American Foreign Policy*, Polity Press, 2010.

⁸ Glenn Snyder, "Deterrence and Defense: A Theoretical Introduction," (191) (16pp.)

In addition to China's willingness to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TTP) and Washington's genuine effort to loosen economic flows between nations, China's third party plenum in last November resulted in optimistic promises for crucial domestic policy changes, best encapsulated by the sentence in the official communique that the market should play a decisive role in the allocation of resources in the economy.⁹ If these promises are to be fully implemented, these reforms would reflect that state-owned enterprises will be less privileged and Chinese consumers more empowered, which are both positive developments for U.S. businesses.

In addition to economic partnership, important agreements are also being made between Washington and Beijing on climate and energy issue, particularly potent greenhouse gases. Both American and Chinese reluctance to confront each other directly is reflected in many international agendas and regional conflicts. Last December, when the U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping held a face-to-face meetings in Beijing, both leaders did not specifically touched upon the rising international tension over China's declaration of a new air-defense zone, leaving questions over the next moves for each power and U.S. allies in the region. Even the response to Vice President's visit in China was muted, with many media coverage playing down tensions over the air-defense zone and blamed Japan for "internationally creating a crisis" in an effort to force confrontation between the U.S. and China.¹⁰ Even when it comes to military confrontation, there has been optimistic atmosphere created by bilateral cooperation, despite the fact that the Chinese and U.S. militaries have faced off on several occasions in recent years, raising the fear of an unintended clash due to a mixed signals. In the recent meeting between the U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Ray Odierno and the vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission Fan Changlong, China and the U.S. promised military exchanges for deeper ties to help reduce the risk of miscalculation, playing down tension between two major powers.¹¹

⁹ Sungji Yoon, "China in the Global Market and Beijing's Determination," *Hankyoreh*, December 2013.

¹⁰ Peter Nicholas and Jeremy Page, "Biden's Trip to Beijing Leaves China Air-Zone Rift Open," *The Wall Street Journal*, 4 Dec 2013. <<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles>.>

¹¹ Ben Blanchard, "U.S. plays down tension with China, upbeat on military exchanges," *Reuters*, 22 Feb 2014. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/dec/27/opinion/la-oe-hachigian-u-s--china-relationship-20131227>>

American foreign policy elites have tended to see value in the importance of the Rooseveltian "big stick," their differences being mainly on how it should be wielded toward adversaries.¹² Liberal internationalists generally prefer constructive or peaceful engagement combined with containment before resorting to warfare.¹³ Despite various national interests that can be shared and clash between two countries, many experts carefully argue that the recent cooperation between Washington and Beijing in turn reflects serious tension behind the curtain. Some even argue that temporary carrots given to each other will bring even more dangerous diplomatic and military confrontation if not fixed properly into one direction: either containment or accommodation.

In fact, the realm of values were fraught in late 2013. Not only was there no notable progress on individual rights in China, but Beijing also continued its crackdown on lawyers, professors, activists, and writers trying to hold China accountable to its own laws and international human rights standards.¹⁴ The Chinese Communist Party constantly lamented the lack of trust in the U.S.-China relationship while simultaneously instructing its members to guard against the influence of American core values. China and the U.S. also have various diplomatic disagreements in the region, including China's behaviors to assert sovereignty in the South and East China Sea and the U.S. support for self-ruled Taiwan. As the South China Sea tension became a backdrop for Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to East Asia last month, the U.S.-China relationship is escalating into a silent confrontation between two major powers trying to drive a balance of power in the region. In response to China's increasingly assertive claims over the territorial issues, Secretary of State John Kerry's call for South China Sea issues to be resolved according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea, was rejected by Beijing officials as well.¹⁵

Hence, for better or worse, the complex brew of tension, hope, progress, and retrenchment is what the world is witnessing from the modern day U.S.-China relationship. Both powers have diverging national interests but also unavoidable interdependence.

¹² Paul Viotti, *American Foreign Policy*, Polity Press, 2010.

¹³ Ibid 11.

¹⁴ Nina Hachigian, "The Awkward State of U.S.-China Relations," *Los Angeles Times*, 27 Dec 2013.

¹⁵ Keith Bradshaw, "South China Sea Tensions a Backdrop to Kerry's China Visit," *Sinosphere: Dispatches From China*, 14 Feb 2014.

Viotti argues in his book *International Relations Theory* that interdependence among states is not necessarily such a good thing: rather than being a symmetric relation between coequal parties, interdependence is typically a dominance-dependence relation with the dependent party particularly vulnerable to the choices of the dominant party. Hence, it could be analyzed that the current Sino-American tension and seemingly cooperation reflect both fragility and vulnerability. China, with its former leader Deng Xiaoping's announcement as to come to its "peaceful rise," may have kept a low profile in international order. However, the announcement does not seem to echo in the modern days, with unsustainable and sometimes provocative Chinese ambition to drive the region into a security dilemma. At the same time, as to Obama administration's declared "pivot," or "rebalancing," of American military power toward Asia has not been accompanied by consistent signals about where, when, why, or how U.S. armed forces would be sent into contain China, nor is there a clear operational rationale for basing a contingent of U.S. marines in Australia, the most concrete symbol of the pivot. However, although a crystal clear national security policy into a certain direction - either deterrence against potential threat or accommodation - would sound more ideal, compromising for moderation and maintaining yellow light with China would certainly bring more positive results for the U.S. national interest at the status quo. This would strengthen the U.S. rationale for the balance of power in the Asia where it would have to cross the Pacific Ocean and to harmonize with its biggest rival in the 21st century, China.

Economic Cooperation: Carrot and Stick Approach

The United States and its Asian allies will continue to face increasing pressure from China, as the emerging great economic power seeks to reshape the security order and maintains its ideologically different political structure. This is indeed threatening not only for the U.S. but also neighbors of China since the still-surviving self-professed communist regimes (China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba) are best understood by their own different adaptations to domination within a capitalist world-system.¹⁶ While economic structuralists tend to stress economic factors as underlying or driving politics in a capitalist world economy or system, it is rather different story when it comes to U.S.-China economic relations of which different types of political paradigm clashes yet still manages to survive.

¹⁶ Viotti & Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, Pearson, 2012.

Some scholars warn that it is unacceptable for any states in Asia to unilaterally declare new territorial arrangements, which China is likely to keep pushing for revisions of this kind, and that it will be important for its neighbors and the U.S. to resist these probes.¹⁷ However, despite these types of general warnings, the U.S. and Chinese economies are the first and second largest in the world respectively, and are heavily independent. The Obama administration has sought to cooperate with China in rebalancing the global economy, while acknowledging that the two nations are engaged in what President Obama calls "healthy economic competition."¹⁸ Nevertheless, bilateral economic issues include the issue of commercial cyber espionage allegedly originating from China; China's currency and industrial policies; and China's weak enforcement of intellectual property rights. Despite its increasing foreign direct investment in the U.S., China has complained about U.S. scrutiny of investments on national security grounds.¹⁹

In this economic dynamics between two countries, which is one of the critical external factors that drives the relationship between two nations, economists point out that the size of the U.S. trade deficit with China has risen with the greater volume of trade. The global trade balance is a more meaningful indicator of an economy's health than bilateral balances, and in recent years, China's current account surplus has fallen significantly, as a share of GDP, from 10.1% in 2007 to 2.3% in 2012.²⁰ Many U.S. analysts nonetheless point to the U.S. bilateral goods trade imbalance with China to highlight China's allegedly unfair trade practices and undervalued currency, and their impact on the U.S. economy.²¹ Nevertheless, Chinese officials cite different figures for the bilateral trade deficit than the U.S., and claim that the increase in exports to Washington reflects the shifting production from other countries to China, with many "made in China" products including parts made in other countries. However, in the trade statistics, the total value of such products is counted as coming from China.

¹⁷ Stephen M. Walt, "China Pushing to Change Order," *An Interview with the Korea Times*, Dec 2013.

¹⁸ The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by President Obama and President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China Before Bilateral Meeting," press release, 7 June 2013.

¹⁹ Susan V. Lawrence, "U.S.-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues," *CRS Report for Congress*, 1 Aug 2013.

²⁰ Department of the Treasury, Department of the Treasury Office of International Affairs, *Report to Congress on International Economic and Exchange Rate Policies*, April 12 2013.

²¹ Susan V. Lawrence, "U.S.-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues," *CRS Report for Congress*, 1 Aug 2013.

Table 1. U.S. Merchandise Trade with China over Time

| Year | U.S. Imports from China | U.S. Exports to China | U.S. Trade Deficit with China |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1995 | \$ 46 billion | \$ 12 billion | \$ 34 billion |
| 2000 | \$ 100 billion | \$ 16 billion | \$ 84 billion |
| 2005 | \$ 243 billion | \$ 41 billion | \$ 202 billion |
| 2010 | \$365 billion | \$ 92 billion | \$ 273 billion |
| 2012 | \$ 426 billion | \$ 111 billion | \$ 315 billion |

Source: U.S. International Trade Commission

Many U.S. policy makers argue that China's nontransparent and government-regulated economic policies harm U.S. economic interests and have contributed to U.S. job losses. In order to address this problem, more effective policies that embrace carrot and stick approach should be reviewed in order to address commercial disputes with China. First and foremost, the U.S. should adopt more aggressive stance against China, such as increasing the number of dispute settlement cases brought against China in the World Trade Organization (WTO), or even threatening to impose trade sanctions against China unless Beijing addresses its economic policies that hurt U.S. national interest. Secondly, Washington should intensify bilateral negotiations through existing high-level bilateral dialogues, such as the U.S.-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue (S&ED), which was established to discuss long-term challenges and normalize economic relationship.²² Moreover, pursuing to complete still on-going bilateral negotiations with Beijing to reach a high-standard bilateral investment treaty (BIT) as well as finalizing negotiations in the WTO toward China's accession to the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) would be pivotal. Third, the U.S. should keep encouraging China to join the TPP negotiations in order for China to acknowledge Washington's intention to create open environment for various states to join the international trade system. This would provide more positive atmosphere for normalizing the U.S.-China economic relationship and provide incentives for the Chinese government to follow the capitalistic economy model. In addition to persuading China to join TPP, seeking to negotiate a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) with China would also pave more pathways for mutual trust.

²² Wayne M. Morrison, "China-U.S. Trade Issues," *Congressional Research Service*, 10 Feb 2014.

Lastly, the U.S. government should continue to pressure China to implement comprehensive economic reforms, such as diminishing the role of the state in the economy and implementing policies to boost domestic consumption.²³

Diplomatic Cooperation: Mutual Deterrence Against North Korean Nuclearization

As China increasingly acknowledges its growing responsibility as an active member of the international society hand in hand with its increasing prominence, the U.S.-China relationship encountered new diplomatic breakthrough: working together against nuclear North Korea. Although North Korea is not necessarily an adversary which should be contained for China, nuclear North Korea with its constant provocation in the region has toughened China to pressure its long-standing little brother. According to Viotti, containment of adversaries is an explicit alternative to armed intervention or warfighting and that it continues to be a central part of American foreign policy.²⁴ Henry Kissinger also points out that there should be a myriad of alternative policies to containing adversaries, if not military measures, such as cooperating with China if it is necessary.²⁵ According to the Obama administration's National Security Strategy 2013, North Korea evidently presents a specific concern for the illegal proliferation of nuclear technology to rogue state and non-state actors: collaborating with Washington's allies in Asia and "China,"²⁶ the report specifically notes, the U.S. will be able to successfully restrict North Korea's ability to flout international agreements on non-proliferation and normalize relations with China. Why would maintaining positive diplomatic ties with Beijing benefit the U.S. national interest as well as the region? Why does working closely with China towards North Korean de-nuclearization matter as in deterring and accommodating Beijing at the same time?

First of all, as a deterrence strategy, Obama's "pivot" to Asia signals the administration's strong commitment to maintain its sphere of influence in East Asia as well as to deter Chinese growing prowess.

²³ Ibid 21.

²⁴ Paul Viotti, *American Foreign Policy*, Polity Press, 2010.

²⁵ Henry Kissinger, *On China*, Penguin Books, 2012.

²⁶ Obama National Security Strategy (2013)

Current political and diplomatic emphasis on Middle East and Russia is bound to be re-shifted since growing China is an evident, present and upcoming threat for Washington. In order for Obama's "pivot" to Asia to have a firm standing and justification for its increasing involvement in the region, it should not only work with its regional allies but also accommodate China by working together against regional threat: nuclear North Korea. This is not only because deterring China would also mean working closely with China to solve regional problems but also due to the fact that China's neighbors in the region share numerous historical and cultural ties with it. The existence of a balance of power, or the capabilities requirements for balancing, can hardly be determined without attempting to look into the "mind" of the enemy.²⁷ In other words, due to the similar strategic culture that those countries share, there exist inevitable interdependence among them diplomatically, economically, and culturally.

To be more specific, although China's geographically close neighbors such as South Korea, Taiwan and Japan recognize the fear of China's growing regional prominence, they also share a similar historical and cultural root with China. Notable factor is their thousands years of historical interaction and deeply rooted Confucianism in their strategic culture. This link inevitably leads to increasing number of bilateral negotiations, free trade agreements, and multiple summit talks to solve regional problems among East Asian states in pursuit of regional stability and mutual assurance. The trend is already portrayed in the recently more robust Sino-South Korean relationship working towards mutual growth and trust especially in regards to the North Korean nuclear issue.²⁸ The U.S. goals for regional cooperation include establishing a global balance of power that favors freedom, seeking to establish active agendas of cooperation in the fight against terrorism, and ultimately creating a strategically stable Asia.²⁹ Failure to find a suitable approach in Asia could be just as catastrophic to maintaining a peaceful Asia-Pacific region, including open conflict in Korea, the Taiwan Strait, and the South China Sea.³⁰

²⁷ Glenn Snyder, "Deterrence and Defense: A Theoretical Introduction," (191) (16pp.)

²⁸ Sun-ah Kim, "Moving Toward Regional Stability in East Asia," *The Korean Institute for Security Studies*, 4 Jan 2014.

²⁹ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, DC: The White House, September 2002, p. 26-28.

³⁰ Frank L. Miller, Jr, "Impact of Strategic Culture on U.S. Policies for East Asia," *The Strategic Studies Institute*, November 2003.

Other, less dangerous threats to U.S. national interests in the region are also possible such as its marginalization if the strategic cultures of Asia are disregarded or misunderstood. Hence, it would be mistaken if the U.S. foreign policy makers believe that it can build solid regional strategies in Asia without interacting and normalizing its relations with China by working on mutual diplomatic agendas.

Then, actively working towards the North Korean denuclearization comes into play for the U.S. to exert its influence in East Asia. The United States is clearly uneasy about what it sees as China's effort to gain creeping control over waters in the Asia-Pacific region, including its November 23 declaration of an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in an area of the East China Sea that includes islands at the center of a dispute with Japan.³¹ However, in his recent visit to China, the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry chose not to escalate the tension and reiterated Washington's willingness to cooperate and work together with Beijing when it comes to regional issues in Asia. He told reporters in Beijing he was pleased that China "could not have more forcefully reiterated its commitment" to the goal of denuclearizing North Korea.³² There remain significant differences between the U.S. and China over the specifics of how to rein in North Korea's nuclear programs. However, among numerous national agendas that Washington and Beijing could clash, taking a cooperative gesture when it comes to resolving regional issue and instability seemed to have been what two states can share handshakes and work together with. This is also reflected in the Six-Party Talks (SPT) which took place from 2003 to 2007, which clearly manifested the U.S. leadership in inviting China, Russia, Japan, and two Koreas to work collaboratively for the North Korean de-nuclearization.

Military Deterrence: The Two-Pronged Strategy

Looking into containment in practice, the tactics or ways and means of containment are often offensive in character. One can try to deter an adversary's policymakers from taking certain actions by threatening military response, seeking to dissuade them from continuing to pursue a present policy course, or even attempting to coerce or compel them to take yet a different course of action.³³

³¹ Chung Suh-Yong, "Moving Forward with an Inconvenient Truth," *The Asian Research Association for Peace and Security Studies*, 18 Feb 2014.

³² Michael R. Gordon, "Kerry says China willing to pressure North Korea on nuclear plans," *The New York Times*, 15 Feb 2014.

³³ Paul Viotti, *American Foreign Policy*, Polity Press, 2010.

According to Ning Lu, former Chinese foreign service officer, wrote in his book *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decision Making in China* that Chinese military has not become an independent force in foreign policy decision-making, but instead remains firmly under the control of established guidelines formulated by the civilian central leadership.³⁴ Contrary to general belief, the Chinese military organization is strictly controlled and restricted by the Communist Party: this is why many military experts suggest that peaceful engagement policy with China can pave more stable relationship with Beijing.

Ever since coming into office, President Obama has repeatedly called for a stronger military-to-military relationship with China. This is well-demonstrated in Vice President Joe Biden's statement in July 2013, when he mentioned "leaving the military dimension of our dialogue underdeveloped on both sides causes us to run unnecessary risk."³⁵ Although this unnecessary risk does not have to be in the minds and beliefs of key U.S. policy decision makers, because leaders are entrusted with promoting national rather than international interests, visionary appeals for global military equality simply fall on deaf ears. As Chinese military is expanding its presence in East Asia at the same time that the U.S. is also implementing its rebalancing strategy to the Asia-Pacific, greater proximity of two militaries becomes inevitable. In other words, mixed signals as well as lack of communication between two major powers greatly increased the military tension and would continue the competition of military buildup in East Asia.

Although operational cooperation between two militaries remains extremely limited, in remarks in Singapore in June 2013, Secretary of Defense Hagel characterized dialogue between two militaries as "steadily improving."³⁶ In June 2013, the two militaries both participated in a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief military exercise under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus.³⁷

³⁴ Ning Lu, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decision Making in China*, Westview Press, 2000.

³⁵ Kim Han-Sung, *The China-U.S. Military Dynamics*, The Asan Institute for Policy Research, 19 Nov 2013.

³⁶ Department of Defense, "Remarks by Secretary Hagel at the IISS Asia Security Summit, Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore," June 1 2013.

³⁷ Martin Sieff, "ASEAN Defense Ministers Host Disaster Relief, Military Medicine Exercise," *Asia Pacific Defense Forum*, June 26 2013.

The following civilian-military Strategic Security Dialogues (SSD) produced an agreement between two states "to actively explore a notification mechanism for major military activities" and to continue to discuss rules of the road for air and maritime activities.³⁸

However, despite these subtle progresses in military activities and communications, the U.S. has long been concerned about the intentions behind China's military modernization and cyber espionage against American companies. In the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance that outlined the military component of the U.S. rebalancing toward the Asia Pacific, for instance, the Department of Defense (DOD) stated that the growth of China's military power must be accompanied by greater clarity of its strategic intentions in order to avoid causing friction in the region.³⁹ The DOD report also observed that China's military modernization also appears increasingly focused on developing capabilities for extended range power projection and operations in emerging domains such as cyber, space, and electronic warfare, as well as other missions, including anti-piracy missions, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and regional military operations.⁴⁰

Given this strategic uncertainty, it seems more reasonable for U.S. to pursue a two-pronged policy toward Beijing. One prong is to engage China and encourage it to become a responsible stakeholder in the international community; the second is to engage in prudent hedging against competitive or aggressive behavior by China, pursuing continued engagement rather than treating the country as an enemy. Although Beijing's continued military buildup and the resulting shift in the regional balance of power may profoundly alter the military landscape of East Asia, it is possible for U.S. to respond to China's rise with yellow light that does not unnecessarily strain the U.S.-China relationship.

First of all, Washington should continue to invest in transformational U.S. military capabilities in a portfolio approach that renders appropriate emphasis to highly advanced aerospace and maritime forces as well as the ground and special forces needed for other future missions.

³⁸ U.S. Department of State, "U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue V Strategic Track Select Outcomes," fact sheet, July 12 2013.

³⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, Washington, DC, January 2012.

⁴⁰ Susan V. Lawrence, "U.S.-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues," *CRS Report for Congress*, 1 Aug 2013.

This must be followed by improving intelligence collection and analysis in regards to the Chinese military. Second, it would be pivotal for Washington to maintain and expand its alliance in East Asia, preserving alliances with South Korea, Japan, and Australia, by pursuing deeper military partnership. The U.S. must also remain in strong position to ensure that its military has the capacity to defend Taiwan from an unprovoked Chinese invasion or other military provocations. Simultaneously, Washington should continue to conduct military-to-military activities with China, such as the planned talks between the U.S. Commander of Strategic Command and the head of the Chinese Second Artillery.⁴¹ An important instrument of both engagement and hedging, military-to-military creates mutual familiarity that can help avoid miscalculations in moments of crisis, tension, or competition.⁴² Finally, the U.S. Should expand military-to-military activities to anticipate joint actions - such as the recent bilateral agreements on expanding two countries' military exchange - that might be mutually beneficial for both Washington and China. Joint action could include counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, search-and-rescue, counter-human smuggling, humanitarian relief activities, noncombatant evacuation, and peacekeeping. It would be crucial for Washington to respond to China's military modernization in a way that avoids stumbling into a new cold war, at the same time making that prospect unattractive to Chinese future leaders.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, in the face of new era, no relationship will be as crucial as the one between the U.S., the world's great power, and China, the world's rising power. The world is witnessing, in effect, a new stage in a national dialogue about the nature of Chinese power, influence, and aspirations that has gone on fitfully since the West first pried open China's doors.⁴³ China's rapid economic growth, expanding regional and global influence, continued military modernization, and uneven human rights record are also shifting the geopolitical terrain and contributing to uncertainty about China's future course as well as America's.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Park Soo-Jin, *America's Standing in the 21st Century East Asian Security Map*, Pureungrim, Feb 2014.

⁴² Ashton B. Carter and Jennifer C. Bulkeley, "America's Strategic Response to China's Military Modernization," *Hard Asia Pacific Review*, March 2013.

⁴³ Henry Kissinger, *On China*, The Penguin Books, 2012.

⁴⁴ Carla A. Hills and Dennis C. Blair, *U.S.-China Relations an Affirmative Agenda, A Responsible Course*, Council on Foreign Relations Press, April 2007.

Hence, while the U.S. should not turn a blind eye to the economics, diplomatic, and security challenges posed by China's rise, it should be clear that any aggressive behavior from China would be met with strong oppositions. Henry Kissinger noted in his book *On China*, that what remains to be dealt with is to move from crisis management to a definition of common goals, from the solution of strategic controversies to their avoidance.⁴⁵ What the U.S. faces in the rise of China is certainly a hard choice at the crossroad: however, that choice should not be forced with delusional belief that either deterrence or accommodation is a way to go. Rather, more prudent and cautious approach by working with yellow light would eventually pay off Washington's patience in the face of dealing with and normalizing tension with unprecedented peculiar power, China.

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⁴⁵ Ibid 42.

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Regardless of whether China's foreign policy is currently assertive, its national identity narrative remains a driving force for divisiveness in the regional and international order. Discover the world's research. China-based articles create national identities around the goal of preserving political clout in the Asia-Pacific. US op-eds invert China's goal and generate identities asserting US regional power. National identities have wreaked havoc on diplomacy in East Asia, especially over the past few years, says Gilbert Rozman, and they demand keen attention if bilateral relations are to improve. Looking forward, Rozman analyses three perspectives: (1) differentiating national identity from nationalism, while linking the evolving expressions of identity in China, Japan, and South Korea to Tensions between the US and China are escalating at a dizzying pace. So what will happen next? It's the latest step in a downward spiral in relations between the dueling economic powers which have sunk to the lowest level in decades. The BBC's Barbara Plett Usher takes a look at the motivations - and potential consequences - of this US-China face-off. How significant is this escalation? It is not unprecedented for the US to close a foreign mission but it is a rare and dramatic step, one that is difficult to unwind. This is a consulate not an embassy, so it's not responsible for policy. But it plays an important role in facilitating trade and outreach. The United States signed a treaty to encourage Chinese immigration and guaranteed them protection from discrimination. Some Chinese leaders were inspired by the American political system. Sun Yat-sen, the father of modern China, is said to have modeled his political philosophy of the "Three Principles of the People" after Abraham Lincoln's belief in government "of the people, by the people, for the people." For the United States, China today is neither an outright enemy, nor a trusted friend. The tensions between them are not the result of an enduring U.S. resentment of China, or a tradition of hostility between them. They exist because of the kind of government China has, and the actions it takes. The U.S. relationship with China is long, rich, and complex. Today: A cooperative relationship with China has been a pillar of the United States' foreign policy for more than half a century. Edward Wong on why the Trump administration believes it's time for a change. It's Wednesday, July 29. Edward, can you tell me what happened in Houston last week? People who still clung to the classic notions of free trade and thought that the traditional relationship with China was a stabilizing force in the world. And that this had helped American companies get wealthy over the years, as well as had benefited American consumers. michael barbaro.