

Emerging Challenges to Unipolarity: U.S. Grand Strategy and East Asian Order*

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Shifting Polarity in World Politics

The emergence of the concept of a sole superpower was a late twentieth century phenomenon that was unprecedented in global history. The natural state of world politics prior to the last two decades always involved multiple great powers. At the turn of the last century, the United Kingdom (UK) accommodated the rise of the United States (U.S.) as a great power. The defeat of Japan and Germany in the Second World War and the gradual decline of the UK led to a bipolar world order, exemplified by the cold war rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The end of the cold war was a seminal moment in world politics and history. After more than six decades of incessant conflict and proxy wars, the end of the cold war delivered what IR scholar Francis Fukuyama argued was the final verdict on the ideological debate about the future of the global political system.¹ In 1990, Conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer, famously referred to the end of the cold war as the arrival of the 'unipolar moment' in global politics.² The Unipolar moment signalled the rise of the U.S. as the sole superpower on the world stage with unbridled sway over global affairs.

However, as China emerges as the new challenger, power shifts are inevitable, as the contest for power maximization would intensify in a struggle for regional and global supremacy. The potential for conflict is intense

because Chinese ambitions are calibrated and far reaching, driven by nationalism, fuelled by internal political compulsions and backed up by economic heft and technology driven military modernization. At the same time, the U.S. as the sole superpower is unlikely to retreat or retrench to accommodate China's rise as the regional hegemon in Asia.³ As the world enters a new era of great power rivalry, there are no parallels from the past that could serve as guideposts in analyzing how power arrangements between these two powers will be negotiated and rearranged in the twenty first century. Historical experience has shown that whenever the structure of global power changes, the world experiences more instability. While the end of the cold war was a transformative moment that reshaped the structure of the international system, the need for weaker states to balance against stronger states and the inherent security dilemma of states continues to shape international politics.⁴ The emergence of China as a potential peer competitor to counterbalance U.S. dominance in the world and the emerging challenges to U.S. primacy is the subject of this paper. The main thrust of the paper is to test if the main assumptions about the post-cold war era are

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¹ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

² C. Krauthammer, 'The Unipolar Moment', in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990), pp. 23-33.

³ See J. Mearsheimer, 'Can China Rise Peacefully?', in *National Interest*, 8 April 2014, online at <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204> (last accessed on 30 October 2015); R. Kaplan, 'Superpowers don't Get to Retire: What our Tired Country Still Owes the World', in *New Republic*, 26 May 2014, online at <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/117859/allure-normalcy-what-america-still-owes-world> (last accessed on 30 October 2015).

⁴ R. Jervis, 'Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma', in *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1978), pp. 167-214. For extensive analysis of how security dilemma specifically plays into the U.S-China equation, see A.P. Liff and G.J. Ikenberry, 'Racing toward Tragedy: China's Rise, Military Competition in the Asia Pacific, and the Security Dilemma', in *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Fall 2014), pp. 52-91.

still valid in the context of the U.S. pivot to Asia. Is the unipolar world order still alive and well, as China's rapid rise as a great power challenges U.S. preponderance in East Asia and beyond? This paper seeks to answer the question as to whether the U.S. should continue to perpetuate the unipolar moment or seek accommodation with China in a new regional order through strategic restraint and power sharing.

In the first part of the paper, I revisit the 'unipolar moment' and the arguments advanced by opposing camps on the efficacy of unipolarity. Second, I briefly review U.S. Grand Strategy in East Asia since the end of the cold war and the current academic debates in the context of the U.S. rebalancing to Asia. Third, I highlight several emerging challenges to U.S. hegemony in the region. Finally, I examine why a multi-polar regional order in East Asia led by the U.S., but includes other powers could ease U.S. burden sharing and bolster its pivot.

Post-cold War Unipolarity & U.S. Grand Strategy in East Asia

Unipolarity Revisited

The arrival of the 'unipolar moment' prompted prognostications about its capacity to endure as a viable structure of the international system and the future trajectory of global politics. Krauthammer made three key assumptions about the end of the cold war: the world would become multipolar, America would retreat into an isolationist shell, and there would be less conflict. Waltz argued why global politics was not about to transform itself, but instead the end of the cold war only alters the structure of world politics.⁵ Samuel Huntington raised doubts about the unipolar state of global politics, why it was an aberration that would eventually pave the way toward a 'unimultipolar' world order. Huntington argued that the structure of world politics can no longer be understood in linear and unidimensional terms, but needs a more nuanced and complex understanding of a world

⁵ K.N. Waltz, 'Structural Realism after the Cold War', in *International Security*, Summer 2000, Vol. 25, No.1, pp 5-41.

order that exhibited many qualities of being unipolar, but was also becoming more multipolar.⁶ In his seminal work about why great powers decline, Paul Kennedy professed that the continued domination of the U.S. would depend on its ability to maintain the necessary defence requirements and the means to meet those commitments.⁷

Two major schools of thought have argued for and against unipolarity in the academic literature. First, scholars including Layne and Monteiro⁸ argue that unipolarity is the cause of the outbreak of conflict and question the ability of unipolar systems to promote peace. The opposing camp led by Wohlforth argues why unipolarity promotes a more durable and peaceful world order and has the capacity to sustain itself as long as bipolarity did in the twentieth century.⁹ Some other scholars argue that the U.S. is safer than ever before and call for a less activist foreign policy and a greater reliance on international institutions to advance U.S. national security¹⁰ while others advocate that the U.S. adopt a strategy of soft

⁶ S. Huntington, 'America in the World', in *The Hedgehog Review* (Spring 2003), pp 1-18.

⁷ P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict, 1500-2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

⁸ C. Layne, 'The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment', in *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 7-41; N.P. Monteiro, 'Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity is Not Peaceful', in *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011), pp. 9-40.

⁹ W.C. Wohlforth, 'The Stability of a Unipolar World', in *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999), pp 5-41. For similar views on U.S. Grand Strategy, please see, M. Mastanduno, 'Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy after the Cold War' in *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Spring 1997), pp. 49-88. S.G. Brooks and W.C. Wohlforth, 'American Primacy in Perspective', in *Foreign Affairs*, unnumbered (July/August 2002), pp. 20-33.

¹⁰ M.A. Zenko, 'Clear and Present Safety', in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 2 (2012), pp. 79-93; J. Traub, 'The End of American Intervention', in *The New York Times*, 18 February 2012, online at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/opinion/sunday/the-end-of-american-intervention.html?_r=0 (last accessed 30 October 2015). See for example, B.R. Posen, 'Pull Back: The Case for a Less Activist Foreign Policy', in *Foreign Affairs*, January February 2013, online at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2013-01-01/pull-back> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

balancing.¹¹

Roots of U.S. Preponderance

Despite predictions about the decline of U.S. power, the U.S. is still the largest economy in the world, with one of the largest per capita income. Over the years, investments in Science and Technology have enabled the U.S. economy to develop a sustainable competitive edge in various technology sectors.¹²

The U.S. military is still the most technologically advanced in the world and spends more on defence than the Top 8 countries combined.¹³ The U.S. is also a leading cyber and space power. As the original inventor of the Internet, possessing unrivalled technological superiority over its rivals, the U.S. has played a decisive role in ensuring that the Internet remains in U.S. hands for now and in the future. Since the future of the Internet is increasingly intertwined with the political ideologies of competing states in the global system, in the strategic competition for control of the Internet, the U.S. quest for primacy in controlling the Internet dovetails with what is increasingly being seen as the next frontier for demonstrating global supremacy.

U.S. Grand Strategy in East Asia

While analyzing the U.S. role in Asia, it is important to keep history in perspective. Since Secretary of State, John Hay wrote his famous 'open door' notes in 1899,¹⁴ the U.S. has

maintained an enduring presence in China and the Asia Pacific. Though the U.S. foray into Asia can be traced back to 1692, it is Hay's note, demarcating 'spheres of interests' to safeguard U.S. trading interests that ended America's intransigence and strategic dilemma towards Asia and guided U.S. foreign and security policy in the early part of the twentieth century. During this time, while safeguarding and promoting its own self-interest, the U.S. stayed away from either committing or getting entangled in the Asian great power rivalry involving Germany, UK, Russia and Japan. However, the end of the Second World War and the defeat of Japan, dramatically changed America's strategic posture towards Asia from being a neutral power to that of an offshore balancer and later a regional hegemon. The U.S. long term commitment to Asia should be seen in this historical light. Though East Asia has witnessed wars unfold in the Korean Peninsula (1950-53) and Vietnam (1962-75), it has witnessed unprecedented levels of economic progress and prosperity over the past four decades, led by Japan in the 1970s, Korea and China in the 1980s and the Asian 'tiger economies' in the 1990s. A major contributor to this economic growth has been the enduring alliance between the U.S. and Japan which undergirds a stable security order in East Asia.

From the perspective of U.S. strategy towards East Asia, the 1991 U.S. National Security document only makes a passing reference to China, as the U.S. focus was on managing the after effects of the First Gulf War.¹⁵ Towards the latter half of the last decade of the twentieth century, opening up Chinese markets and integrating the Chinese economy with the global trading system was the overriding priority of the U.S.¹⁶ China prominently figured in U.S. national security calculations for the first time in 2000, as the U.S. recognized the rise of China as a major player in Asia, and stressed not so much competition, but cooperation.¹⁷ The horrific events of 9/11 compelled the Bush Administration to adopt a

¹¹ T.V. Paul, 'Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy', in *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 46-71; John Mearsheimer makes similar arguments and advocates a grand strategy based on offshore balancing wherein U.S. withdraws its troops from bases that are located within its allies and instead projects power from afar. See for example, J. Mearsheimer, 'Imperial by Design', in *National Interest*, No. 111 (Jan/Feb 2011), pp. 16-34.

¹² , Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *'Is the American Century Over?'* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).

¹³ Peter G. Peterson Foundation, 'The U.S. Spends More on Defense than the Next Eight Countries Combined', 11 April 2014, online at http://pgpf.org/Chart-Archive/0053_defense-comparison (last accessed 30 October 2015).

¹⁴ A detailed description of the 'open door' notes is available at <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/hay-and-china> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

¹⁵ U.S. Government, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (The White House, August 1991).

¹⁶ U.S. Government, *A National Security Strategy for the New Century* (The White House, May 1997).

¹⁷ U.S. Government, *A National Security Strategy for the New Century* (The White House, December 1999).

grand strategy based on pre-emptive war and democracy promotion in the Muslim world. The policy in East Asia was still led U.S. engagement with the region with Japan as the fulcrum of its regional strategy.¹⁸ By 2006, the U.S. was beginning to view the rise of China with some degree of concern, scolding China for its penchant for aggrandizing global energy supplies, and expressed serious reservations about its human rights record at home.¹⁹ The long term national intelligence estimate of 2008 clearly recognized China as the long term threat to securing U.S. interests in East Asia. When Obama came to office in 2008, in the immediate aftermath of the global financial crisis, the U.S. briefly flirted with the idea of coopting China to manage global affairs in a G2 framework.²⁰ However, with China calling for a new form of great power relationship and yearning for being treated as an equal, these plans were soon abandoned in favour of a more pragmatic foreign policy that was grounded in realist politics.²¹ Some scholars began wondering if Obama even had a grand strategy?²² For the first time, Obama's National Security Strategy in 2010 spelt out the need for the U.S. to closely monitor China's military

modernization²³ and the 2015 strategy went further in stating that the U.S. would manage competition from a position of strength.²⁴

Emerging Challenges to U.S. Regional Primacy

Most current debates about the U.S. pivot to Asia are framed as some form of a direct contest between the military strategies of the two great powers in the high waters of the East and South China seas: the Chinese A2/AD (Anti-access/Area Denial) strategy pitted against the U.S. Air-Sea battle strategy.²⁵ While this could be a useful lens to analyze rival military strategies in a hotly contested battlespace, a more comprehensive assessment of the emerging security situation in East Asia would have to encompass a deeper understanding of the internal challenges that could constrain the unbridled use of power in the pursuit of U.S. grand strategy and a more nuanced understanding of the economic, political, technological and societal forces that are shaping the politics and the behaviour of states in East Asia, and are largely occurring outside of U.S. control.

China's Pan-Oceanic Ambitions

For more than three decades, the Chinese economy has registered an average economic growth rate of 7-10%. Though economic growth has slowed down and China itself is undergoing internal economic policy shifts under Xi Jinping, the long term economic growth trajectory for China still looks quite promising as China is projected to be the world's largest economy by 2050.²⁶ While Chinese global economic engagement has been on a steady rise, China is using its economic

¹⁸ U.S. Government, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* ([The White House], September 2002).

¹⁹ U.S. Government, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* ([The White House], March 2006).

²⁰ National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*, National Intelligence Council (November 2008), online at <http://www.aicpa.org/research/cpahorizons2025/globalforces/downloadabledocuments/globaltrends.pdf> (last accessed 30 October 2015); for a comprehensive treatment of U.S. grand strategies, see B.R. Posen & A.L. Ross, 'Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy', in *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter 1996/97), pp. 5-53.

²⁰ Jaime Flor Cruz, 'U.S.-China relations in focus at 'G-2' summit', *CNN*, 2 April 2009, online at <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/04/01/g20.china.us> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

²¹ Jamil Anderlini, 'Global Insight: China's Great Power Call to the U.S. Could Stir Friction', in *Financial Times*, 4 June 2013, online at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/80f4168a-ccca-11e2-9cf7-00144feab7de.html#axzz3SNk5j1IJ> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

²² D.W. Drezner, 'Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy? Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times', in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No 4, pp. 57-68.

²³ U.S. Government, *National Security Strategy* (The White House, May 2010).

²⁴ U.S. Government, *National Security Strategy* (The White House, February 2015)

²⁵ D.S. McDonough, 'America's Pivot to the Pacific: Selective Primacy, Operational Access, and China's A2/AD Challenge' in *Calgary Papers in Military and Strategic Studies*, Occasional Paper No 7 (2013), pp. 1-43.

²⁶ Szu Ping Chan, 'How the World would look in 2050', in *The Telegraph*, 10 February 2015, online at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/11401466/How-the-world-will-look-in-2050.html> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

clout to fashion new security relationships globally, more so in South East Asia and South Asia. In South Asia, China is planning a maritime silk route by investing in ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma and Bangladesh to encircle its Asian rival India through a 'string of pearls' strategy.²⁷ In the longer run, some of these ports could be converted for dual-use purpose as naval bases.²⁸ In the long run, China's economic and security interests would extend beyond today's confines of the Yellow, East China and South China seas, to include the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) extending from the Gulf of Aden to the Malacca straits. For the U.S., these developments would mean the need for an active forward policy of containment that would have to extend beyond the confines of the East China Seas.

The Cyber Element in the U.S.-China Conflict

As a rising world power, China's efforts towards improving its technological capabilities have been steadily progressing over many decades. Though the U.S. leads the world in developing Internet technology, China is now the largest Internet market with 564 M Internet users at the end of 2012.²⁹ In emphasizing the importance of Cybersecurity in overall Chinese strategic thinking, Chinese strategic experts - Colonel Liang Qiao and Colonel Wang Xiangsui authored a seminal text - 'Unrestricted Warfare', identifying how U.S. dependence and vulnerability in cyberspace need to be exploited asymmetrically. The Chinese believe that a dominant cyber weapons and cyber-attack capability is a key strategic imperative for Chinese national security in the twenty first century. Increasingly, the cyber domain features prominently in the emerging cyber posture of China and in its foreign and security policies. China seeks to deter the U.S

²⁷ Shannon Tiezzi, 'China Pushes Maritime Silk Route in South, South East Asia', in *The Diplomat*, 17 September 2014, online at <http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/china-pushes-maritime-silk-road-in-south-southeast-asia> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

²⁸ James R. Holmes, 'China Could Still Build 'String of Pearls'', in *The Diplomat*, 8 November 2014, online at <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/china-could-still-build-string-of-pearls/> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

²⁹ Mary Meeker & Liang Wu, *Internet Trends D11 Conference* (Kleiner Perkins Caufield Byers, 2013).

through cyber weapons and believes that eventual strategic parity with the United States would depend on prowess in cyberspace.³⁰

Hedging by Regional Powers

A defining pillar of U.S. hegemony in East Asia has been the enduring partnerships and alliances that were stitched together after the Second World War with countries including Japan and, Korea and later with Taiwan, Philippines, Indonesia Singapore, and Australia. With the exception of Japan and Korea, other countries in the region are likely to hedge their alliance strategies in the long term in ways that may not always align with U.S interests. Taiwan still remains a major conflict flashpoint in East Asia with rapidly changing internal developments that are shaping its political landscape. The looming threat of an outright Chinese takeover of the Island is ever present.³¹ The increasing business and trade ties that the Taiwanese have cultivated with China over the past decade could persuade China to pursue a more assertive foreign and security policy vis-à-vis Taiwan. While India, a country steeped in non-alignment³² during the cold war is engaged in a 'strategic partnership' with the U.S., it is unlikely to enter into any kind of a formal alliance with the United States to contain a rising China. India is open to formal defence cooperation and military exercises, but is in no mood to embed its military operationally with

³⁰ M. Hjortdal, 'China's Use of Cyber Warfare: Espionage Meets Strategic Deterrence', in, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2011), pp. 1-24. For a detailed overview of China's cyber activities, refer to the *2012 Report to Congress of the U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission* (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, 2012), 'Section 2: China's Cyber Activities', pp. 147-265.

³¹ Denny Roy, 'Collision Course: The Looming U.S.-China Showdown Over Taiwan', in the *National Interest*, 21 February 2015, online at <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/collision-course-the-looming-us-china-showdown-over-taiwan-12293> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

³² For a detailed overview of a contemporary 'Nehruvian' view of Indian foreign policy see Sunil Khilnani et al., *Non-Alignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twentieth Century* (29 February 2012), available online at http://www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/NonAlignment%202.0_1.pdf (last accessed 30 October 2015).

the U.S. as part of the 'pivot' strategy.³³ While Australia is a formal U.S. ally and the U.S. troops are stationed in Darwin,³⁴ Australia is also leveraging its relationship with China to boost its own resource economy, while an influential Australian academic has called for the U.S. to share power with China.³⁵ As a major regional player and an important party to the dispute in the South China seas, Vietnam's economic and security interests are linked to how well it can manage relations with China.³⁶ Despite a troubled past, Indonesia's relationship with China has been on an upward trajectory since the 1990s.³⁷

Japan's secular decline

Japan is an important factor in the U.S. rebalancing strategy. As a major global economy, Japan is also a key trading partner of the U.S. and a crucial link in the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership to promote a U.S. led intra-regional trade within the Asia Pacific region that excludes China. As China becomes more assertive in its maritime claims, Japan is responding by increasing its own defence

spending and investing in military modernization. Japan is also engaging in stepped up defence cooperation in Asia with Australia and India. As China accelerates its defence modernization and flexes its military might, it is inevitable that the U.S. and Japan would adopt a closer embrace to counter the rise of China. If Chinese strategic posture in the region veers towards belligerence, Japan's security dilemma will exacerbate in the years ahead as it seeks to bolster its own defence forces and work more closely with the U.S. as the 'offensive partner'.³⁸ Moreover, Japan which has been in the midst of a prolonged economic stagnation and faces a long term demographic challenge, may have to contend with the so called 'commitment paradox', as U.S. resources shift towards balancing China.

Conclusion

The fall of the Soviet Union had raised hopes for a new world order based on peace and cooperation. However, over the past two decades, the world has witnessed at least three major wars, revolutions in Eastern Europe, the Arab spring in the Middle East, nuclear sabre rattling in North Asia and the tug-o-war over regional supremacy in the Gulf.

Within the U.S. and think tank fraternity, two major schools of thoughts define the current debate about the future U.S. role in shaping the global order. Some scholars have argued for the U.S. to recognize the assertive role being played by emerging powers like India and China in shaping a new international order,³⁹ while some U.S. based academics argue for a U.S. retreat from global interventions and have advocated

³³ H.V. Pant & Y. Joshi, 'The American 'Pivot' and the Indian Navy: It is Hedging all the Way', in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Winter 2015), pp. 47-69. For an up to date overview of the state of U.S-India strategic partnership see the *U.S.-India Joint Statement: Shared Effort, Progress for All* (2015), issued by the two countries on the conclusion of the state visit by President Obama to New Delhi in January 2015 and accessible online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/25/us-india-joint-statement-shared-effort-progress-all> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

³⁴ Rob Taylor, 'Australia Embraces Marine Presence in Darwin', in *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 August 2014, online at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/australia-embraces-u-s-marine-presence-in-darwin-as-nations-gather-for-pitch-black-drills-1408035997> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

³⁵ Hugh White, 'Australia's Choice: Will the Land Down Under Pick the United States or China?', in *Foreign Affairs*, 4 September 2013, online at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/australia/2013-09-04/australias-choice> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

³⁶ Vu Throng Khanh, 'Vietnam, China Agree To Better Manage Sea Disputes', in *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 October 2014, online at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/vietnam-china-agree-to-restore-bilateral-relations-1414399895> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

³⁷ Rizal Sukma, 'Indonesia-China Relations: The Politics of Re-engagement', in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (July/August 2009), pp. 591-608.

³⁸ A detailed outline of the interim agreement on the revision to the guidelines for cooperation between the U.S. and Japan can be found at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and is accessible online at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000055169.pdf> (last accessed 30 October 2015).

³⁹ Evan A. Feigenbaum, 'The New Asian Order And How the United States Fits In', in *Foreign Affairs*, 2 February 2015, online at http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142843/evan-a-feigenbaum/the-new-asian-order#cid=soc-twitter-at-snapshot-the_new_asian_order-000000 (last accessed 30 October 2015).

the pursuit of a policy of retrenchment.⁴⁰ Some others have called for an Asian-centric order to be preserved based on the traditional notions of hierarchy which have always been the core guiding forces in preserving East Asian order.⁴¹ Some scholars have called for the U.S. to continue its current hegemonic grand strategy as the only possible response to the rise of the China and have argued for why the U.S. should continue to hone its competitive edge in the emerging competition with China and the need to understand China's 'global personality'.^{42 43} Emerging new scholarship on the U.S. role in East Asia calls for a consent based hegemonic order in the region led by the U.S., but also includes China, Japan and other U.S. partners.⁴⁴

As China undergoes monumental internal transformation to reinvent its society, economy and technology capacity, the world would increasingly look a lot less unipolar and more multipolar. The Chinese are already gearing up to float an alternate infrastructure Bank that is slated to emerge an alternative to the World Bank with many Western powers including the

UK interested in membership.⁴⁵ These changes are bound to have a profound impact on how China seeks to counterbalance U.S. power and play a greater role in managing global affairs.

Notwithstanding the possibility that it may have to prepare itself for a potential future conflict in East Asia, U.S. Grand strategy would be better served by focusing on the macro issues that are crucial to global stability - cyber security, western control of the Internet, preservation of the U.S. led global economic order, cooperation with China on economic and security issues and global cooperation in nuclear disarmament. During the course of the last century, the U.S. became the indispensable technology leader and global power due to American exceptionalism. The challenge to U.S. preponderance in the twenty first century is being able to sustain global stewardship in a 'uni-multipolar' world order.

⁴⁰ Robert S. Ross, 'The Problem With the Pivot: Obama's New Asia Policy is Unnecessary and Counterproductive', in *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2012, online at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2012-11-01/problem-pivot> (last accessed 30 October 2015). For a more detailed treatment of U.S. grand strategy in East Asia and the rise of China, see Robert S. Ross, 'US Grand Strategy, the Rise of China, and US National Security Strategy for East Asia', in *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (Summer 2013), pp. 20-40, and R.S. Ross, 'The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century' in *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Spring 1999), pp. 81-118.

⁴¹ D.C. Kang, 'Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks', in *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Spring 2003), pp. 57-85.

⁴² Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry & William C. Wohlforth, 'In Defense of American Engagement', in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 92 (March 2013), pp. 130-142; M. Beckley, 'China's Century? Why America's Edge will Endure', in *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011/12), pp. 41-78; A.L. Friedberg, 'The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?', in *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 7-45.

⁴³ T. Summers, 'China's Global Personality', Research Paper, Asia Programme (Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, June 2014).

⁴⁴ E. Goh, 2013, 'Hierarchy and Great Power Cooperation in the East Asian Security Order', in Jochen Prantl (ed.), *Effective Multilateralism: Through the Looking Glass of East Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 177-195.

⁴⁵ Kenneth Rapoza, 'U.S. Getting Left Behind As More Allies Join China's Infrastructure Bank' in *Forbes*, 26 March 2015, online at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2015/03/26/u-s-getting-left-behind-as-more-allies-join-chinas-infrastructure-bank> (last accessed 30 October 2015).