



# ICAS BULLETIN

## Institute for China-America Studies

A Bimonthly Survey of Research and Analysis on US-China Relations

*Twice a month, the ICAS Bulletin updates a global audience on American perspectives regarding the world's most important bilateral relationship. Research papers, journal articles, and other prominent work published in the US are listed here alongside information about events at US-based institutions.*

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### Publications

#### **Charting a New Course for the U.S.-China Relationship: Findings from the Center for American Progress 2016 US-China Rising Scholar Strategic Dialogue**

Melanie Hart

Center for American Progress, August 30, 2016

This report describes US-China relations as at a “critical juncture,” in which China is increasing its regional influence and the US decides how to respond China's rise. In this context, Hart paints an optimistic picture of increased US-Chinese dialogue at the level of mid-career professionals. Many foreign policy experts on the relationship today have lived in the US and China, can speak both languages and help foster a deep understanding and appreciation for the others' culture. Such openness provides limitless opportunities for the US and China to overcome their differences and point the bilateral relationship in the right direction. Hart describes the Center for American Progress' US-China Rising Scholar Dialogue which brings together some of these scholars, and some of the themes taken up by this rising cohort of Chinese and American experts.

#### **What are the US and China Fighting Over?**

Fu Ying

Bloomberg, September 1, 2016

Fu places the South China Sea issues in the context of US perceptions of China's rise and Chinese perceptions of the American “pivot.” She discusses differences between the two nations on the legitimacy of military operations in exclusive economic zones, but also suggests that China will not build an exclusive sphere of influence in the region. She concludes by observing that because China was so

underdeveloped mere decades ago, the Chinese people still have work to do in finding effective ways to engage and communicate with the outside world.

### **Why Obama, on His Last Trip to Asia, Needs to Save the TPP**

Parag Khanna

*Politico Magazine*, September 1, 2016

This article asserts that scrapping the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) would only strengthen China and make it more difficult for the US to economically compete with it. This is because China is already involved in several economic plans in the region, including the ASEAN free trade area, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) - all of which mean more dependence on Chinese capital in the region. The US, Khanna argues, needs an economic component to its Pivot to Asia to help reform Asian economies and keep the US competitive in the region. The US should thus establish routes for both trade and investment in the region, both of which are included in TPP. Without such steps, Khanna warns, the US not only risks losing Asia to China, but also losing its economic competitiveness if it withdraws from the fastest growing region in the world.

### **The East Asia Summit in Contested Asia**

Nick Bisley and Malcolm Cook

*PacNet*, CSIS, September 1, 2016

Bisley and Cook consider the future of ASEAN and the East Asian Summit (EAS) in light of President Obama's recent trip to Laos. The authors describe a "gloomy" security environment in Asia, citing regional clashes and competition. However, Bisley and Cook suggest that the US and China signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and the development of ASEAN paints a positive picture for a multilateral solution to regional tensions.

### **Yes, TPP is about Who Writes the Rules**

Matthew Goodman

*PacNet*, CSIS, September 6, 2016

Goodman considers the "strategic economic" case for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and why the deal matters for US interests. He advocates the TPP because it will help uphold the American-supported rules-based economic order in Asia, which both reinforces the US' position in the Asia-Pacific and ensures that the region is not led by, or becomes dependent on, China. Goodman illustrates this by comparing how TPP enshrines standards that China's free-trade agreements do not: labor standards, digital trade, and restraints on state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

### **China's Military Reorganization Aims to Tighten Party Control and Strengthen the PLA's Warfighting Capabilities**

Michael Chase and Jeffrey Engstrom

RAND, September 6, 2016

Chase and Engstrom consider the proposed reforms of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to be completed by 2020. These reforms include boosting the PLA's air and naval power, preparing the PLA for executing modern, high-intensity joint military operations, and the establishment of the PLA Strategic

Support Force that will be responsible for space, cyber, and electronic warfare. These reforms will allow China to protect its regional and global interests with increased deterrence, combat, and military operations other than war capabilities. However, the authors warn, this increased military power does not necessarily mean that China would be more willing to take on a powerful adversary like the US.

### **Beijing's Baffling Bullying**

Brad Glosserman and Brian More  
PacNet, CSIS, September 7, 2016

Moore and Glosserman challenge the assumption that China's foreign policy is operating according to a coherent plan or with great foresight. Instead, they propose that China's foreign policy has been marked by "bullying" and rash responses. They cite China's series of encounters in the East and South China Sea, its negative coverage of South Korea following the announcement of the THAAD deployment, and its media attacks on Australia after the country supported the Permanent Court of Arbitration's (PCA) ruling on the South China Sea as examples of this phenomenon. There are three common explanations for this behavior: first, that Chinese officials believe the balance of power has shifted and China has the power to right historical wrongs. Second, that Chinese leadership is responding to (and fueling) its own nationalism to maintain legitimacy as its economic growth declines. And third, that pressure pays off. However, Moore and Glosserman suggest another explanation: that power in China is being consolidated at the top, which makes it difficult for Chinese leaders to back down once a foreign policy has been set into motion.

### **What Makes this North Korean Nuclear Test Different?**

Jonathan Pollack  
Brookings Institute, September 9, 2016

Pollack writes that this month's North Korean nuclear test is different from previous tests because it is the first time North Korea has tested twice in one year, that the test was conducted by the "Nuclear Weapons Institute of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," not the government, and that it was specifically described as a nuclear warhead. While Pollack acknowledges that we are unable to verify any specifics of this test, he stresses that these differences mean that North Korea clearly wants to show that its weapons capabilities are now established.

### **Friends, Foes and Future Directions: U.S. Partnerships in a Turbulent World**

Hans Binnendijk  
RAND Corporation, 2016 Publication

This is the third report of the Strategic Rethink series, which considers US national security policy regarding various security threats in the world. This report considers how the US can maintain its relationships with partners and adversaries in a world that is shifting away from international engagement and strong defense budgets. Binnendijk identifies three policies the US can adapt to counter these negative trends: to be more assertive, to be more collaborative, and to retrench international commitments. He argues that the US should urge its powerful allies to "pull their weight" in providing defense capabilities, prevent deeper security ties between China and Russia, and train the US' most vulnerable allies in crisis management to avoid unwanted escalation of small incidents.

**Order at risk: Japan, Korea and the Northeast Asian Paradox**

Jonathan Pollack

Brookings Institute, September 2016

This report considers the "Asian Paradox," a term coined by former South Korean President Park which contrasts the economic cooperation of Japan, South Korea and China with their hedging power rivalries and clashes regarding the problem of North Korea. Pollack considers this paradox in light of the US' presence in the region. He argues that, while the US has promoted economic growth and stability in Asia for years, it needs to adapt its policies to the changing forces in the region. Specifically, the changing power trajectories and heightened nationalism as a source of political legitimacy are worrying trends that could disrupt the peaceful regional order.

**Events****Betwixt and Between: Great Power Competition and ASEAN's Relations with Japan and the US**

Wilson Center, September 9, 2016

A panel of Asia experts discussed US/Japan/ASEAN relations in the context of a changing great power environment in Asia. As such, much of the discussion was about the effect of China's rise on regional politics. Takashi Terada emphasized the challenges that ASEAN's model faces in this new environment. Mark Manyin discussed the return of Japan as a great power, ASEAN's increased relevance to Asian politics, complementarity between TPP and RCEP and the nature of US/China competition. Rumi Aoyama discussed the recent history of China's regional diplomacy, and Marvin Ott shared several concerns about what seems to be China's new, uncompromising approach to foreign policy.

**Naval Strategy in Asia and the Arctic**

Center for American Progress, September 12, 2016

US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson discussed evolving strategic challenges for the US Navy in Asia and in the Arctic. With regard to US-China relations, he emphasized the importance of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) for managing interactions between USN and PLAN, and described the productive relationship he has with PLAN Commander Wu Shengli. He described Chinese participation in RIMPAC as a positive step and in response to a question left open the possibility of future USN/PLAN joint exercises, even in the South China Sea.

**Cross-Strait Relations under the Tsai Ing-wen Administration**

Brookings, September 5, 2015

Brookings and CSIS collaborated to host a full-day program on US-Taiwan-PRC relations featuring panels on Taipei-Beijing relations, economic issues, and cross-strait issues in the context of US-China relations.