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The Pivot:
American Involvement in Asia

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Part I: Policy Analysis and Recommendation

On November 17th, 2011, President Obama addressed the Australian parliament and presented a plan to shift American attention towards the Asia-Pacific region (Beitelman 2012, 1086). This is a policy known as the Pivot, which represents one of the most important issues of our time: that of America's relations with China. China is becoming a much more powerful and important player in global politics and global economy, in fact China is growing at a faster rate than any other country in history (Schake 2014). The Pivot looks to lock in a substantially increased investment in the Asia Pacific region (Clinton 2011, 1). Basically, the Pivot is a policy response by the American government to what many call the top foreign policy problem facing the United States (Beitelman 2012, 1074; Stuart 2012, 203). By looking at the policies that make up the Pivot, the purposes and motivations behind it, and how, practically, it has been enacted today, I have examined the benefits and costs such a policy can have on American foreign relations. My conclusion is that the Pivot should be modified in order to truly represent how the United States wants to interact with China the best way possible instead of in a traditional realist manner that reacts to the Chinese threat.

History

This policy came about as a reaction to China's rising influence in the world, although much of it is actually a continuation of policies that have already been undertaken by previous administrations (Manyin et al. 2012, 144). In many ways, the Pivot is not actually novel at all, just an extension of various policies of the past, making the Pivot seem more extreme and important than it actually is. With most of the United States' resources in the Middle East, Clinton found it imperative that the United States begin to refocus attention onto Asia. This was true especially since at the time of the original document, it appeared that unrest in the Middle East was beginning to decline (Clinton 2011, 57). This policy also comes out of the United States' success following the end of World War II when the government created a "network of institutions and relationships" that helped Europe recover and helped to slow communism (Clinton 2011, 2). Another thing that influenced the beginning of the Pivot was that after the 1970's when Deng Xiaoping opened up his country's economy, China has grown in power, in wealth, in military, and also in capitalistic tendencies in their economy. A few years ago, starting at around 2009, when Beijing resisted to compromise at the UN Climate Change Conference, the United States had begun to have some strained relations with the country. There was a seeming

belligerence and growing confidence coming from China and the United States saw it as an opportunity to exert more influence in the region especially among China's near rivals (Ross 2012). In fact, this Asia strategy was built on the policies of previous administrations (Ross 2012). Ever since the American government first moved a submarine from Europe to Guam in 1997, the United States has been involved in the region (Ross 2012). Both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations deployed naval and air weapons systems to Guam and Japan and has cooperated with various other countries in the area (Ross 2012; Stuart 2012, 204). The policy action proposed by Clinton is not unlike these actions and builds on them.

One author describes Asia as "the worlds' most vibrant (but also possibly its most combustible) continent" (Chellaney 2014). As the main Asian actor in this policy, China was in economic turmoil after Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward in the 1960s. Afterwards, there was high inflation between 2009 and 2010 (Ross 2012). Even Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao acknowledged that worsening inflation could result in the undermining of social stability (Ross 2012). In fact, by June 2010, vegetable prices had gone up by 25 percent and there was rising unemployment and inequality (Ross 2012). In 2009 rural unemployment was its highest since 1980 (Ross 2012). Then, the government started to focus on economic advancement, and during the American recession, China's economy grew by ten percent, beginning China's economic rise (Ross 2012). Now, China has one of the fastest growing economies in the world that has sustained.

The Policy

According to Obama and Clinton in their various addresses about the Pivot during 2011, the Pivot is built around six key lines of action. These key lines include: strengthening bilateral security actions, deepening work relationships with emerging powers, engaging with regional multilateral institutions, expanding trade and investment, forging a broad-based military presence, and advancing democracy and human rights (Beitelman 2012, 1087). These lines of action are the backbone of this policy in order to pursue the goal of ensuring that American leadership will continue well into the century. In the following analysis, each of these six key lines can be seen through military action, new economic relationships, the struggle with China, the creation of economic institutions like the TPP, all with the intention of spreading American influence and values.

The policy has many components to it. The first key component is the military component. The military actually plays a fairly large role in this policy. For one, the United States has increased its defense engagement with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) to help with the conflict between Japan and South Korea (Mohan 2014). This military action also included an expansion of naval exercises with Japan (Bello 2013). In fact, in 2011, the United States began the process of sending 2,500 Marines to be stationed in Australia with the goal of completing that movement by the year 2020 (Bello 2013; LaFranchi 2013; Lieberthal 2011). In many ways, this policy is mostly made up of military action because that is the way that the American government sees to practically enforce the policy changes. According to Walden Bello, in his article “Imperial Argument: Washington debates ‘Pivot to Asia’ Strategy,” this policy is seventy percent military action and only thirty percent diplomatic action (Bello 2013). In fact, much of this military action is supported by the smaller nations in South East Asia because it helps to contain China’s growing military power that is a threat to the autonomy of those smaller nations (Beitelman 2012, 1088). Thus, there are ship deployments to Singapore, the aforementioned troops sent to Australia, and enhanced training and cooperation with countries like India, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand. Also, the Philippines has signed an agreement that allows more visits by U.S. ships and a rotating presence of marines (Smith 2014). As one author put it, “The U.S. has surrounded China with an ever-increasing ring of military fire, from NSA surveillance and spy satellites, to Army, Marine, Navy and Air Force bases; from nuclear-armed submarines and a majority of America’s 11 mammoth aircraft carriers to warships, bombers and fighters in dozens of varieties; from short-, medium- and long-range missiles to thousands of nuclear weapons that can be fired from the U.S. and demolish hundreds of major Chinese cities” (Smith 2014). All of these efforts are meant to do two things: to contain China and to protect Southeast Asia (Stuart 2012, 205). This Pivot policy is one that is much broader and covers more geography than any effort like this in the past. American troops are being placed in more countries and American involvement is just in general on a much broader scale (Manyin et al. 2012, 150).

Another part of the Pivot is the diplomatic aspect. This includes an increased involvement in East Asian summits and conferences (LaFranchi 2013). For example, the United States has now gained entrance into the East Asia Summit, Hilary Clinton, while she was Secretary of State, attended forums of ASEAN, and Obama even hosted US-ASEAN Summit and attended

the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summits (LaFranchi 2013; Lieberthal 2011). Much of this new, increased involvement, is to assist South-east Asian nations that are America's allies and help to wean countries from over-dependence on Beijing (Bagchi 2012; Graham 2013, 307). Not only that, but diplomacy was seen as a way to contain China. The more influence America has in Asia, the more the United States can ensure adherence to international norms and rules of conduct (Bello 2013). Clinton used vocabulary such as the "forward-deployed" policy to describe America's diplomatic action in this policy. It means that the United States would continue to dispatch the full range of its diplomatic assets over time (Clinton 2011, 3). A result of these diplomatic relations are defense treaties with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand as well as other partnerships with Brunei, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Taiwan (Smith 2014).

Not only that, but this policy includes various new economic policies and relationships between the United States of America and various East Asian countries. The first main economic change was the vast expansion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is a high-quality trade and investment platform created by the Bush administration in 2006, which includes many of the major economies in Asia, except for China (Smith 2014). It is centered around transparency, the protection of intellectual property, labor rights, and environmental protection (Lieberthal 2011; Clinton 2011, 11). As one author put it, "the logic of the new Pacific initiative: a free-trade agreement that includes many of the Asia-Pacific nations along with the United States, but one that is too demanding for a developing mercantilist nation like China to enter yet" (Prestowitz 2012, 41). Secondly, a new free trade agreement with South Korea was enacted (Lieberthal 2011). One of the main parts of this agreement was that it eliminated tariffs on ninety-five percent of all of US exports to South Korea (Clinton 2011, 10). The agreement was projected to help South Korea's economy grow by six percent (Clinton 2011, 10). In relation to China specifically, the policy also put forth a plan to invest \$50 billion in China, with the expectation that China would make the economic changes that the U.S. government thought were necessary (Clinton 2011, 7). Just as the United States helped to promote a stable and prosperous environment by building a more mature security and economic architecture in Europe after WWII, the United States hopes to build a network and relationships in order to build up the region in Asia in which America will be an integral part (Clinton 2011, 2). The hope is to be sure that there is continued American leadership well into the century (Beitelman 2012, 1087). There

is some controversy over this point specifically. Some scholars say that the United States is in no danger of becoming obsolete or lose leadership anytime soon (Etzioni 2013, 59). Others, the main supporters of this policy, argue that the world is changing and that it will be necessary for the United States to take measures to maintain its hegemony (Beitelman 2012, 1076).

The Pivot is motivated by a variety of diplomatic, economic, and strategic factors. These were the three factors outlined by Clinton in the original document. The first factor is for diplomatic reasons. The region of Asia spans two oceans, is home to half of the world's population, and is home to several of the United States' key allies. It is also the region of many important rising powers such as China, India, and Indonesia (Clinton 2011, 1). For this reason, it is only logical that the United States, as a world power, wants to get involved in the region in order to maintain diplomatic ties. This, in turn, has an effect on the other two motivations as well, which are economic and strategic reasons.

The second motivation that Clinton outlines in the original document about the Pivot was for economic reasons. China needs to be addressed as a rising power with increasing influence, especially in the economic sector. To this topic, Clinton writes, "Harnessing Asia's growth and dynamism is central to American economic and strategic interests... Open markets in Asia provide the United States with unprecedented opportunities for investment, trade, and access to cutting-edge technology. Our economic recovery at home will depend on exports and the ability of American firms to tap into the vast and growing consumer base of Asia" (Clinton 2011, 2). The economic opportunities in Asia are at this point untapped by the Western world. It could be very profitable for the United States to have more economic ties in the region. In fact, the stretch of sea from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific are the world's most vibrant trade and energy routes (Clinton 2011, 60). The American government want so interject itself into Asia's economic milieu in order for American corporations to become more profitably involved in the region's incredible growth (Smith 2014).

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, there is a strategic motivation for the pivot. Maintaining peace and security in an area with countries like North Korea is crucial global peace. Transparency in the military activities of the region's key players is something that Clinton cites as an important objective for the policy (Clinton 2011, 3). At this moment in history, the United States is in a unipolar position at the moment and this position of unipolarity may begin to be threatened by China in the coming years (Beitelman 2012, 1079). In every piece

of literature that discusses China's ascension in world power, also discusses American decline, something that the American government wants to guard against very closely and prevent from happening (Beitelman 2012, 1073). Therefore, if the United States can have a more involved presence in Asia, the government can keep an eye on China and limit China's power as well. By strategically surrounding China with U.S. allies, which Washington has been building up since 1949, America is able to do this (Smith 2014). The Pivot is actually very dependent on the willingness of these nations to interact and ally themselves with the United States (Xiang 2012, 119).

Based on realist theory, these motivations make sense (Graham 2013, 311). If the balance of power is only stable when there is a hegemon since at an international level the world is anarchic, then it makes sense for the United States to feel the need to step into Asia. Also, if every country acts only for their own good, then it can be assumed that as China continues to gain power, China's motivations are selfish and working towards becoming a global leader (Beitelman 2012, 1074). In this case, as the hegemonic power, the United States has a right to feel the need to remain able to check Chinese growth. According to Mearsheimer, a realist political scientist, war is inevitable and that hegemony is the only insurance for security, so American action in this way is perfectly acceptable and even necessary for the maintenance of American power (Mearsheimer 2001). He doesn't believe that "perpetual peace" is possible among the great powers of the world (Mearsheimer 2001).

However, there are many things standing in the way of the Pivot being fully enacted. Because of all of the recent upheavals in the Middle East, this policy has in many ways been put on hold. Washington is very busy with issues in Iran, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Israel/Palestine, Afghanistan, drone wars in several other countries, and in the Ukraine (Smith 2014). There are many parts of the Pivot that have not yet been enacted. Consequently, the President failed to attend the October meetings of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in 2013 and has had to cancel visits to U.S. allies in the region (Sanders 10; Graham 2013, 305). This in turn, pushed back more negotiations for the TPP and instead gave China an opportunity to propose their own economic partnership, which does not include the United States (Sanders 10). Because of this, countries wonder if the Pivot will be fully actualized at all. The American government hopes to put these policies in place in the near future as they try to slowly transition into the Pivot as they have been doing for the past three years.

However, Obama has identified “terrorism” as the main direct threat to America for the foreseeable future (Smith 2014). Even though he has suggested that the war on terrorism is ending, Obama has omitted from recent speeches his plan to Pivot towards Asia (Smith 2014). One thing that may have contributed to this slight change of heart is that the original supporter of this policy, former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, is no longer in office, and the current Secretary of State is less concerned with the region (Lieberthal 2011). John Kerry, the current Secretary of State, does not place as much value on America’s relations with Asia and is more concerned with the Middle East (White 2014). Therefore, there is not as significant a push for the Pivot. The Obama administration is simply overwhelmed with other international issues to spend as much time on the Pivot as is necessary (Sanders 10). Because of this, even just a few years after the Pivot was introduced, Obama and the American government have pulled back from many of the initiatives that were begun in 2011. Political paralysis within the government as a result of things like the budget crisis are also internal issues that have set this policy back (Smith 2014; Manyin et al. 2012, 144; Mohan 2014).

Today’s status of the Pivot is multifaceted. As of today, there are yet to be actual marines in Australia (The Bangkok Post 2013). Little actual military action has taken place, however, it is important to remember that there is already much U.S. military presence in Asia in the form of the Navy. The Pivot has also increased and strengthened U.S. ties with nations that border China such as Vietnam, the Philippines, and even Burma (Etzioni 2012, 395). America’s relationship with Japan has been especially important in this process (Clinton 2011, 58). An Open Skies agreement has also been agreed upon in order for business and people-to-people ties increase and in order to launch strategic dialogue on the Asia-Pacific (Clinton 2011, 58). However, at the same time, the American government still remains tied down in both Europe and the Middle East, limiting its actual involvement in Asia (Schake 2014). Some authors and journalists maintain that the presidents’ absence at some of the summits or the American governments’ preoccupation with other countries will not hurt the Pivot due to the fact that much of the Pivot is still in the works and that more “marketing” will not change the policy itself (The Bangkok Post 2013).

Analysis

The Pivot itself is fairly controversial on a multitude of levels. It is not debated that Asia is rising in influence in the world and that the United States must continue to keep up good

relations with China. The question is, how should that change in focus be handled and is the Pivot the right way to handle Asia's growing influence (in this instance, specifically in relation to China). Supporters of the Pivot look to it as the very necessary solution to check China's growing power and to assist Southeast Asian nations from China's grip with the promotion of peace. The opposition to the Pivot make two very important points. The first is that such strong and immediate action as described in the original document created by Clinton can and will create tension between the United States and China that could lead to bad consequences. Secondly, the Pivot was outlined in 2011 and still has not made a lasting or permanent impact in Asia; the United States has not done what the Pivot said the United States would do and that has some detrimental effects.

Many advocates of the Pivot suggest that China is a direct threat to the United States. Currently, there are debates about whether China's rise can be done peacefully and even if that is even the intention (Beitelman 2012, 1075). If this is the case, that China does not have peaceful intent, then military force is needed and the Pivot is a good idea. This entirely depends on China and on whether it pursues a strategy of peaceful development or not (Beitelman 2012, 1079). The Pivot provides a way to monitor the situation and intervene quickly if necessary. It also can help to prevent multipolarity, which is seen by some people as a very unstable situation (Beitelman 2012, 1083). As Clinton makes clear in her statements about the Pivot, she believes that American work abroad and specifically in China holds the key to security and prosperity at home (Clinton 2011, 57). Another positive view on the Pivot refers to the Pivot as another example of American responsibility to lead on the world stage, and as Obama put it, "if we don't, no one else will" (Smith 2014).

China has an increasing amount of influence in the South China Sea and claims much of it as its own (Etzioni 2013, 59). Some authors suggest that these disputes are most often decided through peaceful means, but there have been skirmishes, not to mention the powerful influence that China has in the region (Etzioni 2013, 60). The presence of the United States in the region, people argue, will have a lasting peaceful effect on the unrest in the region. As Clinton states, the United States is "the only power with a network of strong alliances in the region, no territorial ambitions, and a long record of providing for the common good" and that the United States is already deeply involved in Asia economically so should turn more of its official focus on that area of the world (Clinton 2011, 58). For example, the threat of North Korea will be more

contained if American relations with South Korea opens up enough to enact certain measures (Clinton 2011, 58). Also, many key Asian governments in the region have opened their arms toward more American involvement in order to guard their security and prosperity, specifically from China (Stuart 2012, 210).

One of the main objections to the pivot is that it will harm American relations with China unnecessarily. It can be very hard to accurately decipher and discern where China is headed over time, so action based off of anticipated events are risky (Beitelman 2012, 1074). Sanders' main point, which is echoed by many, is that the pivot could have some very detrimental effects on Sino-American relations (Sanders 10). Uncertainty cannot be the basis of such action, the opposition says, because otherwise the situation could get worse if the situation is read wrong (Beitelman 2012, 1094). Most experts agree that it will be many years, decades even before China will be able to challenge the United States even in their own region (Etzioni 2013, 59). Robert Ross, in his article "Obama's New Asia Policy is Unnecessary and Counterproductive," says that the shift was based on a fundamental misreading of the intent of the Chinese government (Ross 2012). He says that China's tough diplomacy stems from a sense of insecurity from years of financial crisis and social unrest and that the Pivot might be exacerbating those issues (Ross 2012). For example, already China and ASEAN have shared concerns that the TPP might be a force rising intended to sabotage the economic integration of East Asia (Smith 2014). Some would say that the pivot has done the opposite of providing stability in Asia and that it has made the region more tense and conflict-prone where the United States is more at risk of involving itself in fights that do not concern them (Ross 2012). Lanxin Xiang focuses most of his paper on the risk of creating another Cold War situation between the United States and China (Xiang 2012, 116). Not only that, but it would definitely risk China's cooperation on a range of issues in venues such as the United Nations (Manyin et al. 2012, 144).

Another objection is that America is not actually invested in the plan and is spreading American resources too thin. Recently, Obama had a decision to either support Japan militarily over the Senkaku-Diaoyu Island, or choose not to do what, essentially the Pivot said he would do (White 2014). Washington chose not to support Japan and defend against China and did it again when Washington was again reluctant to help the Philippines in 2012 with the Scarborough Shoal issue (White 2014). The opposition uses these examples to show that maybe the United States is not as committed to the Pivot as it should be. Because of this, China is more likely to

push the envelope and China could become a real problem (White 2014). Not only that, but there is worry that China will also be able to convince American allies in Asia of their inability to commit and alienate these nations from their alliances to the United States (Schake 2014).

Another thing that the opposition finds worrisome is the idea that many American resources are being used for this Pivot that could be used elsewhere. Beitelman refers to the former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' pronouncement that America's interests in the Pacific will continue irrespective of tough times or tough budget choices (Beitelman 2012, 1088). Sustaining the Pivot was a question from the beginning but it is increasingly becoming a problem (Mohan 2014). As Clinton says, in the original document, these people want to call for troops not to reposition but to "come home" and the downsizing of foreign engagement (Clinton 2011, 57). Amitai Etzioni makes the point that Pivoting to Asia will prove a major distraction at this point in time especially from the Middle East and from national issues (Etzioni 2012, 399). This is especially true when looking at the fact that part of the Pivot is assisting India, a country that is very close to Pakistan and Iran who are present threats, develop its nuclear program (Etzioni 2012, 399). Some even wonder if Obama just pursued this policy in order to help his public standing and not to actually commit to it (Victor et al. 2010).

Recommendations

In my opinion, there are many flaws in the Pivot and the United States needs to move forward with caution. Therefore, for the Pivot, I recommend a few different actions. First off, the whole mindset of the Pivot comes from feeling threatened by China and all the actions within the policy reflect this. I suggest the United States stop looking at China from realist perspective or that growth in China automatically means a decline in America. It is not a zero sum game in which if one country gains power, the other loses it.

If a realist perspective must be used, Charles Glaser's model of realists as optimists in his article, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-help" is a good picture of what that should look like in this instance. Glaser makes note that structural realism, as it is understood today, is very pessimistic, believing that cooperation between states is nearly impossible and that order can only be created by hegemony (Glaser 1994, 50). Instead, Glaser outlines a form of realism called contingent realism which "predicts that, under a wide range of conditions, adversaries can best achieve their security goals through cooperative policies, not competitive ones, and should, therefore, choose cooperation when these conditions prevail" (Glaser 1994, 50). To do this, he

says that policies that avoid arms races and military build-ups are essential. The Pivot as it is now, seems to be exactly this military build-up that could provoke an arms race that Glaser says that realists should try to avoid through cooperation.

As far as tangible changes go, the military and navy in the region, both the proposed deployment and the present troops must be reduced in order to maintain good relations with China. Secondly, the United States needs to make a greater effort to show their commitment to the Southeast Asian nations and make the actual Pivot policy clearer to all. The third is that there should be an increase in economic and diplomatic documents specifically with China. As the Chinese government itself has said, “the new model of great-power relations means they [America] must now change their behavior to accommodate us” (Schake 2014). The Pivot is often seen by China as a form of containment, which in many ways it is, and therefore the policy as it stands can easily turn into a great source of tension and already has.

Although China and its rising power, economically and politically, need to be addressed, the Pivot approaches China from an overly aggressive realist viewpoint. I suggest that instead of looking at the world with a realist theory, we approach China of a place of trust and economic competition. I do not suggest that we swing the other way and completely ignore China or naively believe that everything will be peaceful. As David Beitelman says in his paper “America’s Pacific Pivot,” it can be difficult to get a clear multi-faceted analysis of Sino-US relations and that often, “contemporary analyses become trapped in a simplified “panda hugger” versus “China hawk” characterizations” (Beitelman 2012, 1074). We need to be wary about oversimplification. The United States of America needs to be wary of having a realist worldview that frames Sino-US relations in confrontational terms, which could potentially lead to a situation not unlike the Cold War (Beitelman 2012, 1080; Xiang 2012, 113). As Sanders says, the United States needs to proceed with “subtle firmness” in order to avoid exacerbating regional suspicions, which is exactly my suggestion (Sanders 10; Lieberthal 2011).

Thomas Christensen, a soft realist, makes a good point in his article “United States and China Relations.” He is a realist, but he puts more stock in soft power than in military power. Although American interactions with China seek to further U.S. national interests in a realist sort of way, these interactions should not be to try to contain China, but to influence China into the nation that we want it to be (Christensen 2007, 86). This is an interesting take on the Pivot because it then changes both the motivation and the anticipated result. Christensen realizes that

China is a big player in the world economy and recognizes the need for the United States to have a strong and positive relationship with the nation. Especially for the sake of the international community, Christensen says that we need to help China frame its choices and encourage the Chinese government to act responsibly with its new place as an economic power in the world (Christensen 2007, 87). If we apply these sentiments to the Pivot, it does not even mean that the realist perspective needs to go by the wayside, it just means that there should be a focus shift from military power to influence. Especially when thinking about the world economy, I think that this perspective will give positive results.

The idea that China's rising automatically means America's decline is an idea that has no place within this policy. In fact, most sources agree that Beijing has not evidenced any interest in becoming a hegemon and replacing the U.S. (Smith 2014; Rudd 2013). Again, Beitelman makes the point that China as of yet still does not have the power or influence that the United States has internationally in order to accomplish this (Beitelman 2012, 1078). It must also be remembered that U.S. decline starts from a very high level and China's rise comes from a very low one; it's more of an economic restoration (Etzioni 2012, 398; Xiang 2012, 121). A hegemon, especially as Layne defines it, must be in a position of multidimensional power. China is still largely one-dimensional in its economic sector (Beitelman 2012, 1078). I would also suggest that such a power change requires hostility and an attempt to change the status quo. Testimonies from China's leaders reveal that there is no such desire to do so (Beitelman 2012, 1078; Smith 2014; Rudd 2013). It is going to be decades before China becomes a real threat to the United States, therefore that mindset needs to be erased before we continue along this path. Not only that, but, as Ross says, policy towards China should assuage, not exploit, Beijing's anxieties while protecting US interests in the region (Ross 2012). From China's view, the West has no reason to fear China's rise, in fact the West would probably benefit because of Chinese economic growth, so such aggressive behavior could be seen as a totally unnecessary direct threat towards Chinese interests, which is not where we want to go (Rudd 2013).

However, this tension between China and the United States that has developed also must be addressed. Therefore, I suggest that some proactive measures to reconcile these tensions be added to the Pivot to be enacted in the region. If the Pivot is to continue, there must be a way to maintain the Sino-American relationship even as the United States seeks to increase its involvement in the region. Together, the United States and China accounted for more than 50

percent of the world's economic growth in the last five years, it makes sense to preserve a relationship with them (Christensen 90). If we work with China, even if our goal is still to curb some of China's power, concessions can be made and positive relation can form without the need for military action.

Secondly, the pivot is altogether too focused on military strength. I think that because the Pivot is 70% a military action, this policy can be seen as leaning too far one way and forgetting the other aspects of diplomacy. I propose that this be modified too. China is different than the United States. America has not been threatened by China militarily and there is no history of warfare as of today with China. In fact, many sources say that the United States has overestimated China's military capabilities, which have not deployed any new ship or aircraft that significantly enhances their ability to challenge US maritime superiority (Ross 2012; Smith 2014). Their main tool to counter the American Navy is a fleet of diesel submarines from the 1990s (Ross 2012). Too many troops without provocation, in my opinion, is not a wise move. However, there is still value in having some military capability in the area, especially if it is seen more as a peacekeeping force. There is already a naval force in the Pacific, more troops are not vital (Ross 2012). Therefore, I propose that the Pivot be modified to decrease the number of American troops sent to Asia. I think that peace is not just on China's shoulders. The American government and the international community must also put forth effort to be sure that Chinese growth is as peaceful as possible. Not placing a large amount of military force on China's turf could be a way of encouraging such action. Both perception and strategic trust have a large part in this (Beitelman 2012, 1093). Also, such military approaches could threaten China's economic holdings, which would not be a good move on the American government's part. As Clinton says, a transparent military on the parts of both America and China would be a wise idea in order for both countries to see the military intentions of the other. This part of the Pivot should remain (Clinton 2011, 59).

Also, the United States needs to commit to this idea if it is going to happen. The American government has proven its commitment to Europe especially through recent action in the face of Russia in Ukraine (White 2014). So why can't the United States show that same level of commitment in Asia? Many Southeast Asian nations expect, with the Pivot, for assistance from the United States. We need to support our decisions and follow-through. Not only that, but the Pivot needs to be clarified to all involved and rewritten for more coherence and, hopefully,

permanence (Eyal 2014). As Etzioni says, if the United States continues to leave Southeast Asian nations to fend for themselves after the promise of support, the Asian nations will “inevitably conclude that the US is an unreliable ally” (Etzioni 2013, 60). On multiple occasions now, Obama has failed to mention the Pivot as a central aspect to American foreign policy in recent speeches (Smith 2014). Right now, American resources are being diffused among too many competing demands for the Pivot to actually be realized.

I suggest that in order for the Pivot to make a real impact, that America cut ties with some other engagements around the world. With China, history has taught us that the most effective way of dealing with the Chinese government is through leader to leader interaction, which can only happen if there is a real shift in focus (Rudd 2013). The American government is very contentious, however, and with tensions in the Middle East, where the U.S. already has many resources, it may be difficult for this to actually happen. If this is the case, the government still needs to choose where they are going to focus their resources, even if it means backing off entirely from the Pivot. At this point, being somewhat committed is actually causing a lot more harm than it is worth.

Lastly, I would also encourage increasing economic relations with China. A big part of the Pivot is economic involvement in Asia, although recently the long-term economic interests seem to have been subordinated to the short-term political/military objectives (Prestowitz 2012, 44). As a largely untapped area of the world economically, I think it would be valuable to continue our economic relations with China. Not only would it help the Sino-US relations diplomatically, it would also be mutually beneficial. The Pivot does, in some ways, seek to increase its economic presence in the region and in this, I think it has the right idea. The idea is that competition does not guarantee conflict and that the Pivot is trying to harness that competition for American economic benefit. However, because of all the military action and the economic institutions that exclude China like the TPP, the Pivot is very aggressive and threatening to China, which in many ways undermines this goal. It is possible though, to continue to form and develop an economically competitive market with China without any sort of military conflict according to many sources and examples in the world (Beitelman 2012, 1090). If the United States is going to be in Asia for the long haul, both China and the United States must look ahead and reach some sort of long-term agreement in order to avoid a major confrontation (Rudd 2013). This will require both countries to understand each other thoroughly

and, as mentioned before, build some sort of trust. The Policy as it stands now will not be able to preserve the peace. As such, the United States should introduce a new framework for cooperation with China that recognizes strategic competition between the two countries and key areas of shared interests that both countries can cooperate on as discussed in Kevin Rudd's article, "Beyond the Pivot" (Rudd 2013). According to Rudd, such actions would reduce the regional temperature and focus both countries on both economic growth and common agendas, thereby benefitting both countries.

In conclusion, although attention must be turned towards China, the Pivot as it is outlined in "America's Pacific Century", I contend, is not the most beneficial way to do so. Most agree that "the Obama administration is right to be seeking a comprehensive 21st-century U.S. trade and globalization policy" as Prestowitz says, however, the Pivot as it is presently is not a solution (Prestowitz 2012, 45). The Pivot is a way to focus on Asia and to become more involved with Asian affairs through military, diplomatic, and economic means, as a way to increase the United States' diplomatic, economic, and strategic standing in Asia, especially in comparison with China. Even though this policy may provide the United States with the power to contain China if China becomes more of a threat and to help the Southeast Asian nations that are unable to stand up to China, it may also harm our own relation to the Chinese government, exacerbate the problems already in the region, and unnecessarily use our resources. Therefore, I propose a change in our mindset as a starting point to modify the Pivot, for although the Pivot has problems, the idea behind it is valid. Changes in political theory, military strength, commitment, and increasing economic relations are my proposed adaptation of the policy as we look to move forward with our relations with China in the hopes that both countries will benefit and flourish.

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Part II: Partnership or Threat? The Philippine Perspective

Throughout history, the Philippines has had a particularly strong tie to the United States. Beginning with its American colonization, and ending with today's strong economic and political ties, the United States of America has always been a strong ally to the Philippines in many ways. The Pivot Policy of 2011 is no different; it seems to reflect those close economic and political ties between the American and Philippine governments. By analyzing the tangible changes caused by the Pivot to the Philippine economy, military, and relationships with other nations, the various arguments for and against such an increase in relations with the United States can be identified. Through this analysis, various conclusions can be made as to the International Relations theory that is being used by the Philippine government and what they will likely do next.

The Philippines has had a long history of foreign occupation and war. In 1521, Magellan arrived in the Philippines to claim the archipelago for Spain. Spain finally colonized the islands in 1565 ().ⁱ The Spanish then occupied the Philippines all the way up to 1898, when the Spanish were defeated by American ships that arrived in Manila Bay.ⁱⁱ December 12th of that year was when the Treaty of Paris was signed, which ended the Spanish-American War and ceded the Philippines to the United States for \$20 million.ⁱⁱⁱ Although this action was not recognized by Filipino leaders, who had control of the entire archipelago, except for Manila, afterwards the Philippines belonged to the United States.^{iv}

The very next year, in February, fighting broke out between the United States and Filipino forces, which began the Philippine-American War. This war lasted for three and a half years of official war (1899-1902) and ten years of overall conflict. About 400,000 Filipino lives were lost in comparison to the 10,000 American lives.^v Many consider this war to actually be just an extension and continuation of the Philippine Revolution against the Spanish rule. In 1901, Subic Bay was designated the principal U.S. Naval Station in the Philippines, it was also the year that the Sedition Law was put into place, a law which gave the death penalty or long prison sentence to anyone advocating for Philippine independence.^{vi} Most of the war was fought through guerilla warfare until most of the guerillas were pushed back onto the island of Samar where they continued their guerrilla tactics and resistance until 1906 when the U.S. gain undisputed control of the islands.^{vii} It was not until 1934 that the Philippines started its journey towards independence. The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 provided for a 10 year

Commonwealth status for the Philippines in order to prepare for independence. Political independence was finally achieved on July 4, 1946 and in 1992, the Subic Naval base was finally closed.^{viii} Finally, after three hundred and eighty five years of submission to various Western nations, the Philippines was politically free.

The Pivot is essentially a refocus of American resources from the Middle East to East Asia. Accompanying this refocus are increased defense treaty alliances with Australia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines.^{ix} This increased American presence along with an increase in warships and aircraft are meant to counter the rise of an increasingly assertive China in the South China Sea, especially as it seems that China has become emboldened and has been supposedly challenging and undermining regional stability.^x The goal is to shift 60% of all U.S. naval assets to the Pacific by the year 2020.^{xi} America is trying to “reinvigorate,” as one source would say, its security alliances with its partners in the region, especially in the Philippines.^{xii} Along with the military changes, there are also economic changes, primarily through the establishment of trade agreements such as the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership). The United States’ goal is for the TPP to surpass all other East and South Asian trade groupings.^{xiii}

This new pivot has a series of real implications for the Philippines specifically. The first is that the Philippine government has agreed to a ten-year agreement to allow thousands of troops to be temporarily based in the Philippines, twenty years after the last United States military bases were completely closed down.^{xiv} This also allowed for more visits by US aircraft and a rotation presence of U.S. marines.^{xv} The Philippines has also offered Washington a greater access to its military facilities in exchange for the modernization of its military and arms.^{xvi} The American government has approved the transfer of a patrol ship to the Philippine Navy and tripled its military assistance to \$30 million in 2012 to fulfill this bargain.^{xvii} The US military will likely continue to increase over the next few years. In fact, two American nuclear armed submarines have already made port calls in Subic Bay.^{xviii}

The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement is the embodiment of these changes.^{xix} The EDCA, as it is called, is a “reconfiguration of the Philippine-US bilateral security partnership towards the development of a minimum credible defense posture in light of the changing geostrategic environment.”^{xx} This allows US military access to and use of many facilities of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) especially for joint ventures, but is not a permanent base because the Philippine constitution bans any sort of permanent US presence.^{xxi}

Such action also increases the US Navy response time in order to help in situations such as the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 and allows the US to have greater operational flexibility in the region.^{xxii}

Not only that, but this increased alliance with the Philippines has made the Philippines a hub for American forces. This year, in fact, the Australian, Japanese, and South Korean militaries for the first time participated in the Balikatan (meaning shoulder to shoulder) US-Philippine exercise.^{xxiii} However, as Chris Brose, a foreign policy adviser, has told Washington, “The question is not whether America is doing something. Clearly America is. The question is whether what America is doing adds up to a set of actions that’s fundamentally impacting China’s calculus.”^{xxiv}

It is well known that the Philippine people are very pro-American. In fact, public opinion has generally supported this increase in relations with the United States, which means that the Philippines has welcomed the enhanced cooperation with the United States.^{xxv} Many attribute this support to the shared history, common values, common strategic and economic interests, and commitment to freedom and democracy.^{xxvi} Actually, Filipino is the largest foreign-born group in the U.S. armed forces, there are an estimated 150,000 Americans living in the Philippines and there are about four million Filipino Americans in the United States.^{xxvii} Clearly, the two nations have a strong connection. Statistically speaking, there is a 62%+ trust rate of the United States, in contrast with 55% percent of the population who have little trust of China.^{xxviii} Manila is the most vocal in criticizing China’s aggressive moves in the region.^{xxix}

Generally speaking, this new “pivot” towards Asia is looked upon favorably by the Philippine government. Manila has warmly welcomed the US military presence in South East Asia.^{xxx} In fact, most political leaders in the Philippines, except the far left-leaning parties, support this intensification of relations with their already-ally the United States.^{xxxi} This is in contrast with some of the other nations in the region, such as Thailand. This is due to a variety of reasons. First, the Philippines does not have the economic ties with China that countries like Thailand do. Although Thailand has been a treaty ally of the U.S. since 1954, it has been unwilling to further open its territory to the United States as the Philippines has.^{xxxii} This is due to the fact that Thailand fears that strong ties with the United States would compromise its vibrant trade with China and since they have refused further American ties, they have upped their ties with China.^{xxxiii} The Philippines, on the other hand, does not have those same strong

economic ties to China since President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo left office. In fact, the United States is the Philippines' largest source of FDIs and is also the Philippines' second largest trade partner.^{xxxiv} In 2012, only 12.4% of the Philippines' exports go to China whereas 15.6% go to the United States.^{xxxv}

Secondly, there are political factors in the area that make an extended alliance with the United States ideal. Primarily, the Philippines is having some territorial disputes with China over the Scarborough Shoal. China has sent combat ready patrols to defend the shoal and after the Philippines was forced to withdraw, established a permanent presence.^{xxxvi} Especially with the presence of large oil reserves within that area, both countries are trying to claim it as their own.^{xxxvii} With the increased militarization that the Philippines has received from the United States, the Philippines, the timing of American involvement appears to be perfect in order to continue to stand up to China for its territory.^{xxxviii} Without the militarization and build-up of the Navy that the Philippines has received from the U.S. with the EDCA, there would be no way that the Philippines could stand up to China. In fact, in July of 2014, President Aquino announced that he may ask the US to deploy spy planes in the Philippines' territory in the South China Sea, or the West Philippine Sea, as the Philippines would prefer.^{xxxix}

Not only that, but Philippine President Benigno Aquino has begun to transfer national focus from internal issues to external issues and it is the perfect time to strengthen ties with allies. Because the Philippines has been so concerned with domestic struggles, its navy and airforce are very weak since the military has received all of the resources.^{xl} The Pivot came at a perfect time for the Philippines to receive many resources necessary from the United States. Agreements such as the EDCA also help to cover non-military issues such as human rights and relief aid.^{xli} As one author put it, "The Philippines needs to attain minimum defense credibility, enhance its maritime domain awareness, improve its capacity to enforce its laws over its waters, and cooperate on traditional and non-traditional security issues such as humanitarian action and disaster response with other countries on the same level."^{xlii} This renewed alliance with the United States can help the Philippines attain those things. Basically, the United States' desire to maintain a credible presence in South East Asia is the Philippines' perfect opportunity get as much as it can out of a strengthened relationship with the U.S.A.^{xliii}

Finally, the Philippines has also started to see China as an overarching existential threat to their wellbeing.^{xliv} Other nations in the region still have strong relations with China and

therefore do not have this issue. In fact, this has created a new facet in the Philippines' relationship with the United States.

However, there are also a few reservations about this renewed relationship with the United States. The first is the question of the reliance of the United States. Valerie Sanders, in her article entitled "The U.S. and Asia: What Pivot?" puts it the best when she writes, "President Obama's decision... to cancel visits to U.S. allies in the region, has led many to ask whether the pivot is simply a rhetorical device without any real substance to it."^{xlvi} Most sources that question the pivot first question America's commitment to the Pivot, especially in the last two years. In fact, as the United States has seemed to back off from the region in the past two years, China has responded with concrete policies and actions.^{xlvi} Although the US has significantly increased its warships and resources to Asia despite budget woes, these absences and a seeming indifference to the pivot in recent speeches still invoke doubt. Since Washington is still grappling with the Middle East, then growing tension in the South and East China Seas that could depend on US intervention become periphery concerns, which is an issue that greatly concerns the Philippines.^{xlvi} Some even say that the U.S. created overblown expectations for the Pivot and are now paying the price because now countries in the area are questioning Obama's reliability. Not only that, but countries like the Philippines who are America's allies who rely on external security guarantors like the U.S. to ensure peace are starting to look vulnerable since America does not appear to be there.^{xlvi}

Some would say, however, that the Pivot itself has begun to exacerbate the issues that the Philippines has with China instead of fixing them; that the Pivot has lead to *increased* tensions in the region.^{xlvi} They say that the increased relationship between the United States and the Philippines has caused China to proverbially flex its muscles to push back. They see the increased economic relationship as a threat. For example, it was not until the Philippines began to increase and expand its alliance with the United States in 2011 that the territorial dispute began to get worse.^l China also seemed to be "punishing" the Philippines when it started to ban Philippine bananas. It also bears mentioning that when this happened, the US bought the country's bananas instead, which shows how much China's actions are also contributing to the Philippines' turn towards the United States.^{li} Not only that, but some sources say that Philippine-made goods are being held at Chinese ports for nontariff-related "issues."^{lii}

President Aquino is attempting to maintain diplomatic and economic relations with China while he tries to actively oppose China's actions in the West Philippine Sea, but it has become very difficult to do so; he did not even attend the 10th China-ASEAN expo.^{liii} In fact, since the pivot began, President Aquino has cancelled some Chinese-funded projects because of irregularities during his anti-corruption platform.^{liv} This is not without cost, however. Although China is not the Philippines' main trade partner, but trade with China is still a valuable part of Philippine economy. Not only that, but China is the fourth largest provider of development assistance to the Philippine Islands and is the second largest provider of concessional loans to the country.^{lv} Losing these things will hurt the Philippines' economy immensely. The Philippines' relationship with the United States also seems to be harmful to the Philippines' relationship with other Southeast Asian nations who have given some negative sentiment for appearing to cleave more closely to Washington than any other nation in the region.^{lvi} Instead of mellowing the region, the Pivot seems to have further complicated the area. In essence, China seems to be challenging and testing the U.S. to see what America will do and the relations between China and the Philippines specifically have been the most worrisome.

Traditionally, the United States has deterred regional powers in this region from resorting to aggression by showing that the US is interested in maintaining freedom of navigation. However, now, the US has been inserted directly into the legally complex disputes of the region.^{lvii} This in and of itself is cause for the Philippines to be wary. There is some fear that America's actions are solely motivated by the purpose of protecting American hegemony and interject Washington deeply into Asia's economy.^{lviii} In fact, ASEAN itself has shared concerns that TPP and America's other economic action might be issues.^{lix} Not only that, but American action could be considered unconstitutional and against the VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement) of 1999 in the Philippines. Both of these things establish the U.S. military force in the Philippines as a non-combat role and outlaws any permanent base of operations for the U.S. military on Philippine land.^{lx} People do not want to go rushing into an agreement that is going to go poorly for them later.

Looking at the way the Philippines has responded and reacted to the events in the region in the last few years, it is clear that the Philippine government is employing a variety of International Relations theories. I would suggest that it is employing a neorealist theory in

regards to its own region of Asia and a neoliberal theory at a larger level, especially in relation to the United States.

The Philippines especially shows neorealist theory in the instance of its relationship with China and the territorial disputes of the Scarborough Shoal. Neorealism is characterized by its realist views of anarchy and that every nation is just looking out for its own interests with an added view that nations seek to increase their relative power and are equal in terms of needs but not in capability. The Philippines is seeking to increase its relative power to the other nations in the region especially through its defense of the disputed territory in the West Philippine Sea. However, at the same time, it realizes the need to work with more powerful nations since although each nation has the same needs, there is a difference in ability to achieve those needs or goals.

However, on the other hand, the Philippines also welcomes partnership with the United States and this seems to indicate a neoliberal view. The neoliberal view is characterized by the idea that nations can successfully work and cooperate in the international system. Although some Philippine skeptics point to the dangers of the Pivot and of American involvement in the Pacific, the government seems to think that their nation and the United States can successfully cooperate with one another without too many negative consequences. Although this is a debatable view, the government clearly acts on it.

It is clear that due to these sentiments, the Philippine government will most likely continue on the political route that they are on. Regionally, it is likely that the Philippines will continue to fight for the Scarborough Shoal and defy China, especially if the United States continues to support the Philippine military. Internationally, the Philippines will also continue to maintain a strong relationship with the United States, relying on the U.S. for military and economic support.

In conclusion, the Pivot to Asia that the United States has enacted in the past four years, has many implications for the Philippines, both good and bad. Very early in the history of the Philippines, there has been a strong relationship between the Philippines and the United States of America. This shared history has influenced the fact that the Philippines has had a strong relationship with the United States for a long time. Although the Philippine government has opened its arms to heightened American involvement, it is still necessary to analyze the positive and negative factors of the Pivot from the Philippine perspective. Through looking at the

economic, military, and relational changes that occur because of the Pivot and how the Philippines has responded, one can assess the Philippine government's actions and reasoning according to both neorealism and neoliberalism.

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