

Chinese Leadership and Elite Responses to the U.S. Pacific Pivot

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Over the past several years, the most significant overall U.S. foreign policy action of relevance to China has been the announcement and initial follow-through of the so-called Pacific Pivot or “Rebalancing” of U.S. attention and resources to the Asia-Pacific. This policy move (hereafter termed the Pacific Pivot)¹, albeit in many ways expressing great continuity with past U.S. policy, is being viewed by many observers and officials in the United States, China, Asia, and elsewhere, as an important response not only to the growing overall significance of the region to American interests, but in particular to the challenges and opportunities presented by an increasingly powerful and influential China. The Pacific Pivot has thus drawn considerable attention and levels of controversy in many quarters, and nowhere more so than in Beijing.

This article takes a close look at the Chinese reactions to Washington’s increased stress on Asia, including Chinese assessments of the perceived implications of this policy shift for the region and for China in particular. Three categories of sources are examined²:

- *Authoritative*: Several types of PRC sources are considered authoritative in the sense of explicitly “speaking for the regime.”³ Of these, commentary on the Pacific Pivot has only occurred during Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) or Ministry of Defense (MND) press conferences, and in the remarks of a few senior MFA officials.
- *Quasi-authoritative*: Several types of usually homophonous, bylined articles appearing in the *People’s Daily* are considered quasi-authoritative in the sense that, although indirect and implicit, they are intended to convey the view of an important PRC organization. Of these, commentary on the Pacific Pivot has only occurred in articles using the new byline Zhong Sheng (钟声), which is an apparent homophone for “the voice of the Central,” and appears to be written by the editorial staff of the *People’s Daily* International Department⁴
- *Non-authoritative*: Many types of low-level commentary and signed articles appearing in a wide variety of PRC and Hong Kong media convey notable yet decidedly non-authoritative views.⁵ Many of these types of articles include a broad spectrum of diverse reactions on the Pacific Pivot.

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The content of statements and commentaries appearing in these sources is compared and contrasted to discern possible differences in the Chinese reaction to the Pacific Pivot. In addition, their timing and content are compared to apparent changes over time in U.S. formulations, emphases, and military or diplomatic actions regarding the policy move, to see whether and how the Chinese response might be prompted and shaped by specific U.S. policy behaviors.

The essay begins with a brief summary of the history and evolution of the Pacific Pivot (centering on key leadership speeches and writings as well as statements by U.S. government sources, such as State Department and Defense Department officials and spokespersons), followed by a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the Chinese response, divided into both authoritative and quasi-authoritative versus non-authoritative sources. The quantitative analysis examines the frequency and timing of the appearance of statements regarding the pivot in selected key media. The qualitative analysis examines the content and timing of Chinese statements and commentaries with regard to five issue areas where references to the Pacific Pivot are most evident:

- Broad regional strategy and U.S.-China relations
- U.S. defense doctrine and policies (especially the Air-Sea Battle Concept, or ASBC⁶)
- The U.S. military presence in Asia (including basing, deployments, and exercises)
- U.S. policy toward the South China Sea territorial disputes
- The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) initiative

However, not all of the authoritative, quasi-authoritative, and non-authoritative sources examined cover every one of these five issue areas.*

Origins and Evolution of the Pivot to Asia

The Obama administration's increased emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region builds on similar but arguably less extensive and coordinated activities undertaken during the Clinton and especially the Bush II administrations. These included, among others, efforts to strengthen relations with existing regional allies; negotiate new regional economic arrangements; push forward existing multilateral initiatives such as APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); develop new partnerships with India, Indonesia, and Vietnam; and place a greater military stress on the southern and western parts of the region by increasing operations there, mainly through new rotational deployments.⁷

Despite such actions, Obama officials have asserted that the United States was “underweighted in Asia, given the importance of the region, given the economic dynamism in the region, and the strategic dynamics in the region.”⁸ As a result, U.S.

officials have stressed three policy features as central pillars of the Pacific Pivot: first and foremost, the strengthening of U.S. bilateral alliances and security partnerships in the region; second, more intensive engagement with the emerging power centers in the region, most notably China, India, and Indonesia; and third, more active and direct participation in the development of regional multilateral institutions, especially in the realms of economics, diplomacy, and security.⁹

According to two U.S. analysts, none of these moves were “presented as being aimed at containing, encircling, or counterbalancing China. Rather, they were billed as a necessary rebalancing of U.S. attention to advance U.S. interests, exploit opportunities, and reassure allies and friends of U.S. staying power and commitments.”¹⁰ However, there is no doubt that the pivot was motivated by concerns over China’s growing power, influence, and behavior in the Asia-Pacific. Specifically, Washington saw an increasing need to respond to the apparent uncertainties and anxieties in the region created by China’s growing military capabilities and its increasing assertiveness—especially in 2009–2010—regarding claims to disputed maritime territory and U.S. and allied military exercises and surveillance operations in the Western Pacific. From the U.S. perspective, such assertiveness threatened to unnerve friends and allies, inhibit U.S. freedom of air and maritime navigation, and generally constrain Washington’s ability to project power in the region.¹¹

Milestones

Key features of what became the Pacific Pivot emerged in the early months of the Obama administration, and were primarily reflected in a stepped-up series of diplomatic visits to the Asia-Pacific in 2009 by senior officials (including both the president and the secretary of state), and new initiatives signaling a greater level of U.S. involvement in multilateral institutions (such as the East Asian Summit or EAS), along with other diplomatic moves. Most of this activity began in Southeast Asia, largely because many regional leaders felt they had been neglected by Washington during the Bush II era, as noted above. But subsequent trips by Secretary Clinton in that year, and a major 10-day Asia trip by President Obama in November, included stops in northeast Asia as well.¹²

This tempo of activity largely continued in 2010 and into 2011, and included a clear assertion of increased U.S. involvement in the South China Sea and East China Sea territorial disputes between China and other Asian nations.¹³

The Obama administration’s renewed emphasis on Asia became a very clear and deliberate policy initiative by the fall of 2011. At that time, the policy moves began to be described as a “pivot” or “rebalancing” toward the region. Such deliberate phrasing coincided with several coordinated actions and statements, including the publication of a major article and public address by Clinton (both titled “America’s Pacific Century”) and a very eventful trip to the Asia-Pacific by President Obama and Clinton in November.¹⁴ In an address to the Australian Parliament in November, Obama stated that the goal of the U.S. policy shift to Asia is to ensure that “the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping [the] region and its future.”¹⁵

Two final milestones in the enunciation of the Pacific Pivot occurred in the first half of 2012, both relating to military issues. In January, the Obama administration released new defense strategic guidelines that stressed the Asia-Pacific (along with the Middle East) as a key regional defense priority and identified China and Iran as two potential anti-access threats. This coincided with the announcement of a new approach to organizing U.S. military power: the Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC).¹⁶ In June, Defense Secretary Panetta delivered a major address describing the U.S. commitment to a continued strong military posture in the Asia-Pacific. In support of that commitment, Panetta announced the intention to devote a majority of U.S. naval power to the region.¹⁷

Chinese Views: A Quantitative Assessment

In general, since October 2011, when authoritative U.S. announcements of the policy shift first emerged, only a handful of *authoritative* or *quasi-authoritative* articles or statements explicitly addressing the Pacific Pivot have appeared in China's media. Most of these are discussed below.¹⁸

In contrast, approximately one hundred *non-authoritative* statements, articles, and commentaries have appeared in party, military, and government media (i.e., the *People's Daily*, the *People's Liberation Army Daily*, and Xinhua publications) discussing the U.S. policy emphasis on Asia.¹⁹

Although our search for such references began with the advent of the Bush II administration, the overwhelmingly majority of "hits" were concentrated in 2010, 2011, and 2012, and consisted mostly of responses to specific U.S. actions and initiatives relating to the increased emphasis on Asia listed above, ranging from military exercises to participation in regional multilateral fora, as well as high-profile statements by U.S. leaders.²⁰

The vast majority of these references appeared in the *People's Daily*, and were concentrated in late 2011 and early 2012, in response to the above-outlined series of high-profile statements, appearances, and actions relating to the Pacific Pivot appearing at that time.²¹ Interestingly, an archival search of the *People's Liberation Army Daily* turned up far fewer references to the "pivot" or any of its equivalent terms.²² However, the *People's Liberation Army Daily* understandably contained more references to the ASBC than did the *People's Daily*. But the numbers were small in both cases.²³

Chinese Views in Five Issue Areas

Among the five issue areas identified above, Chinese responses to the Pacific Pivot have most often addressed either the larger (usually regional) strategic dimensions of the policy and its implications for the U.S.-China relationship in particular, or specific military or defense-related issues, including U.S. military strategy; U.S. basing, deployments, or training; or U.S. actions toward territorial disputes, especially regarding

the South China Sea. Although important, Chinese references to the TPP in this context were far fewer.

Regional Strategy and U.S.-China Relations

Overall, statements from authoritative MFA and MND sources have been largely muted and restrained, with abstract, at times even conciliatory, responses given to very specific and sometimes provocative questions about the Pacific Pivot. In addition, most notably, virtually all of these statements have occurred during regular press conferences, in response to media questions. The low ranking of such events as authoritative sources reinforces the relatively low-key treatment accorded to the issue.

In their responses, the MFA spokespersons often reiterated Beijing's prior statements of support for "the constructive role played by the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific," along with other somewhat conciliatory remarks.²⁴ References to the "constructive role" of the United States in Asia of course predate the Pacific Pivot, having emerged at the latest in 2009, in response to U.S. efforts to elicit a formal public declaration of China's acceptance of the United States as an Asian power.²⁵

However, while it is generally regarded as a positive term, the adjective "constructive" implies that China's acceptance of a U.S. presence is a conditional one, dependent on Beijing's view of the specific type of regional role played by Washington. In fact, other authoritative Chinese statements suggest that the Chinese view U.S. regional behavior as constructive only if it respects the interests and concerns of China and other Asian powers, and in general contributes to greater bilateral and regional cooperation while de-emphasizing military divisions or rivalries. Indeed, authoritative Chinese statements regarding the Pacific Pivot often include a stress on the convergence of U.S. and Chinese interests in Asia and the need for the United States to respect the "interests and concerns of other parties in the Asia-Pacific, including China" and for the two sides to "develop a relationship featuring mutual benefit, win-win and sound interaction between emerging and established powers."²⁶

On this basis, one could conclude that Beijing regards as unconstructive in nature those aspects of the U.S. policy move that appear to invoke actual or potential rivalries or create or sustain divisions or zero-sum interactions among countries. This would presumably include emphases on bolstering bilateral security alliances or creating exclusivist political or economic associations. And in fact, authoritative Chinese commentaries on the Pacific Pivot usually contain a mild criticism of those aspects that involve efforts to intensify or expand U.S. military deployments and defense alliance relationships in the region.²⁷ Again, such statements were made during regular press conferences, in response to media questions.

In contrast to such pronouncements, both quasi-authoritative and non-authoritative articles and statements in this issue area have in general been more explicitly critical of the United States, and more likely to draw analytical connections regarding the motivations and consequences of particular U.S. policies associated with the Pacific Pivot.

Regarding the motivations behind the policy shift, Chinese observers publishing in civilian and military organs argue that the United States is now attempting to expand its presence and influence in Asia primarily in order to gain the benefits of the region's dynamic economic growth and thereby sustain its dominant position, both regionally and globally.²⁸ Many of these observers also see the Pacific Pivot as primarily directed against China, "because only China's rise can pose a potential challenge to [U.S.] hegemony."²⁹

In other words, most commentators suggest that the United States seeks to counterbalance Chinese influence in an effort to preserve American dominance over the region. Moreover, observers publishing in both quasi- and non-authoritative sources assert that the U.S. policy could eventually generate a "zero-sum" competition with Beijing, and thus undermine U.S. attempts to benefit from Asia's dynamism or promote a more stable regional security environment. Indeed, articles in the same range of sources explicitly point to a tension or contradiction between the U.S. effort to sustain dominance in the military and political spheres, which could very likely increase regional tensions; and the need to enhance economic and trade relations with Asia, which requires an absence of such tensions.³⁰

In addition to the geostrategic effort to retain dominance, some Chinese observers also point to the influence of domestic U.S. politics in the emergence of the Pacific Pivot.³¹ But these references are relatively few.

Regarding the means allegedly employed to advance the U.S. policy shift, in many instances, a struggling Washington is viewed as attempting to assemble a regional coalition to counterbalance China.³² In a similar vein, many observers, including the quasi-authoritative *Zhong Sheng*, see the policy move as involving U.S. efforts to promote regional tensions or take advantage of regional differences to increase U.S. influence.³³

More broadly, some observers point to the new U.S. policy's emphasis on strengthening Cold War-era alliance relationships as an attempt to use "small group" military cooperation to create "a structural barrier to [a larger pattern of] security cooperation of Asian countries."³⁴ In this manner, the U.S. policy move is seen by many Chinese observers as a relic of the Cold War era and a direct challenge to the prevailing trend in international relations, "in which seeking for communication and cooperation far precedes resorting to confrontation and conflict."³⁵

One Chinese commentator asserts that, given the divisive consequences he alleges will result from the U.S. policy move, and the supposed U.S. desire for dominance motivating it, other Asian nations are "unlikely to approve of the U.S. attempt to impose its values on them or the so-called 'leadership' it aspires to exercise in Asia. . . . What [such nations] need right now is a reliable partner, not a country that yearns for leadership and intends to act as an arbitrator."³⁶ In a less confrontational version of this argument,

some analysts lay as much or more blame on other Asian nations as on the United States for using the Pacific Pivot to stimulate division and instability.³⁷

At the same time, a few Chinese journalists and government-associated scholars do not assume that the United States will inevitably choose such a confrontational path. Some even see the potential for positive outcomes of the Pacific Pivot.³⁸ Others question whether the United States will be able to sustain the policy over time even if it does pursue a more confrontational path, given U.S. economic problems and the strong incentive of many Asian nations to maintain close economic ties with China.³⁹ In fact, an editorial in *Global Times* argues that nations will only align with the United States if doing so is more profitable than maintaining close relations with China. Equally notable, the article also seems to imply that nations will eventually have to give up their military ties with the United States to maintain access to China's economy.⁴⁰ A few observers, including Zhong Sheng, assert that Asia is a large enough area to accommodate the "return" of the United States and permit coexistence with China.⁴¹

U.S. Military Strategy and Defense Concepts

Authoritative Chinese civilian and military commentary on those elements of the Pacific Pivot that relate to U.S. military strategy and defense concepts has been both very rare and restrained. And, as in the case of overall U.S. strategy and U.S.-China relations discussed above, every authoritative comment on U.S. military strategy has been low level, appearing in response to media questions at regular press conferences and most often in the aftermath of the unveiling of the January 2012 U.S. Defense Strategy Review report.⁴²

To our knowledge, only one authoritative comment has occurred on U.S. defense concepts associated with the Pacific Pivot, notably concerning the Air-Sea Battle Concept. Again, at an MND press conference, the ASBC was unsurprisingly described as destabilizing (by advocating confrontation and stressing the security of the United States at the expense of the security of others), an expression of a Cold War mentality, and against the dominant global trend of "peace, development, and cooperation."⁴³

In contrast to such rare and relatively benign commentary, both quasi- and non-authoritative remarks on U.S. military strategy and concepts have been more frequent (although by no means numerous), more critical, and largely conveyed by PLA analysts or in PLA media. As with authoritative commentary, many remarks came in response to the publication of the new U.S. National Defense Strategy Report in January 2012.

In line with the broader assessment of the U.S. policy move as an effort to counter-balance or contain China's growing power, some Chinese defense analysts assert that the shift in Washington's strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific region represents a return to the Cold War-style "threat-based" national security planning model—directed at China and Iran—and the end of the "capabilities-based" planning approach that marked the counter-terrorism effort.⁴⁴

In characterizing the ASBC as an essential part of this new threat-based, “Asia-first” U.S. defense strategy, many military analysts, and some Zhong Sheng articles, assert that the concept is clearly directed at China and will result in greater Sino-U.S. military frictions.⁴⁵ Indeed, a few PLA scholars stress the supposed similarity of the ASBC to the Cold War concept of Air-Land Battle, thereby implying that the U.S. military is now treating China as the new Soviet Union.⁴⁶

Two well-known defense analysts assert that the ASBC is viewed by Obama and senior U.S. defense officials as “the fulcrum and the theory foundation for directing the strategic transformation of the United States and the eastward shift of the gravity center of the U.S. global strategy.”⁴⁷ The same defense analysts also connect the ASBC to the allegedly destabilizing U.S. effort to strengthen political and security relations with regional allies, a major component of the Pacific Pivot.⁴⁸

All these assessments greatly exaggerate the scope and significance of the ASBC at this point in time, since the concept remains largely undefined, unfunded, and unimplemented. Moreover, in reality, the concept is explicitly designed to counter specific anti-access, area-denial *capabilities*, regardless of which country might possess them. That said, as seen above, the Defense Department has also explicitly identified Iran and China as the two major possessors of such capabilities at present. Hence, while it is inaccurate to describe the ASBC as purely “threat-based,” it is nonetheless arguably being developed with specific countries in mind.

The U.S. Military Presence: Basing, Deployments, and Exercises

There has been more commentary by authoritative Chinese sources on features of the U.S. military presence than on any other issue area associated with the Pacific Pivot, except perhaps U.S. policy toward regional territorial disputes in the South China Sea (discussed below). However, as with the above issue areas, such commentary has taken place almost exclusively at a low level, during regular press conferences.

In response to the announcement of the rotational deployment of marines to Darwin, authoritative PRC Foreign Ministry sources have generally taken a rather low profile, only indirectly suggesting that the move might go against the regional trend toward greater peace, stability, and cooperation. In answering questions about the U.S.-Australian announcement, MFA spokespersons have reiterated China’s commitment to peace, stability, and economic development in the region and urged other countries to “make constructive efforts in building a harmonious and peaceful Asia-Pacific region.”⁴⁹

Perhaps the strongest MFA statement on this topic came in November 2011, when a spokesperson responded to a query regarding the U.S.-Australian defense move with these words: “China does not seek military alliance . . . The U.S. stated many times that it welcomes a strong, prosperous and stable China and has no intention to contain China. We hope the U.S. does what it says.”⁵⁰

The response of a military (MND) spokesperson to a similar question conveyed a more directly critical perspective, but one that is also often found in quasi- or non-

authoritative commentary on the Pacific Pivot, as shown above. While reiterating the usual statement of support for activities that promote peace, stability, and development in Asia, the spokesperson took the opportunity to criticize military alliances, describing efforts to strengthen and expand such alliances (as in the case of the U.S.-Australia initiative) as “an expression of a Cold War mentality, and . . . not [in accord with] the trend of peace, development, and cooperation.”⁵¹

However, it is important to note that PLA spokespersons have also generally played down possible links between U.S. military exercises with other Asian nations and the Pacific Pivot. As with the U.S.-Australian initiative, comments have merely stressed the hope that joint exercises will be “conducive to the peace and stability of the region.”⁵²

Non-authoritative Chinese observers generally strike a far more critical tone toward various dimensions of the increasing U.S. military presence in Asia associated with the Pacific Pivot. As with commentary on U.S. strategy in general, many assert a direct connection between such activities and the supposed larger intention of the policy move as an effort to strengthen U.S. “hegemony” in the region and contain China’s rise.

In this regard, as suggested above, unlike authoritative commentary, analysts often point to a supposed link between increased U.S. deployments (to Australia and elsewhere), exercises with Asian allies, and expanded regional access (exemplified by the dispatching of littoral combat ships to Singapore) on one hand, and the requirements of the Air-Sea Battle Concept, viewed as a central element of the Pacific Pivot, on the other. In particular, the ASBC, and U.S. military strategy in general, are seen as requiring an enhanced and dispersed U.S. force presence across the region.⁵³

Some Chinese observers have also characterized such U.S. actions as involving not only the dispersal but also partial withdrawal of U.S. forces from those forward areas threatened by Chinese ballistic missiles, such as Japan and South Korea.⁵⁴

Finally, some Chinese observers argue, in line with general views on the Pacific Pivot, that the enhanced U.S. regional military presence, rather than reassuring nations, will in fact divide the region, threaten the sovereignty of some nations, and generally create greater security anxieties.⁵⁵ In response to the U.S. policy move, one Zhong Sheng article argues that Japan and other Asian nations should cultivate a form of regionalism not beholden to external powers or foreign values.⁵⁶

The South China Sea Disputes

The ongoing and arguably intensifying territorial disputes over the South China Sea—involving China and several ASEAN nations (and especially Vietnam and the Philippines, a U.S. ally)—are viewed by many Chinese observers as a key issue linked to the Pacific Pivot.

PRC MFA representatives have commented frequently and unmistakably, albeit often indirectly and usually at a low level of authority (again during press conferences), on the enhanced level of U.S. involvement in the disputes. While avoiding any explicit

linkage between the larger Pacific Pivot and U.S. behavior toward the South China Sea, MFA spokespersons have repeatedly expressed opposition to any involvement in the disputes by “countries outside the region” and have stated that “[c]omplicating and magnifying the South China Sea issue does not help solve relevant disputes, nor is it conducive to regional peace and stability.”⁵⁷

In addition, Chinese officials have indirectly rejected U.S. concerns over freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, asserting that China has never inhibited free passage in the region and would not do so in the future. Moreover, Beijing authorities have also cast suspicion on the motives of any entities that “[play up] . . . the issue of freedom of navigation and [confuse] it with island sovereignty and maritime demarcation in the South China Sea,” stating that such actions “cannot but raise our suspicion of the motives behind the move.”⁵⁸

At the same time, MFA spokespersons have generally avoided accusing Washington of taking sides in the disputes, although they have also failed to affirm clearly that the United States is in fact adopting a neutral stance.⁵⁹ But both MFA and MND spokespersons have generally adopted a measured approach toward U.S. involvement in the recent disputes between China and the Philippines over the Scarborough Shoal/Huangyan Island.⁶⁰ Beijing has authoritatively criticized Manila for causing the dispute and militarizing it through the deployment to the scene of armed state vessels and has suggested that it might be attempting to draw “other countries” (read: the United States) into the dispute as supporters. However, it has not directly accused the United States of encouraging or backing the Philippines in the dispute.⁶¹

That said, perhaps the most pointed authoritative remarks on this issue came from a relatively high level: Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai. Cui reportedly warned that “individual countries are actually playing with fire, and I hope the fire will not be drawn to the United States,” urging the United States to “counsel restraint to those countries who’ve been frequently taking provocative action.”⁶² This remark was directed primarily at China’s rivals in the South China Sea territorial disputes. But it also conveyed the concern that the United States could be drawn into such disputes in support of those nations.

In sharp contrast, both quasi- and non-authoritative Chinese observers have leveled direct and harsh criticism of U.S. behavior toward the South China Sea disputes, often linking such behavior to the Pacific Pivot. Many assert that Washington is using the disputes—and has “created” an issue over freedom of navigation in the region in particular—to justify an enhanced military presence in Southeast Asia, to contain China, to support its overall pivot toward the region, and to “stir up trouble” and sow discord between China and local powers.⁶³

Moreover, while a few Chinese observers acknowledge that the United States is officially attempting to remain neutral in the territorial disputes, many others assert that Washington has shown, through its military and diplomatic assistance to the Philippines during the Scarborough Shoal dispute, that it is using Manila to strengthen its control

over the region, and to contain China.⁶⁴ Some observers point to the recent U.S.-Philippines joint military exercises as a confirmation of such intent.⁶⁵

Several observers, including Zhong Sheng, also criticize the United States indirectly for providing backing to the alleged efforts of other claimants to internationalize the territorial disputes and thereby exert pressure on China. Instead, they argue, such efforts will destabilize and divide the region.⁶⁶

The TPP

As suggested above, many Chinese observers see the increased emphasis, in the Pacific Pivot, on deepening economic ties with the region, as stemming from a somewhat urgent, if not desperate, need to better employ Asia's uniquely strong growth in an attempt to pull the United States out of its current economic malaise. Many point to the U.S. initiative in support of the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP) as the major indicator of this effort in the multilateral arena.

Again, the PRC government has apparently adopted a rather lukewarm stance regarding the TPP, holding an "open attitude" toward any initiative that promotes regional economic integration while expressing skepticism toward those that seem to divide the region or are not created by "the international community through agreement." Although not explicitly identified, both of these criteria apply to the TPP, which was created by a relatively small number of nations (joined by the United States) and is open only to those nations that meet its requirements.⁶⁷

That said, Beijing has indicated that the existing mechanisms and platforms should be given full play so as to push forward the economic integration of the Asia-Pacific region "in a step-by-step manner." These structures include the East Asia Free Trade Area (10+3), the East Asia Comprehensive Economic Partnership (10+6), the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP), and other mechanisms. With regard to the TPP in particular, Beijing states that "China has followed the progress on the TPP negotiations and is ready to keep communication with relevant members." Not exactly a full-throated endorsement.⁶⁸

As in the above issue areas, non-authoritative or quasi-authoritative sources are generally far more directly critical of the U.S.-led TPP initiative. Many observers believe that Washington designed the initiative to revise the rules governing economic interaction in ASEAN and other countries in order to benefit the United States, while in the process alienating China and creating destabilizing divisions and competitions among many aspiring Asian nations. And, more directly and sharply echoing the authoritative response, many observers see the TPP as a threat to those genuinely indigenous structures that promote gradual economic regionalization, such as APEC and various bilateral and trilateral free trade zones.⁶⁹

In this sense, some Chinese observers regard the TPP not as an economic undertaking but primarily as an instrument of U.S. regional strategy, designed to contain China, strengthen its economic control in the region, and undermine regionalism.⁷⁰ That

said, some Chinese observers do not believe the TPP will amount to much in at least the near to medium term, given the growth of protectionist sentiment in industrialized democracies and the supposedly suspicious attitude toward it held by many Asian countries.⁷¹

Recommended Responses

Very few authoritative Chinese sources offer any recommendations regarding China's response to the Pacific Pivot. However, those few that do are of a relatively high level and generally recommend that Beijing continue to work to maintain the stability of U.S.-China relations, and by implication not over-react to the U.S. policy shift.⁷² This is not surprising, given the overall restrained and cautious stance toward the move exhibited by such sources, as described above.

Perhaps somewhat more surprising is the stance taken by many of the far more directly and sharply critical quasi- and non-authoritative commentators on the Pacific Pivot. Even these observers, for the most part, tend to counsel restraint and caution in response. As two Western analysts of the Chinese view toward the U.S. policy shift state, Chinese analysts generally recommend that Beijing "observe U.S. actions and stay its existing course by continuing to focus on economic growth and enhancing its diplomacy while simultaneously improving its military capabilities."⁷³

Summary and Conclusions

The above analysis indicates that authoritative sources on one hand and both quasi- and non-authoritative Chinese sources on the other hand convey very different messages regarding the origins, intentions, and consequences of the Pacific Pivot. While authoritative Chinese reactions to elements of the U.S. policy move are relatively rare and almost without exception restrained and cautious, quasi- and non-authoritative assessments are far more numerous and contain a relatively high number of critical and/or alarmist assessments, with only a smaller number of relatively restrained and balanced remarks. Although a similar contrast was discovered with regard to other foreign policy issues examined in other issues of the CLM (such as Chinese views toward North Korea, Iran, and the AfPak issue), it is arguably most evident in this case.

Among the former (authoritative) Chinese assessments of the Pacific Pivot, the vast majority are conveyed at a low level of authority, consisting of remarks by MFA or MND spokespersons in response to questions posed by the press. The content of the commentary is generally similar, including largely indirect and low-key criticism of the U.S. effort as potentially divisive and destabilizing in many ways (politically, militarily, and economically) and therefore against the prevailing trend of the times toward greater levels of regional communication and cooperation. Very few authoritative comments are offered by civilian sources regarding specific military-related issues associated with the U.S. policy move, such as U.S. military strategy, changes in the U.S. military presence, or the ASBC. Most of the (relatively few) authoritative commentaries on these issues

comes from MND spokespersons, at regular press conferences, and are by and large restrained in nature.

Among the latter (quasi- and non-authoritative) type of views, *quasi-authoritative* comments on the Pacific Pivot are limited exclusively to Zhong Sheng articles appearing largely in the *People's Daily* and possessing a low level of authority.⁷⁴

The commentaries appearing in this source, and all clearly non-authoritative sources as well, do not seem to differ much, if at all, in their overall tone and level of criticism, however. Zhong Sheng articles at times seem slightly more restrained and cautious. But articles appearing in both types of sources argue that the Pacific Pivot is destabilizing to regional order, runs against prevailing international trends, and is an expression of a deliberate U.S. effort to counterbalance or contain China's growing power and influence in Asia. In addition, most quasi- or non-authoritative analysts explicitly draw a close connection between the U.S. policy move and a wide range of current changes in the U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific, including deployments, exercises, and basing or access arrangements. This is not found in authoritative sources.

Some of the most tepid commentaries (e.g., the reference to going against international trends) are found in authoritative sources, and a few non-authoritative sources (and Zhong Sheng articles). In sharp contrast to the former sources, many more quasi- or non-authoritative sources contain explicit, direct criticism of the U.S. policy move as: a) motivated by both economic pressures and a desire to retain regional hegemony; b) involving deliberate attempts to create or manipulate divisions among regional states to achieve U.S. ends; and c) for some observers, inevitably fated to failure, as a result of regional resistance and/or America's own economic weakness. Moreover, many such commentators see a fundamental contradiction between the U.S. need for closer and deeper economic ties with the region, and the desire to advance military policies that allegedly weaken regional cooperation and thereby undermine economic growth.

In contrast to the differing assessments (in both number and content) occurring in authoritative versus quasi- or non-authoritative sources, both types of commentaries draw a generally similar set of conclusions regarding the future. They both tend to counsel caution, restraint, and the continuation of existing policies designed to advance China's and the region's economic development and sustain cooperative Sino-U.S. relations. Few if any commentators, of any type, argue that China must stand up to and/or work energetically to undermine or counter the Pacific Pivot.

What accounts for both this sharp difference in viewpoint and frequency of commentary between authoritative and quasi- or non-authoritative Chinese sources regarding the motivations, key features, and desired goals of the Pacific Pivot, and the apparent similarity of approach in assessing what China should do in response to the U.S. policy move?

Regarding the former point, it is very likely that most senior-level officials and government agencies have been instructed not to comment on the Pacific Pivot and its supposed military, economic, etc. manifestations, while mostly low-level authoritative sources have been permitted to make only general, indirect, and very low-key comments. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that even authoritative military sources, often viewed as somewhat more critical of U.S. policies in Asia than their civilian counterparts, in general take the same reserved stance.

This stance probably reflects the overall desire of the Chinese leadership to avoid striking a sharply critical or confrontational stance toward the Pacific Pivot, for at least four reasons.

First and perhaps foremost, the Chinese leadership does not want to become engaged in a sharp and potentially escalating dispute with Washington over the U.S. policy move during a critical transition period for the PRC political leadership system. The upcoming 18th Party Congress—scheduled for the fall—will witness a major turnover at the senior levels of the party elite. Moreover, for the first time, this turnover will occur in the absence of the stabilizing imprimatur provided in the past by charismatic figures of the revolutionary era such as Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Adding to this, other domestic issues, such as economic development, reinforce the need to place a premium on the maintenance of stable external relations, especially with major powers such as the United States. This latter imperative is always present in the Chinese calculus, given the regime's long-standing focus on sustaining an environment conducive to continued economic growth. But it is particularly important at present, due to growing signs of distress in the Chinese economy.

Second, Beijing undoubtedly realizes that many Asian capitals have expressed strong concerns over China's recent "assertiveness" in the region (discussed in previous issues of *CLM*), and, equally important, believes that such concerns are being used by Washington to strengthen regional support for its more activist stance, exemplified by the Pacific Pivot. The Chinese probably also recognize that many Asian countries prefer to see at least some level of greater U.S. involvement in the region, including (in the case of Vietnam, the Philippines, and Japan) backing for various territorial claims against China. Hence, strong and vigorous efforts to challenge the U.S. policy move could deepen regional concerns, provide more support to the United States, and generally promote greater tension and polarization across the region. None of this would serve China's interests.

Third, it is possible Beijing also believes that many Asians view the Pacific Pivot as potentially polarizing and hence destabilizing and that regional support for the policy move is weaker than many observers might think. Consequently, the Chinese leadership probably concludes that Beijing should focus its attention on improving ties with the region by drawing on China's economic and diplomatic strengths and regional uncertainties, while avoiding any direct confrontation with the United States. The notion of an ambivalent regional attitude regarding the Pacific Pivot is implicit in the common emphasis placed by both authoritative and non-authoritative Chinese sources on the

supposed “prevailing international trend” toward greater levels of cooperation in the region and against polarizing policy initiatives (more on this point below).

Finally, it is possible that the Chinese leadership remains uncertain as to the lasting impact of the Pacific Pivot. Washington’s economic problems, combined with China’s arguably growing influence in the region and the supposed ambivalence of many Asian powers toward the U.S. policy move, all suggest that Beijing should not overreact by highlighting its importance or publicly confronting the United States over it. Ultimately, in Beijing’s view, it might not amount to all that much. So better to stay the course and adopt a wait-and-see attitude.

As indicated above, this cautious, wait-and-see response is evident across all types of Chinese sources. This probably reflects the fact that the vast majority of Chinese observers, to varying degrees, recognize the importance of the above four factors in shaping China’s reaction at present. But what about the long term? Are we likely to see a far more confrontational Chinese stance toward the U.S. policy emerge if China’s political transition proceeds without incident, the Chinese economy largely recovers from its current problems, Beijing views its influence in the region as rising, regional states become more concerned over the divisiveness of the U.S. policy move than over Chinese behavior, and the U.S. economy continues to confront major challenges? The answer is probably yes, especially if—as is likely—Chinese leaders sympathize with many of the intense suspicions and criticisms regarding the U.S. policy expressed by most quasi- and non-authoritative sources. That said, we are unlikely to see such a “perfect storm” of simultaneous developments anytime soon, if at all. In fact, China’s long-standing emphasis on maintaining a placid environment will doubtless continue, as will various low-key, indirect efforts to counter the Pacific Pivot, largely involving efforts to increase Beijing’s influence and presence in the region.

This all sounds somewhat reassuring. However, the above analysis, and the assessments of Chinese “assertiveness” presented in previous issues of *CLM*, also suggest that, despite Beijing’s formal acceptance of the United States as an Asian power, many Chinese hold a very critical view toward the role of the United States in the Asia-Pacific, along with recent U.S. actions regarding regional maritime territorial claims. Much of this criticism stems from the fact, reflected abundantly in the analysis of the Chinese response to the U.S. Pacific Pivot, that very many Chinese believe the U.S. emphasis on military predominance, security alliances, and supposedly “exclusionary” economic regimes such as the TPP is aimed at China and conflicts with regional and global trends in inter-state relations, including growing levels of globalization, the search for “win-win” outcomes, emerging cooperative economic and security mechanisms, and a reduced overall emphasis on military power. The latter notion is to a significant extent self-serving and doubtless to some degree hypocritical, given China’s large, ongoing investment in various force projection capabilities. Nonetheless, it reflects a basic difference in perspective between Beijing and Washington regarding the essential requirements for continued regional stability and prosperity, a difference that will increase the likelihood of future serious Sino-U.S. crises in the Asia-Pacific.

Notes

¹ The use of the word “pivot” to describe the renewed U.S. policy emphasis on Asia during the Obama administration is no longer supported by U.S. officials, and was never entirely endorsed across the administration. Even the alternative description of the policy—as “rebalancing”—has been largely jettisoned by most officials in recent months. This has occurred in response to some confusion and concern on the part of many observers, including many Asians. Both terms suggested that the United States had been excessively inattentive to the region in the recent past and, of greater concern, might “pivot” away from Asia in the future. In other words, the terms conveyed a sense of unsteadiness or unreliability over time that did not serve U.S. interests. However, whether endorsed or not, the word “pivot” has become the widely accepted label for the U.S. policy move undertaken in 2011. And of course the substance of the policy, involving a concerted and heightened focus on the Asia-Pacific, has not changed.

² I am indebted to Alice Miller for assistance in defining these four types of sources. She adds: “Authority of official comment is determined by the place of the issuer in the institutional hierarchy. For example, newspapers together fit into a hierarchy of authority determined by the relative standing of their sponsoring institution. And so *People’s Daily* editorials and commentator articles speak for *People’s Daily* as an institution, and so by extension for the CCP Central Committee, and so they outrank “authoritative” commentary in every other newspaper. . . . *Liberation Army Daily* speaks for the General Political Department (GPD), and so for the PLA. The output of Xinhua is certainly “official,” because it is the mouthpiece of the State Council. It does carry Xinhua-written commentary, but such commentary is low-level and not “authoritative” in the sense that Xinhua as an institution stands by it. I have never seen a Xinhua editorial.” Personal correspondence, June 27, 2012.

³ Authoritative statements and articles can vary by source and level of importance. They generally include MFA and MND statements and briefings and remarks by senior civilian and military officials appearing in the leading Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (or CCP CC) and military (People’s Liberation Army or PLA) newspapers: *People’s Daily* (人民日报) and *Liberation Army Daily* (解放军报). Authoritative statements include, in descending order of authority, PRC government and CCP statements, MFA statements, MFA spokesperson statements, and MFA daily press briefings. Authoritative commentaries in *People’s Daily* and *Liberation Army Daily* include, in descending order, “editorial department articles,” editorials, and commentator articles.

⁴ Other quasi-authoritative homophonous bylines include “Ren Zhongping” (任仲平 homophonous with “important RMRN commentary”), “Zhong Zuwen” (仲组文 homophonous with “CC Organization Department article”), and “Zhong Xuanli” (钟轩理 homophonous with “CC Propaganda Department commentary”).

⁵ Such articles appear in the PRC government news service (Xinhua), CCP and PLA newspapers, the Hong Kong-based (and owned by *People’s Daily*) *Global Times* (环球时报), and many minor PRC and Hong Kong newspapers and academic publications. Despite the view expressed by some pundits, nothing published in the *Global Times* is “authoritative” in any meaningful sense, “because the newspaper is a commercial vehicle and doesn’t stand for the *People’s Daily*, even though it is subordinate to that organ.” Alice Miller, personal correspondence, June 27, 2012.

⁶ The Air Sea Battle Concept is a sub-component of the broader Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC) unveiled by Pentagon officials in early 2012. Although public articulations of JOAC are rather general and most of the technical details of the concept are highly classified, given publicly available information and assessments, the operational core of this strategy would ostensibly involve a networked, domain-integrated, deep-strike-oriented force structure designed to disrupt, destroy, and defeat all relevant Chinese A2/AD-type capabilities, encompassing both offshore weapons systems and supporting onshore assets. See General Norton A. Schwartz and Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, “Air-Sea Battle: Promoting Stability in an Era of Uncertainty,” *The American Interest*, February 20, 2012, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/article.cfm?piece=1212>; and “Joint Operation Access Concept,” United States Department of Defense, January 17, 2012, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/JOAC_Jan_2012_Signed.pdf.

⁷ For a comparison of Asia policy under the Clinton and early Bush II administrations, see Michael McDevitt, “U.S. Security Strategy in East Asia,” remarks delivered to the MIT Security Studies Program, November 6, 2002, http://web.mit.edu/ssp/seminars/wed_archives02fall/mcdevitt.htm. For comparisons between the Bush II and Obama administration’s policies toward the Asia-Pacific, see Mark E. Manyin, Stephen Daggett, Ben Dolven, Susan V. Lawrence, Michael F. Martin, Ronald O’Rourke, Bruce Vaughn,

“Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration’s ‘Rebalancing’ Toward Asia,” Congressional Research Service (CRS), March 28, 2012, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>; Peter Ennis, “Mike Green: The Asia Pivot is both political, and good policy,” *Dispatch Japan*, February 20, 2012, <http://www.dispatchjapan.com/blog/mike-green/>.

⁸ “Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jay Carney, National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes,” Office of the White House Press Secretary, November 19, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/19/press-briefing-press-secretary-jay-carney-national-security-advisor-tom->. Obama officials to some degree view themselves as correcting the Bush II administration’s supposed distracting and excessive focus on counter-terrorist policies in Asia and its supposed de-emphasis on multilateral activities, marked by former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice’s alleged “snubbing” of ASEAN meetings, and lack of support for new initiatives such as the East Asian Summit. See Jeffrey A. Bader, *Obama and China’s Rise: An Insider’s Account of America’s Asia Strategy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2012), pp. 1–4.

⁹ “Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jay Carney [et al.], November 19, 2011” (see preceding endnote).

¹⁰ Bonnie Glaser and Brittany Billingsley, “U.S.-China Relations: U.S. Pivot to Asia Leaves China off Balance,” *Comparative Connections*, January 2012, http://csis.org/files/publication/1103qus_china.pdf

¹¹ See Manyin et al., “Pivot to the Pacific?”

¹² Manyin et al., “Pivot to the Pacific?”; U.S. Department of State, “Beginning a New Era of Diplomacy in Asia,” press release, February 18, 2009. Clinton traveled to the region in February and July, and again in November. The February occasion marked the first visit by a secretary of state to the ASEAN Secretariat and was Clinton’s first overseas trip after taking office; the second trip included meetings with regional foreign ministers at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). These were a prelude to Washington’s first attending (in 2010) and then joining (in 2011) the East Asia Summit (EAS), a move resisted by the Bush II administration. Clinton clearly suggested this contrast in involvement when she stated at the time that the United States was “back in Southeast Asia.” See Hillary Rodham Clinton, secretary of state, “Press Availability at the ASEAN Summit,” Sheraton Grande Laguna, Laguna Phuket, Thailand, July 22, 2009, www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/july/126320.htm. The third occasion saw Clinton accompany President Obama on his trip to Asia, which between the two of them included visits to the Philippines, Indonesia, China, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. Obama’s November trip included participation in the 17th Annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders’ meeting in Singapore. He also co-hosted the ASEAN Leaders Meeting, the first ever with all 10 ASEAN members represented. After returning to Washington, Obama hosted Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India for the first official state visit of his administration.

¹³ In January 2010 Secretary Clinton gave a major policy speech that covered many of the elements of the emerging policy shift to Asia, including an emphasis on strengthening alliances to promote regional stability, increasing the capacity of multilateral institutions such as the ARF to address regional problems, and ensuring that the “defining regional institutions” will “include all the key stakeholders.” See Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks on Regional Architecture in Asia,” Imin-Center Jefferson Hall, Honolulu, January 12, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/135090.htm>. In March, Obama made a second trip to the region, visiting Guam, Indonesia, and Australia. For a good summary of these and other activities in 2009 and early 2010, see Kurt M. Campbell, “Regional Overview of East Asia and the Pacific,” statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, Washington, DC, March 3, 2010, www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2010/03/137754.htm.

In July 2010 Clinton attended the ARF meeting in Hanoi, where she clearly signaled a greater level of direct U.S. involvement in the territorial disputes occurring in the South China Sea. At that meeting, Clinton asserted that the United States has “a national interest in freedom of navigation, open access to Asia’s maritime commons, and respect for international law in the South China Sea.” She also remarked that the U.S. “supports a collaborative diplomatic process by all claimants for resolving the various territorial disputes without coercion,” and “is prepared to facilitate initiatives and confidence building measures.” Moreover, the U.S. played a key role behind the scenes in organizing and coordinating the many statements of concern about an intensification of the territorial disputes publicly expressed at the meeting by member states. The Chinese regarded these statements, and Clinton’s above remarks, as being in large part directed at themselves, with some justification. See “Remarks at Press Availability,” National

Convention Center, Hanoi, Vietnam, July 23, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/07/145095.htm>.

In October 2010, following Japan's arrest of a Chinese fisherman in the disputed Senkaku Islands and an alleged Chinese embargo on rare earths to Japan, Secretary Clinton reaffirmed the inclusion of the Senkakus in the scope of the 1960 U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. In the same month, Secretary Clinton joined other regional leaders at the East Asia Summit in Hanoi, signaling the U.S. intent to develop the institution into a key player on political and security issues. See Jeffrey A. Bader, *Obama and China's Rise: An Insider's Account*, pp. 106–108 (full citation in endnote 8); Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Joint Press Availability with Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara," Kahala Hotel and Resort, Honolulu, Hawaii, October 27, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/10/150110.htm>; Mark Landler, "U.S. Works to Ease China-Japan Conflict," *New York Times*, October 30, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/31/world/asia/31diplo.html>.

In January 2011 the U.S. held its first ever bilateral Strategic Dialogue with the Philippines, with a specific focus on building the capacity of the Philippines to maintain maritime awareness and security in its territorial and adjacent waters. U.S. officials also consulted with Singaporean leaders regarding the state of U.S.-China military relations. See Kurt M. Campbell, "U.S. Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives in Southeast Asia for 2011," press briefing in Washington, DC, February 2, 2011, <http://fpc.state.gov/155878.htm>.

In March 2011, Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell reiterated the core tenets of the Obama administration's re-engagement with Asia. Kurt M. Campbell, "Asia Overview: Protecting American Interests in China and Asia," Testimony Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Washington, DC, March 31, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2011/03/159450.htm>.

In June 2011, Assistant Secretary Campbell and Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai hosted the inaugural Asia-Pacific Consultations in Honolulu, focusing on upcoming agendas for the ARF, EAS, and APEC, as well as maritime security and the South China Seas. See "U.S.-China Asia-Pacific Consultations," Office of the State Department Spokesperson, June 26, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/06/167095.htm>. Also in June 2011, the U.S. conducted joint exercises with the Philippines, as the smaller nation faced off against China over clashing territorial interests in the South China Sea. Kate McGeown, "Philippine-U.S. joint naval drill amid tension with China," BBC News, June 28, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13938361>.

In July 2011, Secretary Clinton embarked on another trip to Asia. At the ARF, she reiterated U.S. interests in maritime security and the freedom of navigation in the South China Seas. In a separate address, Clinton emphasized the importance of U.S. economic engagement in the Asia-Pacific—particularly with regards to the TPP. See Daljit Singh, "South China Sea Developments at the ASEAN Regional Forum," East Asia Forum, August 3, 2011, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/08/03/south-china-sea-developments-at-the-asean-regional-forum/>; Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks on Principles for Prosperity in the Asia-Pacific," remarks at Shangri-La, Hong Kong, July 25, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/07/169012.htm>.

¹⁴ During this trip, several announcements were made regarding heightened levels of defense cooperation with Australia, a more broadly distributed and enhanced U.S. military presence across the region, and U.S. support for the newly launched TPP. At the East Asian Summit in Bali, Obama repeated Washington's commitment to ensuring freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and stressed the need to settle sovereignty disputes on the basis of international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In Manila, Clinton signed a declaration marking the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty's 60th anniversary. See Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," November 2011, *Foreign Policy*, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century?page=full; Hillary Rodham Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," remarks delivered at the East-West Center, Honolulu, November 10, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/11/176999.htm>; Tom Donilon, "America is Back in the Pacific and Will Uphold the Rules," *Financial Times*, November 27, 2011; "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jay Carney [et al.], November 19, 2011"; Office of the White House Press Secretary, "Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament," speech delivered at the Parliament House, Canberra, Australia, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>; "Fact Sheet: The East Asia Summit," Office of the White House Press Secretary, November 19, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/19/fact-sheet-east-asia-summit>.

For secondary sources on these and other events during this period, see Manyin et al., “Pivot to the Pacific?”; Evan A. Feigenbaum, Council on Foreign Relations; Strengthening the U.S. Role in Asia, November 16, 2011, <http://www.cfr.org/asia/strengthening-us-role-asia/p26520>; and Andrew Ryan Smith and Matthew Kleine, “USS Fitzgerald Hosts Signing of Manila Declaration,” Commander of Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, November 16, 2011, http://www.public.navy.mil/surfor/ddg62/Pages/USSFitzgeraldHostsSigningofManilaDeclaration.aspx#.T_X8IBem_Tq. The TPP has been described as “a multilateral free trade agreement that seeks to reduce and eventually eliminate trade tariffs among member countries, and for which the bar for joining is set so high that China would not likely be able to qualify for many years.” See Bonnie Glaser and Brittany Billingsley, “U.S.-China Relations: U.S. Pivot to Asia” (full citation in endnote 10, above).

¹⁵ During his visit to Australia, Obama announced plans for rotational deployments of marines to Darwin. See “Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament” (full citation in endnote 14).

¹⁶ The JOAC includes the Air-Sea Battle Concept (ASBC), which consists of new operational approaches and force deployments designed to counter a range of so-called anti-access, area denial (A2AD) capabilities being developed by China and Iran, and possibly other entities. See Barack H. Obama, Leon E. Panetta, and Martin E. Dempsey, “Defense Strategic Guidance Briefing from the Pentagon,” briefing at the Department of Defense, Arlington, Virginia, January 5, 2012, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4953>; “Joint Operational Access Concept,” Department of Defense, January 17, 2012, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/JOAC_Jan_2012_Signed.pdf; “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” Department of Defense, January 2012 http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf.

¹⁷ Leon E. Panetta, “Remarks by Secretary Panetta at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore,” Singapore, June 2, 2012, <http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=5049>. Panetta announced, “by 2020 the Navy will re-posture its forces from today’s roughly 50/50 percent split between the Pacific and the Atlantic to about a 60/40 split between those oceans. That will include six aircraft carriers in this region, a majority of our cruisers, destroyers, Littoral Combat Ships, and submarines.”

¹⁸ An examination of MFA and MND websites since October 2011 for English and Chinese variations of “pivot,” “rebalancing,” “return,” and “return to Asia” yielded few, if any results, with many of the references coming from reprinted news stories from Xinhua, *People’s Daily*, and *Liberation Army Daily* (examined below). Searches for broader terms, such as “military presence” or “presence,” yielded only a handful of results, although virtually all of the entries were references to the rotational deployments to Australia of U.S. Marines units. Quasi-authoritative references were exclusively limited to a few articles by the pseudonym Zhong Sheng, described above. These appeared primarily in *People’s Daily*.

¹⁹ Searches were conducted of the archives for the *People’s Daily* and the *Liberation Army Daily* held at the Library of Congress, with time parameters set at January 1st, 2000, to June 05, 2012. Experimental searches for a number of Chinese variations of “pivot,” “rebalancing,” and “return” yielded mixed results, which could reflect differing translations among media outlets. Within official media, it appears that the Obama administration’s “pivot” is most commonly referred to as a “Return to Asia” (重返亚洲), or a “Return to the Asia-Pacific” (重返亚太). Articles also made reference to rebalancing (再平衡). Searches distinguished between relevant and irrelevant entries, based on whether the article in question used “Return to Asia,” “Return to the Asia-Pacific,” or “rebalancing” as a reference to U.S. foreign policy or Asia policy. An irrelevant entry, for instance, might use “rebalancing” in the context of describing China’s shift toward a consumption-based model of growth.

²⁰ In other words, in the Chinese media, the concept of a “return to Asia” or “rebalancing” was closely linked with the foreign policy of the Obama administration. Very few, if any articles discussing a return, pivot, rebalancing, or shift in strategic focus toward the region occurred during the Bush administration.

²¹ These included Clinton’s *Foreign Policy* article, U.S. attendance at and statements made during APEC and the EAS in November 2011, and the release of the Defense Strategic Guidance in January 2012.

²² These totaled 17 references, including 12 relevant references to “Return to Asia” (重返亚洲) or “Return to the Asia-Pacific” (重返亚太) and 5 relevant references to “rebalancing” (再平衡), all referring to U.S. policy.

²³ A search for Air-Sea Battle (空海一体战) from January 1, 2000, to June 5, 2012, yielded five results in *People’s Daily* (two of which were in late 2011, and three in 2012) and 15 results in *People’s Liberation Army Daily* (one in 2000, three in 2010, 11 in 2011, and one in 2012).

²⁴ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on June 4, 2012,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, June 5, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t939675.htm>; “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on May 31, 2012,” June 1, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t939538.htm>; “PRC Foreign Minister Answers Reporters’ Questions on Foreign Policies, Relations,” Xinhua, March 6, 2012, Open Source Center (OSC) CPP20120307075001; and “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on November 14, 2011,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, November 15, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t878946.htm>. Also see Le Yucheng, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister, “The Rapid Development of China’s Diplomacy in a Volatile World,” address at the Seminar on China’s Diplomacy in 2011 and Its Prospect, December 18, 2011, www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zygy/gyhd/t890675.htm. Le states: “We hope the U.S. can play a constructive role in this region, and that includes respecting China’s major concerns and core interests. The Pacific Ocean is vast enough to accommodate the coexistence and cooperation between these two big countries. . . . In my view, the U.S. has never left the Asia-Pacific, so there is no ‘return’ to speak of. China does not want to and cannot push the United States out of the Asia-Pacific.”

²⁵ Bonnie Glaser, “Obama–Hu Summit: Success or Disappointment?” *Comparative Connections*, vol. 11, no. 4 (January 2010), <http://csis.org/files/publication/0904q.pdf>. The Chinese statement of a qualified acceptance of the U.S. role in Asia is contained in the Joint Statement issued during Obama’s trip to China in November 2009. See Office of the White House Press Secretary, “U.S.-China Joint Statement,” Beijing, China, November 17, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/us-china-joint-statement>.

²⁶ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on May 31, 2012”; Le Yucheng, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister, “The Rapid Development of China’s Diplomacy in a Volatile World,” address at the Seminar on China’s Diplomacy in 2011 and its Prospect, December 18, 2011, www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zygy/gyhd/t890675.htm; and “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on November 14, 2011.”

²⁷ See “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on June 4, 2012.” Liu states: “At present, peace, cooperation and development is the general trend of the times and common aspiration of people in the Asia-Pacific region. All parties should be committed to safeguarding and promoting peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific. It is *unfitting* to artificially single out a military and security agenda or intensify military deployment and alliance.” (my emphasis) This sentiment was echoed by the MND spokesperson later in the same month. See “June 2012 Regular Press Conference for the Ministry of National Defense,” Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China, June 28, 2012, http://www.mod.gov.cn/photo/2012-06/28/content_4381068.htm.

²⁸ Zhong Sheng, “Goals of U.S. ‘Return to Asia’ Strategy Questioned,” *People’s Daily*, October 18, 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7620216.html>. The author writes: “Given rapid economic development of Asian countries over recent years and the gradual formation of a new type of cooperation pattern, the United States is afraid to miss the express train of Asia’s development and accordingly lose its dominance of regional affairs. The U.S. move to ‘return to Asia’ aims to gain more interests from Asia’s regional development and cement its dominant position in Asia.” Also see Wu Chunsi, “Back in Town,” *Beijing Review*, January 9, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-01/09/content_24358126.html; Wang Tian, “U.S. Uses ‘Hedging’ Strategy to Deal with China’s Rise,” *People’s Daily*, December 26, 2011, <http://english.people.com.cn/90780/7688310.html>. (Wu Chunsi is a senior research fellow at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies); Ruan Zongze, “What Does the U.S. Want on ‘Rebalancing’,” *People’s Daily*, June 4, 2012, OSC CPP20120604787003; and Ruan Zongze, “To whom does Pacific Century belong?” *People’s Daily*, December 20, 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/102774/7682657.html>. Also see “*People’s Daily* Cites PRC Scholars on U.S. Strategy of Returning to Asia,” *People’s Daily*, December 23, 2011, OSC CPP20111223702006; and Tian Yuan and Zhang Xin, “What is Behind U.S. ‘Return to Asia’ Strategy?” *People’s Liberation Army Daily*, December 26, 2011, http://chn.chinamil.com.cn/txjx/2011-12/26/content_4752340.htm.

²⁹ Zhong Sheng, “Goals of U.S. ‘Return to Asia’ Strategy Questioned,” *People’s Daily*, October 18, 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7620216.html>. Also see Luo Yuan, “One Should Be Alert But Also Calm When Facing U.S. Readjustment to its Defense Strategy,” *People’s Liberation Army Daily*, January 10, 2012, OSC CPP20120110787012.

³⁰ Zhong Sheng, “Inconsistency Between Words and Deeds Lowers U.S. Influence in Asia-Pacific,” *People’s Daily Online*, June 5, 2012 OSC CPP20120605787002; Zhong Sheng, “Goals of U.S. ‘Return to

Asia' Strategy Questioned," *People's Daily*, October 18, 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7620216.html>; Wang Tian, "U.S. Uses 'Hedging' Strategy to Deal with China's Rise," *People's Daily*, December 26, 2011, <http://english.people.com.cn/90780/7688310.html>; Ruan Zongze, "What Does the U.S. Want on 'Rebalancing'," *People's Daily*, June 4, 2012, OSC CPP20120604787003; "People's Daily Cites PRC Scholars on U.S. Strategy of Returning to Asia," *People's Daily*, December 23, 2011, OSC CPP20111223702006. Tian Yuan and Zhang Xin, "What is Behind U.S. 'Return to Asia' Strategy?" *Liberation Army Daily*, December 26, 2011, http://chn.chinamil.com.cn/txjs/2011-12/26/content_4752340.htm; "China Takes U.S. Return with Aplomb," *Global Times Online*, November 21, 2011, OSC CPP20111121722006; "U.S. Asia Pacific Strategy Brings Steep Price," *Global Times Online*, November 18, 2011, OSC CPP20111118722004. Some analysts express considerable skepticism toward official U.S. assurances that the U.S. emphasis on Asia is not intended to challenge or contain China, charging instead that U.S. actions convey a different message. See, for example, Wang Fan, "U.S. Should Back up Its Proclaimed 'Good Intentions' in Asia-Pacific With Action," *Xinhua*, June 12, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-06/03/c_131628241.htm. Wang Fan is a professor of the Institute of International Relations at the China Foreign Affairs University. Wang writes: "The United States must understand it will not only be judged by what it proclaims that its 'pivot to Asia' strategy will bring to the Asia-Pacific, but also by what it really does in the region. Till now, sweet words have yet to turn into reality. Many in China are legitimately worried that the United States attempts to 'contain' China with cold-war style military alliances and endless war games in the region. Only when the United States walks the talk rather than talks the talk, can it convince countries in the Asia-Pacific that its new strategy will help promote peace and stability in the region."

³¹ Tian Yuan and Zhang Xin, "What is Behind U.S. 'Return to Asia' Strategy?" *Liberation Army Daily*, December 26, 2011, http://chn.chinamil.com.cn/txjs/2011-12/26/content_4752340.htm. Citing Lin Zhiyuan: "The American political struggle has entered a critical stage and the economy maintains depressed. Under such circumstance, the Obama administration needs to be more aggressive in military and diplomacy in order to create favorable conditions to win the presidency election." Also cited is Shen Jiru (researcher, Institute of World Economics & Politics [IWEP], Chinese Academy of Social Sciences): "From another perspective, all measures and attitudes in America's 'return to the Asia Pacific' are a demonstration of the hard line of America and the Republican Party, with the aim of winning more votes in the 2012 election."

³² See Wang Tian, "U.S. Uses 'Hedging' Strategy to Deal with China's Rise," *People's Daily*, December 26, 2011, <http://english.people.com.cn/90780/7688310.html>. Wang writes: Taking the 'Atlantic network' as the model, the United States is trying to build up a 'Pacific network' that will accord with its own interests and outlook of values and include various partnerships and organizations. . . . Due to the weak U.S. economic recovery and China's growing economic and political clout, Americans are becoming increasingly worried that a rising China may pose a major threat to their country . . . The United States has worked to shore up its ties to old Asian allies, like Japan and South Korea, as well as new giants like India. The goal is "to assemble a coalition to counter-balance China's growing power." Also see Ruan Zongze, "What Does the U.S. Want on 'Rebalancing'," *People's Daily*, June 4, 2012, OSC CPP20120604787003; "Fu Mengzi, The Geo-economic Situation in the Asia-Pacific," trans. Liu Bo, *Contemporary International Relations*, vol. 21, no. 6 (November/December 2011).

³³ See Zhong Sheng, "Inconsistency between Words and Deeds Lowers U.S. Influence in Asia-Pacific," *People's Daily Online*, June 5, 2012 OSC CPP20120605787002. Zhong writes: "In essence, rebalancing is not a new concept. It is still aimed at consolidating the United States' strategic status by making use of the misgivings of some of China's neighboring countries about China's development. On one hand, the United States will strengthen the containment of China through the so-called security guarantee obligations; on the other hand, it also tries to prevent conflicts and confrontation with China. The self-contradictory strategy will certainly aggravate the complexity of the Asia-Pacific security situation, and may even cause division." Also see "U.S. Asia Pacific Strategy Brings Steep Price," *Global Times Online*, November 18, 2011, OSC CPP20111118722004. Shen Dengli, "American Pivot a Fallacy," *China Daily*, May 4, 2012, OSC CPP20120504968023; and Shen Qiang, "Adjustment of U.S. Global Strategy: Strategic Focus Tilting Further toward the Asia-Pacific Region," *Foreign Affairs Journal*, vol. 100 (Summer 2011).

³⁴ See Liu Qing, "New Changes in U.S. Asia-Pacific Strategic Deployment," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, May 20, 2011, OSC CPP2011072567100.

³⁵ For one notable example, see Deng Yushan, “Build Trust To Avert Tragedy,” Xinhua, May 7, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-05/07/c_131573482.htm. Deng Yushan is a reporter with Xinhua. This notion of “the prevailing trend” toward regional cooperation has become a common refrain among both authoritative and non-authoritative Chinese analysts of the region.

³⁶ Wei Jianhua: “U.S. ‘Return’ to Asia Raises More Questions Than It Can Answer,” Xinhua, November 19, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2011-11/19/c_131256990.htm. See also Wei Jianhua, “Commentary: Asia-Pacific region needs a partner, not a leader,” Xinhua, November 17, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-11/17/c_131253080.htm.

³⁷ See Wu Chunsi, “Back in Town,” *Beijing Review*, January 9, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-01/09/content_24358126.htm. Wu asserts that “some Asia-Pacific countries . . . have exerted influence on Washington’s new America’s Asia-Pacific strategy in a bid to drive a wedge between China and the United States. Their attempts have increased mistrust between the two big powers while hindering progress in regional cooperation.” The author is most likely referring to Vietnam, the Philippines, and possibly Japan, all of which have arguably intensifying territorial disputes with China and thus, according to this viewpoint, seek to use the U.S. policy move to increase U.S. support for their disputes with Beijing (more on this point below, in the discussion of the South China Sea disputes).

³⁸ See Yu Zhixiao, “Constructive U.S. Role in Asia-Pacific Welcome, but Not Warmongering,” Xinhua, January 6, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-01/06/c_131346348_2.htm. Yu Zhixiao is a Xinhua reporter. Yu writes: “The legitimate interests of the United States, the world’s biggest power, in the Asia-Pacific region are generally respected by other countries. The U.S. role, if fulfilled with a positive attitude and free from a Cold War-style zero-sum mentality, will not only be conducive to regional stability and prosperity, but be good for China, which needs a peaceful environment to continue its economic development. However, while boosting its military presence in the Asia-Pacific, the United States should abstain from flexing its muscles, as this won’t help solve regional disputes.” Also see Wu Chunsi, “Back in Town,” *Beijing Review*, January 9, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-01/09/content_24358126.htm. Wu writes: “The development of Sino-U.S. relations in recent years shows the United States has not defined China as a foe or a threat, but as an opportunity or a partner. While partly aiming to cope with China’s rise, Washington’s new Asia-Pacific strategy cannot be simply interpreted as a measure designed to hedge against China.” Also see Niu Xinchun, “Eight Myths about Sino-U.S. Relations,” trans. He Nan, *Contemporary International Relations*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Jul./Aug. 2011) and Da Wei, “U.S. Pivot in Asia Pacific Signifies New, Complex Era,” China.org.cn, February 26, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-02/26/content_2472893.htm. Both authors are analysts at the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) in Beijing, a research institute under the Ministry of State Security. Also see Wang Fan, “Players Would Lose in Sino-U.S. Competition,” *Global Times Online*, June 30, 2011, OSC CPP20110702722021.

³⁹ See the *Global Times* editorial “China Takes U.S. Return with Aplomb,” *Global Times Online*, November 21, 2011, OSC CPP20111121722006. The author argues that the U.S. has the intention but not the economic or geopolitical means to encircle China, noting the modest nature of many of the steps associated with the pivot.

⁴⁰ See “U.S. Asia Pacific Strategy Brings Steep Price,” *Global Times Online*, November 18, 2011, OSC CPP20111118722004. The author writes: “Any country which chooses to be a pawn in the U.S. chess game will lose the opportunity to benefit from China’s economy. This will surely make U.S. protection less attractive. . . . As long as China increases its input, it will make countries either pay the price for their decision or make them back the doctrine of solving maritime disputes through cooperation.” Another more nuanced *Global Times* editorial argues that regional nations will not become pawns of U.S.-China competition in the region, and that neither the U.S. nor China can conceivably hope for nations to pick sides in a zero-sum contest. See “Forcing Asia To Pick Sides Will Go Awry,” *Global Times Online*, February 17, 2012, OSC CPP20120217722006.

⁴¹ See Zhong Sheng, “Goals of U.S. ‘Return to Asia’ Strategy Questioned,” *People’s Daily*, October 18, 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7620216.html>; and Wei Jianhua, “Commentary: Asia-Pacific region needs a partner, not a leader,” Xinhua, November 17, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-11/17/c_131253080.htm. Wei Jianhua is a reporter and editor for Xinhua.

⁴² “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” Department of Defense, January 2012 http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf. For example, MND

Spokesperson Geng Yansheng merely replied that China has “paid attention to” (注意到了) the strategic defense guideline and will “closely watch out for” (密切关注) the influence of the new U.S. policy shift on the security situation of the Asian-Pacific region and the world at large. See “U.S. Should Treat China and Chinese Military Objectively and Rationally: Defense Ministry,” Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China, January 10, 2012, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2012-01/10/content_4336374.htm. For similar remarks, see Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on January 9, 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China,” January 10, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t895104.htm>.

⁴³ See “Defense Ministry’s Regular Press Conference in November, 2011,” Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China, November 30, 2011, http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2011-11/30/content_4347180.htm. As one military analyst observed: “This is the first [and last] time a Chinese government department openly criticized the ‘air-sea battle’ theory of the United States.” See Yang Yi, “U.S. Air-Sea Battle Theory Targets China’s Military Modernization,” *People’s Daily Overseas Edition*, December 10, 2011, OSC CPP20111210708003.

⁴⁴ For example, see Lin Zhiyuan, “What Sort of Message Does the New U.S. National Defense Strategy Convey?” *Liberation Army Daily*, January 7, 2012, OSC CPP20120107718001.

⁴⁵ See the comments of Fan Gaoyue (Fan), a senior colonel in the People’s Liberation Army and research fellow at the PLA Academy of Military Science, in Yu Jincui, “New U.S. Strategy Brings Risk of New Arms Race,” *Global Times Online*, December 08, 2011, OSC CPP20111209722006. Fan states: Although there is no official statement that the plan mainly targets China, the intention is obvious. Confronted by a rising China, the U.S. is panicky. It worries China may replace it as the biggest economy and challenge its global leadership.” Also see Zhong Sheng, “Inconsistency between Words and Deeds Lowers U.S. Influence in Asia-Pacific,” *People’s Daily Online*, June 5, 2012 OSC CPP20120605787002. The author writes: “The ‘Air-Sea Battle’ concept will push the United States into a dangerous position of provocative war planning against China. . . . The U.S. strategy of pivoting to Asia-Pacific has the obvious feature of confrontation, and that cannot but arouse relevant Asia-Pacific countries’ worries and concerns about the confrontation costs and burdens.” And see Yang Yi, “U.S. Air-Sea Battle Theory Targets China’s Military Modernization,” *People’s Daily Overseas Edition*, December 10, 2011, OSC CPP20111210708003.

⁴⁶ See Yang Yi, *op.cit.* Also see Peng Kuang and Peng Guanqian, “What Is Inside the ‘AirSea Battle’ Concept?” *Liaowang*, March 19, 2012, OSC CPP20120329787008.

⁴⁷ Peng Kuang and Peng Guanqian, *op.cit.* Peng Kuang is an editor of the military section of the *Global Times* online portal, and Peng Guanqian is a retired major general in the Academy of Military Sciences and a prominent military analyst. The authors also claim that a multilateral joint military exercise involving computer simulations and including the U.S., the Philippines, Japan, the ROK, Australia, Vietnam, and Singapore is supposedly “the first exercise for testing the ‘Air-Sea Battle’ concept in an official form. The three-dimensional image of ‘Air-Sea Battle’ will move out of the Pentagon office and be displayed in front of people.”

⁴⁸ Yang Yi, *op.cit.* Yang writes: “According to the design of the ‘air-sea battle’ concept, the participation of all allies in the region is required to establish a new network of bases and a new division of combat missions in conformity with the ‘air- sea battle’ concept. This will undermine strategic mutual trust between different countries in the region, increase strategic suspicion and misunderstanding, and lead to the development of a vicious cycle of negative security interactions.” Also see Yu Jincui, “New U.S. Strategy Brings Risk of New Arms Race,” *Global Times Online*, December 08, 2011, OSC CPP20111209722006. And Peng Kuang and Peng Guanqian, *op.cit.*

⁴⁹ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on April 5, 2012,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, April 6, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t921455.htm>; “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on March 27, 2012,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, March 28, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t918577.htm>; Also see “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on November 17, 2011,” November 18, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t879769.htm>; “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on November 10, 2011,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, November 11, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t876744.htm>; and “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on November 25, 2011,”

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, November 26, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t882428.htm>.

⁵⁰ See "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on November 16, 2011," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, November 17, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t879281.htm>.

⁵¹ "Defense Ministry's Regular Press Conference in November, 2011," Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, November 30, 2011, http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2011-11/30/content_4347180.html.

Also see Li Xiaokun and Li Lianxing, "U.S. Base in Australia Shows Cold War Mentality," *China Daily*, December 1, 2011, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-12/01/content_14193427.htm. For a similar, more recent statement by the MND, see "June 2012 Regular Press Conference for the Ministry of National Defense," Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, June 28, 2012, http://www.mod.gov.cn/photo/2012-06/28/content_4381068.htm.

⁵² "Defense Ministry spokesperson Geng Yansheng's regular press conference on February 23, 2012," Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, February 26, 2012, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2012-02/26/content_4353303_3.htm; "Defense Ministry's Regular Press Conference in October, 2011," Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, October 26, 2011, http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2011-10/26/content_4347179.htm.

⁵³ Liu Bin, "The Roadmap of the Asia-Pacific Military Bases of the U.S. Military," *People's Daily*, April 23, 2012, OSC CPP20120423787003. Liu states that U.S. forces are being deployed in a "scattered and networked pattern across the region, as part of an effort to 'reinforce the second island chain.'" Also see Ruan Zongze, "What Does the U.S. Want on 'Rebalancing'," *People's Daily*, June 4, 2012, OSC CPP20120604787003.

⁵⁴ Liu Bin, "The Roadmap of the Asia-Pacific Military Bases of the U.S. Military," *People's Daily*, April 23, 2012, OSC CPP20120423787003; Shen Dengli, "American Pivot a Fallacy," *China Daily*, May 4, 2012, OSC CPP20120504968023; and Sun Guangyong and Han Shuo, "U.S., Thailand Hold Largest Military Drill in Asia Pacific," *People's Daily*, February 10, 2012, <http://english.people.com.cn/90777/90851/7726075.html>

⁵⁵ Lu Desheng, "The Multiple Implications of the Change in the U.S. Military's Deployment," *Liberation Army Daily*, June 5, 2012, OSC CPP20120605787017. The author cites several defense analysts, including Han Xudong and Lu Yin of the NDU and AMS researcher Lin Zhiyuan. Han states that "the United States will definitely . . . tighten its control over strategic strongpoints in the Asia-Pacific region, and that is bound to increase people's concern that the United States will use its military supremacy to interfere in the sovereignty of countries in the region, and heighten people's concern about a military confrontation between big powers and tension in the security situation."

⁵⁶ Zhong Sheng, "Seeking Cooperative Route for the Prosperity and Stability of Asia," *People's Daily*, April 24, 2012, OSC CCP20120424787003.

⁵⁷ See Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on June 4, 2012"; "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on May 31, 2012"; Don Durfee, "China Urges U.S. To Stay Out of Sea Dispute," Reuters, June 22, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/22/us-china-sea-dispute-idUSTRE75L14L2011062>; "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on November 21, 2011," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, November 22, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t880858.htm>.

⁵⁸ See "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on June 4, 2012"; "Premier Wen Jiabao Elaborates China's Position on the South China Seas," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 20, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/wjbdyldrhy/t879891.htm>.

⁵⁹ See "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei's Regular Press Conference on May 25, 2012," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, May 26, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t936062.htm>. Hong stated: "*As far as we know*, [my italics] both the non-claimants of ASEAN and countries outside the region adopt the position of non-involvement in territorial disputes on the South China Sea issue."

⁶⁰ One MND spokesperson expressed a particularly low key sentiment, stating only: "Peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region benefit the shared interests of all countries; we hope that parties will proactively take actions that benefit peace and development in the Asia-Pacific, rather than the contrary." See

“Defense Ministry’s Regular Press Conference in May, 2012” Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China, May 31, 2012, http://news.mod.gov.cn/headlines/2012-05/31/content_4372635.htm.

⁶¹ See “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on May 22, 2012,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, May 23, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t935031.htm>; and “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on April 25, 2012,” April 26, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t928004.html>.

⁶² Don Durfee, “China Urges U.S. To Stay out of Sea Dispute,” Reuters, June 22, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/22/us-china-sea-dispute-idUSTRE75L14L20110622>.

⁶³ See Zhong Sheng, “U.S. Should Not Muddy the Waters Over the South China Seas,” *People’s Daily*, March 20, 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/102774/7762724.htm>; Also see Liao Qin and Hong Junjie, “United States Stirs South China Sea to Make Arrangement For Its Asia Strategy,” *Liberation Daily*, August 10, 2010, OSC CPP20100811038001; Deng Yushan, “Not To Make Waves in South China Sea,” Xinhua, June 12, 2012, OSC CPP20120602968046; and Li Bo, Ming Jiwei, “Any Attempt to Interfere in South China Sea Disputes Will Undermine Regional Peace, Stability,” Xinhua, November 19, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-11/19/c_131257617.htm.

⁶⁴ See Shen Dingli, “A Neutral U.S. Helpful to Stability in the South China Seas,” *People’s Daily Overseas Edition*, May 4, 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/102774/7808120.html>; and Xue Hao, “What’s the Real Intention of U.S.-Philippines Joint Military Exercise,” *Liberation Army Daily*, April 25, 2012, OSC CPP20120426702003.

⁶⁵ See “War Games Show Hypocrisy of U.S. Intentions,” *Global Times Online*, April 17, 2012, OSC CPP20120417722008. The author writes: “Manila has been openly seeking U.S. naval backing in regional maritime disputes. Washington is also interested in lending its support. It is clear that the real target of the joint exercises is even if the two sides deny it.” Also see Liu Tian, “Proposed U.S.-Philippines drills raises questions about U.S. intentions in Asia,” Xinhua, January 23, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-01/23/c_131374109.htm.

⁶⁶ See Zhong Sheng, “Internationalization of the South China Sea Issue Is a Strategic Short-Sightedness,” *People’s Daily*, April 26, 2012, OSC CPP20120426787001. Zhong Sheng writes: “Internationalization of the South China Sea issue means amplification of contradictions between individual countries and destruction of the hard-won fruits of regional cooperation. Internationalization of the South China Sea issue means that countries in the region will be forced to choose sides, thereby shifting one country’s own pressure onto other countries in an irresponsible manner. Internationalization of the South China Sea issue means that external forces will be invite to arbitrate Asian affairs, thereby giving an opportunity to those trying to relive the dream of “hegemony.”

⁶⁷ “China Will Observe Rules Agreed on by International Community: Diplomat” Xinhua, November 14, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-11/14/c_131246517.htm. Also see “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on November 14, 2011” (full citation in endnote 24).

⁶⁸ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin’s Regular Press Conference on November 14, 2011.” Also see “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on November 10, 2011” (full citation in endnote 49); “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Jiang Yu’s Regular Press Conference on October 27, 2011,” October 28, 2011, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t872726.htm>.

⁶⁹ See Qin Hong, “Asia-Pacific Countries Should Promote Free Trade Pragmatically,” *People’s Daily Overseas Edition*, April 06, 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7779395.html>; and Shen Jiru, “New driving force for East Asian cooperation,” *People’s Daily Overseas Edition*, January 16, 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/102774/7706716.html>.

⁷⁰ See Liu Qing, “New Changes in U.S. Asia-Pacific Strategic Deployment,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, May 20, 2011, OSC CPP2011072567100.

⁷¹ “China Can Wait on Prospects of New Deal,” *Global Times Online*, November 27, 2011, OSC CPP20111128722008.

⁷² See, for example, “PRC Foreign Minister Answers Reporters’ Questions on Foreign Policies, Relations,” Xinhua, March 6, 2012, OSC CPP20120307075001. When asked about China’s response to the pivot at a press briefing, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi stated: “China and the United States have more overlapping interests in the Asia-Pacific region than in any other part of the world . . . I hope all the parties concerned will devote themselves to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, to its development and prosperity.

We hope and welcome the United States to play a constructive role in the region. Of course, we also hope that the United States will respect China's interests and concerns. We are ready to work with the United States and other countries in the region to make Asia-Pacific more stable and more developed." Also see Sun Yi, "Cui Tiankai: Maintenance of Healthy and Steady Development of Sino-U.S. Relations is the Only Correct Choice for the Two Countries," Xinhua, January 9, 2012, OSCCPP20120109136010; Le Yucheng (Chinese assistant foreign minister), "The Rapid Development of China's Diplomacy in a Volatile World," address at the Seminar on China's Diplomacy in 2011 and its Prospect," December 18, 2011, www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjby/zygy/gyhd/t890675.htm.

⁷³ Michael S. Chase and Benjamin S. Purser, "Pivot and Parry: China's Response to America's New Defense Strategy," *China Brief*, vol. 12, issue 6 (March 15, 2012). http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39143&cHash=284d79d86e352a6be468df1a6ef1161f. A commentary by Zhong Sheng appears to take a conciliatory, if orthodox stance, reiterating that "China respects America's rightful interests and welcomes the United States to play a constructive role; it also hopes that the United States respects China's rightful interests and properly handles mutual interests and concerns in a joint effort to promote peace, mutual trust, and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region." Zhong Sheng, "Chart a Path Toward a New Type of Relationship Between China and the United States as Major Powers," *People's Daily*, May 5, 2012, OSC CPP20120505722022. Also see "China Takes U.S. Return with Aplomb," *Global Times Online*, November 21, 2011, OSC CPP20111121722006. The author states: "China does not need to panic about the U.S. return to Asia. Facing a weak economic recovery, the U.S. can do nothing but make some strategic mobilization as self-consolation. China will not confront the U.S. strategically or militarily. At present, China has the upper hand in the Sino-U.S. competition and the U.S. return to Asia cannot change the situation. What China should do now is to continue its steady and fast development." In addition, see "U.S. Asia Pacific Strategy Brings Steep Price," *Global Times Online*, November 18, 2011, OSC CPP20111118722004. Li Wen, "How Should China Cope with America's Return to Asia?" *China Youth Daily*, February 28, 2012, 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/204372/7742466.html>. Li is Deputy Director of the Institute of Asia Pacific Studies at CASS; Wu Chunsi, "Back in Town," *Beijing Review*, January 9, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-01/09/content_24358126.htm; Xi Jianmei, "In 'Eventful Autumn,' China and the United States Particularly Needs Virtuous Interaction," Xinhua, October 11, 2011, OSC CPP20111011075006. Xu Jianmei is a Xinhua reporter. "AirSea Battle plan renews old hostility," *Global Times*, November 14, 2011, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/683750/AirSea-Battle-plan-renews-old-hostility.aspx>. Deng Yushan, "Build Trust To Avert Tragedy," Xinhua, May 7, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-05/07/c_131573482.htm. Also see "China May Be Lonely, But Not Isolated," *Global Times*, June 29, 2012, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/717844.shtml>; "China Can Wait on Prospects of New Deal," *Global Times Online*, November 27, 2011, OSC CPP20111128722008.

⁷⁴ As noted above, Zhong Sheng articles fall below editorial department articles, editorials, and commentator articles in the *People's Daily* hierarchy.