

CONFERENCE REPORT «AFTER THE UKRAINE CRISIS: TOWARDS A POST-HEGEMONIC MULTIPOLAR WORLD?» IN CENTRE ON ASIA AND GLOBALISATION, LEE KUAN YEW SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE, FEBRUARY 24-26, 2015

Panel 1:

Ukraine Crisis, Russia's policies and implication to global strategic balance

THE RUSSIAN VIEWS OF THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS AND ITS TRUE DIMENSIONS

Viktor Kremenjuk: *Deputy Director, Institute for US and Canadian Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Presented on his behalf by Alexander Korolev*

The Ukraine Crisis is a turning point. It is the end of a post-Cold War period in international politics that some people called “the Called Peace.” The “Cold Peace” is a rather vague state in which there were chances of closer cooperation between Russia and the West. The Ukraine crisis has put an end to this. “Why cooperation did not work? What to expect? Where do we go from here? There was a strong pretext to the current crisis in the relations between Russia and the West.

While US administration tries to demonstrate its concern with Ukraine in reality it has done very little both to help the Ukrainians out of their desperate position or to settle the problem. Mainly those who work hard in this area are the Russians and the Europeans – Germans, French, and Polish but not the Americans. The West preferred to continue traditional rivalry in the style of the 19th or the first half of the 20 centuries. Russia responded with the same what has become evident during Mr. Putin’s rule.

The end of the Cold War was not well perceived, especially in the Soviet Union, and later in Russia. Now when we hear expert comments on the Ukraine Crisis in Russia we can see some sort of an expected “catharsis” in US-Russian relations. The fact of NATO expansion is also very important for understanding the current situation, because it shows that it is the West who thinks in terms of traditional power and tries to deprive other countries of their sovereignty. The rest of the world, in this situation, finds itself at a crossroad. As to the other nations, especially the members of the BRICS (Brazil, India, China, and South Africa), they remained cold to the US plea. They have not expressed any support to the Russian action in Ukraine but equally they didn’t rush to support USA. At least, Russia does not pretend to play the role of the leader of this group, it stands as equal among the equals while USA pretends to play the role of the world leader and from this position the fact that a big and important group of nations did not follow Washington’s prescriptions tells much. Pessimistic about any alignment between west and rising powers as non-western states wants more, without clearer idea of what this more means.

Major Powers do not support American policies toward Russia. It is hard to say who suffered more from this crisis – Russia or the U.S. What we have in Russia-West relations is highly emotional, poorly structured, and extremely complicated controversy which may either burst one day into a full-size conflict or

become a subject for a long and exhaustive negotiation process.

THE UKRAINE CRISIS – HOW GENERALIZABLE?

Timothy Colton: *Chair of the Department of Government at Harvard University*

With changes to the status quo resulted in the Ukraine Crisis, it points us to the direction of trying to understand if the crisis echoes what happens elsewhere. Both Ukraine and Russia have been visibly worse off after the Ukraine Crisis. The EU has realized that itself helped triggered the crisis. Sanction and counter-sanction activities bite on the EU as well as the Russian side.

One year into the process, the Ukraine mess stands out, in my view, for its negative-sum character. The two major state actors, Ukraine and Russia, are visibly worse off than before the train of events got underway.

With no doubts Russia has widened the repertoire of sovereignty-shredding behaviors, but it is the other countries, particularly the United States that pioneered in this area. However, the example of great powers annexing territories from lesser powers set by Russia is unlikely to be copied by the other conventional powers, only two of which are embroiled in territorial disputes with neighbors, namely China and India. Their disputes are long standing and it's doubtful that the future conducts of China and India will be influenced by what Russia has gotten away with in Crimea. The only plausible exception might be China on South China issues. However, China was cross-pressured on Crimea by the pro-Russian separatists' use of a referendum device there, something that might be seen as setting a precedent for Taiwan or Tibet.

In general, the Ukraine Crisis is more sui generis and thus less system-shifting. Contextual elements of this crisis are specific enough to the regional context to moderate if not eliminate the chances that the Ukraine Crisis will have a major role in reshaping the international system.

THE BREAKDOWN OF 'BALANCING DILEMMA': RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN A POST-UNIPOLAR WORLD

Alexander Koroley: *Research Fellow, Centre on Asia and Globalization, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore*

There is a controversy in the IR theoretical literature on the concept of balancing. The realist assumption is that balancing is inevitable. If the hegemon manages to restrain itself or employs strategies based more on benevolence than coercion, other states are still prone to worry about their safety and survival in the unbalanced international system and will either concentrate efforts to increase their capability (internal balancing) or try to realign with other secondary states (external balancing). There is vast amount of literature that counters this position and reasserts 'Exceptionalism of American domination and impossibility of balancing.' For example, "American power is extraordinary and unprecedented, and puts U.S. in a "category of its own."

This literature lends its argument on 6 conditions that guarantee the absence of balancing, namely the effectiveness of the Grand Strategy of the United States; the low availability of allies under the conditions of the unipolar system; America being a status quo powers; America being an international stability provider; the nature of American power seen as non-threatening; non-aggressive and benevolent; and the unsurpassable power threshold generated by the U.S. When this is applied to the current situation in international politics then it seems like this balancing dilemma is 'breaking down,' as neither of these assumptions are fully in place (except the final one, which is also changing).

Since the 6 conditions of balancing are not entirely satisfied, there is an environment in which balancing can occur, this can be demonstrated in Russian foreign policy. From Putin's speech in Munich in 2007, he rejected the concept of a 'unipolar world.' In his speech at the Valdai club in Sochi (2014) he said that the so-called 'victors' in the Cold War had decided to pressure events and reshape the world to suit their own needs and interests."

Between these two speeches there are empirical cases to show that Russia does balance against USA such as the Russia-Georgian War; Syrian War and the Eurasian Union. The main goal of the Russia-Georgian War was to thwart the US's political projects in Caucasus and prevent Georgia's NATO membership. It was also the first time since the end of the Cold War when Russia used military force outside its state borders and also the first time when American

forces were involved in military actions against Russia. It was not forced on Russia by a direct military attack on its own territory; otherwise it would not be 'balancing'. This was followed by an extremely harsh reaction by the US and, in the words of G.W. Bush, "Russia has invaded a sovereign neighboring state and threatens a democratic government elected by its people... Such an action is unacceptable in the 21st century." The main outcome was that Georgia's membership in NATO is a long way off.

Another was that of the Syrian Crisis, where Russia has been providing military and diplomatic support to the Syrian government; the U.S. has been trying to uphold the rebels. Russia and China vetoed four U.N. Security Council resolutions on Syria. Once again, this was not forced on Russia by a direct military attack on its own territory. The outcome of this was that any of the U.S.-led large-scale military operations in Syria failed to materialize due to increased costs of such endeavor.

The final case is that of the Eurasian Union. Similar to the cases of Georgia and Syria, the conflict in Ukraine was not directly forced on Russia (Russia had not been attacked), which would have ruled out the case for "balancing." There was a sudden strong push by the West for Association agreement with Ukraine as a reaction to Russia's Eurasian integration agenda, which ties post-Soviet space together: unification of economic regulation, coordination of policies in the energy sector; common policies toward non-members. Why now, but not under Yushchenko? The reaction of the West was quite straightforward. In the words of Hillary Clinton, "it's not going to be called that [Soviet Union]. It's going to be called customs union, it will be called the Eurasian Union and all of that, but let's make no mistake about it. We know what the goal is and we are trying to figure out effective ways to slow down or prevent it" (December 2012). Two main outcomes were achieved as a consequence: Crimea is part of Russia and Ukraine's NATO membership is a vague prospect.

Conclusions:

- American foreign policy has triggered a balancing response from another major power.
- The preconditions of "non-balancing" are compromised.

- Contrary to popular theoretical assumptions, balancing (hard, soft, internal, external) does take place and can be effective.

- Russia has already taken the lead in resisting U.S.-dominated unipolarity and, by doing so, has resolved the collective action problem. Now, other major powers - China, India, Japan, Germany - can decide whether unipolarity is good/bad for them and, through its policies towards Russia, accelerate the transformation of the international system.

- Balancing responses of greater scale will take place more regularly.

- If the US does not change its policies towards Russia, there will be high probability of China-Russia strategic alliance aimed at comprehensive balancing against America. This will transform the current world order and mark a historic return to the balance of power.

Discussant Ted Hopf:

1. Timothy's paper concludes that the Ukraine Crisis is sui generis. Rather than implying Russia's foreign policy or balancing of powers, he attributed the crisis to a set of unusual circumstances.

2. The West, the U.S. in particular, played unipolarity very poorly and inconsistently. Indeed US hegemony is 'dissipating.'

3. The 1990s is an important period for Russia as it was during this period that Russia realized the 'meaning of democracy and markets'. These entailed chaos, criminality and political de-functionality. Since 1990's there was a relentless pressure on the Russian sovereignty. Almost every IR scholar in the U.S., from realists to constructivists, argued against NATO's expansion.

4. There is a serious lack of diplomacy between U.S. and Russia. For example, in 2001 after 9/11, the U.S. received great support from Russian people and Putin. Such efforts have not been reciprocated and in November 2001, the US pulled out of the ABM treaty. This was followed by the Iraq invasion in 2003. Hence giving Russia reason after reason to balance against USA.

5. From 2003-2008, it seemed that Russia followed a foreign policy strategy of 'liberal imperialism,' where it pursued a neo-colonial American strategy of penetrating and dominating neighboring countries and providing eco-

conomic assistance to them. This then changes in 2008 to hard-balancing.

6. However, the current situation is not irreversible given the interdependence Russia gained in the international system. The West can regain the authority through collective efforts through sharing powers.

7. Russia is indeed a balancing power. However it may be an exaggeration to state that Russia is the vanguard of balancing against the US and that different countries would support and join its efforts in also doing so. Russia is fairly isolated internationally. While not many countries are supporting the U.S. foreign policies on Russia, none are supporting Russia's policy on Ukraine and Georgia.

8. Despite the Ukraine Crisis, Russia has been very cooperative on issues such as nuclear non-proliferation, North Korea, Iran, etc. Hence it does not seem to be balancing against everything. In fact the only entity that is purely balancing against U.S. power, which is also a common enemy for both the U.S. and Russia, is global terrorism.

9. While the paper argues that Russia and China can become strong allies, China may not necessarily want to go this far, given Russia's actions as an 'irresponsible power.'

10. The Eurasian Economic Union is presented as an economic counter balance to the EU. That may not be the case. Apart from using geopolitical tools to analyze this, exchange of resources such as high-tech are relatively limited.

11. Where is US hegemony going? What is the alternative? When the US caused the 2008 financial crisis due to the reckless mismanagement of its securities markets, it was expected that China and the rest would present an alternative to the American-led neoliberal order at the next G20 meeting. However, at the meeting there were only a few policy prescriptions from them. China has benefited most from the international system after 1945. It is unlikely that China will break down the international institutions for the sake of Russia. Indeed, the US has only lost 1% of its GDP since China's rise in 1978. Hence has there been much of a challenge to the American-led world order?

12. While the naval exercises that China has held with Russia was the largest in has done with any foreign power, have they held naval exercises with any other foreign power? If they

have not, then the example is meaningless. Further, how large is the exercise? If it is 1/100th of a US-Japanese naval exercise then it is also trivial from a balancing perspective.

13. While trade has doubled, but from what level? What is it from a global perspective? An argument can be made however, that these are 'leading indicators' of hard-balancing.

14. One of the features of 'mass common sense' in Russia, especially in relation to sanctions and public opinion was that the average Russian does not desire neoliberal integration with the world capitalist economy as a normal or desirable thing. Sanctions are not 'unpopular' in Russia, but instead talk of more state involvement and isolation is 'popular.' Hence, if the objective of Western sanctions is to turn public opinion against Putin then it is counter-productive.

Questions and Comments:

1. Do the Georgian, Syrian and Ukrainian crises are very different. Do they indicate that we are back to the era of proxy wars? Can escalation be contained at strategic levels?

2. How can the level of commitment between China and Russia be assessed? Having a strong economy may not directly translate into world leadership immediately.

3. Does the fall in oil prices have an impact on Russia's projection of power?

4. Though Russia is balancing against USA, it does not necessarily mean a return to a multipolar or renewed bipolar order.

5. Balancing takes time, so when criticizing theories that argue that balancing will not happen, clarity on the time horizon is essential. Given that, in how long will Russia catch up? It seems unlikely that Russia may do so as its economy will take time to recover. It can also be argued that Russia could be balancing against threats as oppose to balancing against power. In the case of the latter, this is done in 2 ways, internal balancing (such as military spending as mentioned in the presentation by Alexander) and external balancing (forming alliances). Does Russia have any such 'allies?' This creates a problem for a Russia's overall strategy as it relies heavily on asymmetrical balancing.

6. In terms of the China-Russia alliance, Russia might be the junior partner economically. China is a status quo power, is establish-

ing the strategic alliance with Russia really in its interest?

7. Given their Russian population, are Estonia and Latvia 'next' after Ukraine?

8. It seems to idealistic that Russian foreign policy has a long-term balancing vision against USA. It seems more reactive.

9. Russia may not necessarily be isolated. Other major powers such as Japan, China and India do not 'follow' American leadership in relation to Ukraine.

10. USA has 'outsourced' its policy to Europe. Is this the case in the Ukraine crisis or is Europe acting on its own?

11. China is not necessarily working toward some sort of 'alliance' or 'alignment' with Russia. China is pursuing its own interests.

12. China is playing a leverage game in its own interests. Every player is doing this and this may eventually bring the world to multi-polarity but it is not intentional acts of balancing.

13. The economic difficulties in Russia may somehow change the public opinions in Russia. However, it is important to delink the public opinions and policy making process.

14. Public opinion in Russia may not be the most accurate reflection of trends.

Responses:

Alexander Korolev:

1. Russia is not entirely 'isolated' in its response to the Ukraine Crisis. Since the crisis, China and Russia signed multiple contracts and the Chinese government even offered to provide economic assistance to Russia. Russia does not need a 'NATO-like' alliance with China as militarily Russia is more than capable and equipped. In this situation, 'silence' is support. Beneath the silence, there is growing trade and investment.

2. Balancing will occur with the means they have at hand. Russia exerts pressure using traditional geopolitical methods using energy and pipelines.

3. Chinese scholars in fact, say that it is Russia does not want to pursue an alliance with China and deal with its foreign policy problems rather than the other way around.

4. We have not completely stepped out of the era of proxy wars. Proxy wars fit into the concept of balancing.

5. The paper does not deal with 'balance of power' but 'balancing'. Hence it does not argue that Russia is capable of changing the international system and surpassing the United States.

6. According to Waltz's theory of international politics, balancing does not necessarily have to be an intentional act of restoring multipolarity.

7. In Russia's case, the benign relations with other countries can be alignments instead of alliances because Russia does not face direct threats. China-Russia do not have to be formal 'allies' China and Russia conducted the biggest military drills in Chinese history with any foreign power. China and Russia plan to conduct drills in the Mediterranean, which is traditionally, a NATO sphere of influence. Trade volume between the two countries has almost doubled since 2008. Further, it is not just oil and gas exchanges between Russia and China. There is a list of contracts between the two in various other sectors such as banking, technology and so on.

8. A poll shows that Russians who see the U.S. as the No.1 enemy actually read English news media and China is seen as the friendliest nation. Given the 'China threat' that drives English media, Russia's public opinion seems to overlook this.

Timothy Colton:

1. There are differences between global contexts and regional contexts. The region is sui generis because what happened in the 90s was not only the end of Cold War but also a country's decease. The collapse happened with minimum communication. A quarter century later, we are still dealing with the consequences, which have been underestimated for a long. In the 80s it is predicted after the swinging between ideology politics and interest politics, it would be about identities and eventually policy making tend to be rational. However, it is interesting to see identity politics have replaced interest politics in Ukraine. This also poses a challenge for us and reminds us to pay more attention to the puzzles of identities.

2. When the small countries are seeking protection from big countries, under certain circumstances, they end up with the biggest leverage. Proxy war is a very complex game in general.

3. Western sanctions make it difficult for Russia to recover from falling oil prices and

other woes of the economy. Russia is not very credit-worthy at this stage. Though Russian corporations and the Russian Government still have cash reserves but they cannot use them as they do not have access to international credit for the foreseeable future.

4. Russia will still be a major oil reserve for generations; however this oil from the Arctic sea might entail a lot of cost to obtain, which might not be very profitable.

5. Though Russia is not a 'democracy', the leadership does enjoy a considerable amount of mass support.

6. It is hard to see how Russia can sustain itself over a long period of time with this level of isolation and antagonism against it.

7. There is a school of thought that says that the major question in Ukraine is more about language than ethnicity. The sector of native speaking Russians in Ukraine were about 45-50% and they are a part of a Russian civilizational world that has been reinforced by the internet.

8. As far as Estonia and Latvia are considered, it may be a possibility that Russia might exert pressure on them, but very few would be sympathetic towards Russia as most of them are citizens of EU countries and want to avoid trouble at home. These countries are also members of NATO, so it is unlikely that Russia could make any territorial claims on them but it could exert soft power on them.

Panel 2:

The impact of the Crisis on international politics: strategic and policy reorientation of major powers in the wake of the crisis

RUSSIA – WEST RELATIONS AND RELATED THEORETICAL PROBLEMS IN THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS

Feng Shaolei: *Dean of the School of Advanced International and Area Studies (SAIAS) and Director of the Centre for Russian Studies, East China Normal University*

The author has presented directly from his paper (see the conference site at NUS).

RUSSIA AND THE WEST: RETURN OF BALANCE OF POWER POLITICS OR DIFFERING CONCEPTIONS ON WHAT IT MEANS?

T.V. Paul: *James McGill Professor of International Relations, McGill University*

There is a debate, as evident in the theme of this conference, whether this conflict is the harbinger of a new world order signaling a profound change in the structure of the international system from a near unipolar to a multipolar one.

In this paper I argue that we are still several years away from a hard balancing equilibrium in Eurasia as the parties are reluctant to escalate the conflict to an intense level. American military aid to Ukraine may challenge the situation a bit, but it is unlikely to lead to an intense hard balancing effort by the West or by Russia due to lack of allies, fear of losing too much economically, and a realization of escalation of unwanted conflict on both sides. Instead, we will see continued hedging based on soft balancing, diplomatic engagement, and limited hard balancing for some years until threats crystallize and the power capabilities of Russia and China increase to the extent of upsetting the present order. Increased nationalism is a possibility in Russia and China and more asymmetrical military challenges to regional order.

The Western conception of balance of power implies an expansion and consolidation of the liberal pacific union to prevent the rise of challengers, including semi-authoritarian Russia and China, and deterring potential and actual threats emanating from them. This strategic conception comes out of the liberal notion that the spread of democracy and liberal institutions are sure guarantors of enduring peace.

The European Union shows that a pluralistic security community can emerge in a region that experienced unending wars and rivalries through the millennia, if the liberal principles are applied.

This strategy is based on the notion of "overwhelming preponderance as a pacifying condition," rather than the balance or equilibrium of forces between the two sides. This is also routed in hegemonic stability logic that security is assured only when a benign hegemon has dominance over restive regions.

Western strategy toward Russia has been one of steady expansion of the liberal pacific union. At the end of the Cold War, the European Union and NATO invited former republics and allies of Russia in Eastern Europe to join NATO. In the first round of expansion, in March 1999, Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic were added to NATO.

The problem with the Western policy is the absence of a proper strategy to integrate the former superpower that is yet to accept the norms of the Western liberal pacific union. The more it resisted acceptance of Western goals, the harder the Western positions became. Further, the earlier invitations to Russia to join Western institutions were not intended to give it a prominent status as a great power but one among several equals, if only it accepted the Western liberal principles in both domestic and international affairs. In the new European order, the notion of great power status looked antiquated.

The Western position thus has been somewhat ideologically-driven and it gives the impression of surpassing or transcending traditional power politics as well as its chief component, balance of power politics. It reveals a strategy of overwhelming preponderance of liberal states as the best guarantor of peace in Europe. This policy appears to be fair at face value, but it gives the impression it is neutral to geopolitical consequences.

Russia under Putin has been playing according to the dictates of realism and classical balance of power, while the West is treating its expansion toward Eastern Europe, including former Soviet republics, as a benign liberal strategy with righteous ideological overtones.

It appears that both sides are driven by peculiar notions of balance of power, despite the liberal overtones of Western policies. The West wants to bind all East European states under NATO and the EU so as to balance Russia in both hard and soft balancing methods, even though it does not say it in so many words. This reflects the opposite views of the two sides on what constitutes international order, especially the rights and obligations of great powers, and their regional spheres of influence.

An interesting question is whether the Western understanding of international order itself is changing. John Ikenberry has argued that durable post-war orders were created by winners, especially democracies, by establishing "interlocking institutions" limiting the power of the winner that increasingly took on "constitutional characteristics." Limitations on what the winner can take disproportionately have been essential for order creation. He states: "limits are set on what actors can do with momentary advantages. Losers realize that their losses are

limited and temporary, and that to accept those losses is not to risk everything or to give the winners a permanent advantage.

The winner gave the impression of taking on all the advantages, especially from Moscow's point of view. Russia does not consider itself a loser, unlike the vanquished in previous major wars, yet it has little sympathy left in many of its former republics. Transforming the victory of the West into legitimate authority is a major challenge here. The favourable conclusion of the end of the Cold War occurred through diplomacy and the Western powers, especially the US and Germany, showed statesmanship in not aggravating the Soviet difficulties or undercutting Gorbachev who was making painful foreign policy choices. What we are missing today is statesmanship on both sides similar to 1989-1991 period.

Russian Conceptions:

Russia wants to retain its status as a great power and the dominant state, or *primus inter pares*, among its former republics and East European allies. This persisting opposition to NATO and EU expansion is contained in Russian foreign policy documents, especially the military doctrine Moscow issues periodically. The new Russian military doctrine issued in December 2014 states that the "main external military danger" comes from an increasing power potential of NATO and giving it global functions carried out in violation of international law.

The general problem in the Russia-Western relationship is a dearth of sensitivity to each other's points of view, the lack of trust and the absence of statesmanship on both sides to avoid a rivalry from emerging.

Status competition thus is an underlying issue here which is not easy to reconcile for the parties concerned. Material capabilities cannot explain why Moscow still pursues status projects with such vehemence. It may well be true that the material weakness of Russia is what affected its status in the West and neighboring states.

Will Intense Balance of Power Competition Re-emerge?

The chances of an intense balance of power competition between the West and Russia in the near and medium terms are low because states tend to hard balance through two mechanisms: 1. Internal balancing – i.e., building a strong armed force on one's own, and 2. Through ex-

ternal balancing, which involves finding suitable allies who would form a coalition to balance the external powers. On both these counts, the Russian efforts are likely to fall short. Russia may build more nuclear weapons as a balancing mechanism, but that has little relevance for its relations with the former republics. They at best will remain neutral in Russia's conflict given that it has legal implications as well.

Western efforts to develop further links with unattached Russian neighbours may be hampered by the fear of Russia's direct action similar to Ukraine. Even among NATO member states, leaders of Poland, Czech Republic among others, have expressed opposition to NATO expansion to additional spaces or to send troops to protect Ukraine.

How to Prevent Intense Balance of Power Competition?

Liberals can also believe in their own propaganda as they claim to stand for universal values of liberty, freedom and self-determination. What the West is communicating to Russia is that it has to accept a secondary role as a co-opted power in the European order, headed by the EU and NATO, built around liberal principles. These Western idealistic pronouncements have little resonance in Moscow which does not consider the liberal hegemony as benign or without power considerations.

The problem is that Russia is a weak global power, but is not a defeated great power and has residual power to spoil peace regionally and globally through asymmetrical means. Better statecraft is needed on both sides, and diplomacy has to be elevated to a higher level if a rapid deterioration of relations and escalation of violence are to be avoided. Institutional structures need to be created for confidence building and conflict resolution. But a dramatic reordering of world power structure is not in the cards for now.

INTERESTS, HEDGING AND STATUS: EXPLAINING INDIA'S
RESPONSE TO THE UKRAINE CRISIS

Rajesh Basrur: *Professor, Coordinator, South Asia Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, NTU*

The basic question addressed is why India reacted mildly to Russia's military action in Ukraine. The reasons are twofold: 1) Russia has been a source of immense political support

to India on critical issues such as the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan, its nuclear status and so on. 2) Russia has long been the biggest supplier of advanced weaponry to India, amounting to \$40 billion over the last 10 years. That said, Russia's place in Indian strategy is declining and simultaneously America's place is advancing. In terms of political support, USA helps India better integrate itself in the non-proliferation regime. The US has also emerged as India's largest arms supplier. If that is the case, why is Russia still important enough for India to ignore what it has done in Ukraine?

India places a premium on strategic autonomy. This has security and status benefits as it helps India to spread its bets in both spheres. In terms of security, what India has been doing in the past is to keep away from the great power game by seeking alternative pathways - its commonly known Non-alignment movement, which is a weak power strategy, is an example.

As a rising power however, India's strategy has changed from staying away from great power relations to actually engaging in and with it, to its own benefit by building multiple strategic partnerships. Through this, India is trying to optimize its autonomous position in what is essentially a post-alliance world, where structural politics is diminishing. In other words, 'Balance of Power' does not have the same meaning it used to. In the current era, it is hard to actually use that strategy among great or major powers for two reasons: 1) the presence of nuclear weapons. Patterns indicate this is why great powers avoid conflict; 2) economic interdependence: it is quite common place to say that the latter did not prevent World War 1, but it did not occur to this extent. The complex chains of production that exist today prevent states from letting them break and deriving benefit.

In a situation such as this, the strategies that India (and others) uses are: 1) building military capabilities, even though many are redundant and cannot be used. For example, the US would not think of India as the strategic partner as it does had it not been for the 1998 nuclear tests; 2) developing support in international institutions. As a post-colonial state, this helps India in establishing its 'status'. India is a part of G20 and will be a part of APEC. Though India does not play a very proactive role in these institutions, it is important to get a seat.

India is a relatively weak aspiring great power and it tries to establish itself as one without ruffling too many feathers and by presenting itself as a responsible power. It does so by providing limited security cooperation without incurring much cost. This demonstrates that Indian behaviour is a reflection of how all states behave in the post-cold war system. It is important to make a distinction between security-seeking behaviour and status-seeking behaviour, which is useful for policy makers as well to find out what they are looking for. What India is doing is optimizing security through strategic partnership and status through diversified networks. It is evident that everyone is playing this game. The distinction between balance of power and balancing is also critical as much of the latter is symbolic. Even India's security seeking behaviour is changing. For example, the use of force has and accumulation of military power has limited value and finally, alliances don't amount to much, which is why this behaviour is replaced by strategic partnerships. Commitments are always limited.

Discussant Huang Jing:

It seems to be that the scholars on this panel agree that the Ukraine Crisis and how it was handled by Russia is a fundamental challenge to the international system established in 1945. This not only attributed to tensions between national players in the system, but also the legitimacy of the system itself. Professor Paul touched on the question of legitimacy. America's own behaviour has undermined its legitimacy through its unilateral behaviour. Professor Feng Shaolei mentioned the Kosovo crisis, which also exemplifies this point. Next, the system is also challenged by rising powers. While China benefits from the international order, it but does not necessarily want to maintain it as it does not recognize China's political system as it is not compatible with the liberal order led by USA. This brings up two key questions: to what extent can the West remain united under the current world order and to what degree can rising powers recognize this order?

Questions/Comments from the Audience:

1) Russia was ranked 6th in military spending and now it is ranked 3rd. Also, there is a massive re-armament programme in Russia. What are the reasons to not call this internal balancing?

2) Much of the strategic behaviour in the post-cold war period is hedging - how do you define it? Is it different from Southeast Asian states are adopting? What can be used to define India's behaviour?

3) What is the difference between India and China's response to the Ukraine crisis on the other hand? What is the difference between India's response to Ukraine and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on the other?

4) Is the Russia-China-India alliance for India's status elevation useful?

5) Who is challenging the world order? Is it Russia or the West? What is the purpose of NATO's expansion to east? Is it to secure Europe from Russia, which it was very weak in doing after the fall of the Soviet Union? The reason was to decrease Russian space? Who is responsible for the Ukraine Crisis? Is it Russia? Russia helped Ukraine to survive economically? Is it a Russian organized coup-de-etat?

6) It is a bit a stretch to make it think World Order can be impaired by the crisis in Ukraine. It is different from Berlin crisis of 1948 and is more 'regional' in nature. The post 1989 order in Europe along with the understanding between Europe, Russia and America is broken down. These understandings need to be studied and questioned historically.

7) No Russian historian has produced a document to show that this was agreed that NATO would expand eastwards.

8) In 1990, when Iraq intervened into Kuwait, it seemed like a threat to American world order, but it was not, can this be the case of the crisis in Ukraine. What will India and Russia do with its new power and status? Will Japan go down this route, why is it not doing so?

9) What are the debates on leading scholars on China-Russia relations?

10) Small states are not irrelevant in great power relations. Though China is given an international status, denied Russia was denied of a military and/or material status. Small states are playing a destructive role. E.g.: Georgia, where the small state decided to gain from the conflict between USA and Russia, also Ukraine for that matter. Ukraine is different for 2 reasons: 1) it is tied to ideology-associated with it being a source of the Slavic civilization; 2) Choice of the economic system: Ukraine is fundamental to Russian security.

11) Russia was not defeated militarily after the Cold War. Instead, it reconstructed communism by the efforts of the communist people.

Responses:

Professor Rajesh Basrur:

1) Hedging is defined as establishing strategic partnerships, i.e. trying to build capabilities without strong commitment. A lot of it is symbolic meaning. In response to Ukraine, China has taken active steps towards drawing closer to Russia and India's response has been to stay as far away as possible. India's response to Afghanistan is not all that different from Ukraine. The difference is that there was a public statement stating its position in the case of the latter.

2) Through the Russia-India-China grouping India is two things: (1) establishing political communication to different audiences: To the US it sends the message that is not dependent on it. To the Russians, that despite growing relations with Washington, its ties with Russia is still important. To China, that it is not a part of any containment strategy against it. (2) Status: The idea is to tell major and smaller players that they belong the 'great powers' club.

3) Japan is not going about establishing its status actively was because it was better integrated into the international system after World War 2.

4) India is responding to China's rise through by engaging in balancing behaviour. It builds ties with the US to build its capabilities as India competes with China for status. Hence, it uses a bandwagoning strategy against China in this regard.

Professor Feng Shaolei:

Ukraine crisis is a key test for China's foreign policy.

Professor T.V. Paul:

1) While Russia is building military capabilities to balance, it cannot be called 'balance of power' as the process assumes parity equilibrium with other forces competing with it. Russia's building of capability in no way changes the outcome in the way the order is structured.

2) Hedging is commonly used as there is no other term to look at the world given the complexity of alliance structures. While there was the alliance structure in the Asia Pacific, there has

been a 'pivot' amongst Southeast Asian countries. Countries which were not initially 'American alliance' countries, are now becoming so. There is hence a limited hard balancing going on amongst ASEAN states towards China. There are multiple layers of balancing. India's behaviour is also soft balancing, but also limited hard balancing as it is building its air force, navy and so on but it is not to the extent of an arms race.

3) Russia's interventions have not really helped its national security in the long run. Beginning from the Afghan intervention in 1971 or Georgia. Immediate tactical gains are not long term strategic gains in terms of regional influence.

Professor Huang Jing:

1) The expansion of NATO does not challenge international order but instead it reinforces the American led world order as it keeps up with the momentum of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

2) Ukraine is important to Russia as perhaps China is to Taiwan or Kashmir is to India. It is the collapse of stability in Ukraine that undermined the collapse of its stability to Russia.

3) The strategic mistake made by the West was that it overplayed its hand in Ukraine, which intensified the crisis.

4) The Ukrainian crisis is not a just a European problem, as it tests America's ability as a global leader.

5) China faces a dilemma: It cannot stand with Putin as it will lose credibility internationally, this would damage its key relations with the United States.

Panel 3:

Changing Asia: the shift of regional power balance – Russia and China

UKRAINE CRISIS AND THE REALIST WORLDVIEW
OF CHINA'S FOREIGN IN POLICY ELITE

Da Wei: *Director, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations*

The realist Worldview of the China's
Foreign Policy Elite

It is natural for political leaders and foreign policy elites from all over the world to have realist view, but for Chinese elites, they have a particularly strong tendency to be realist.

1. A nation-state centric world view. China strictly sticks to the “territorial integrity and sovereignty independence” principle, so some issues like Taiwan issue, Tibet-related issue and territorial disputes over the South China Sea are linked with the “core national interest”. Nation state is the basic unit that Chinese foreign policy elites use when they try to do the strategic planning, and the Chinese leaders’ main concerns are challenges from other nation-states.

2. All the major countries pursue power and glory. China thinks it is natural for US to pursue its leadership and hegemon. China itself wants to achieve “national rejuvenation”, President Xi’s priority. When talking about power, China’s elites refer to material power resources. Even soft power is regarded as material power such as exporting of cultural industry.

3. The continuous national security concern. Historically, China worried about its survival as a country, facing the invasion of other countries, and then China faced the insecurity of the backwardness of its economy. Although China becomes the No. 2 economy today, China still has concerns over the political security, middle-income trap, and containment by the super powers.

4. Deeply influenced by the view of structural realism. China always talks about bipolar world and then the course towards multipolar world. In recent years, China talks about the avoidance of “Thucydides trap”, using the language of polarity of the structural realism to describe the international environment.

5. Great influence of the geopolitical view. Many Chinese foreign policy elites like to use terms such as “encirclement” or “containment” in a very strict and rigorous way. In recent years, they emphasize the importance of sea power and link it with China’ great power position in the world.

6. The anarchic nature of the world politics. Many believe that the international institution and interdependence cannot stop hegemonic countries.

The reasons for Chinese elites to have such a strong realist view can be explained by historical memories when China encountered the West in the 19th century and the lessons learnt from the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Ukraine Crisis

The crisis intensified the realist world-view in China.

1. The return of the power politics and geopolitics. China views the Ukraine Crisis as the latest development of the Russia-West confrontation since the 1990s. Russia’s political space was viewed as squeezed step by step in last 20 years. Many see the importance of military powers in that process, for example, as Russia is a militarily strong country, no countries or international institutions can stop Russia from annexing Crimea, despite of the existence of sanctions.

2. From the crisis, Chinese get an updated understanding of the power of the West. Before the crisis, many people talked about the decline of the West, but after the crisis, the financial and economic sanction against Russia make people realize that the West’s power is not limited in the military aspect. Chinese are talking about whether similar sanctions would be imposed against China in the future.

3. Another power of the West is the discourse power, the dominant ideology that provoked “colour revolution”. The crisis started with the political instability in Ukraine since 2004 and in the year of 2013. A series of “colour revolution” since this century has posed serious concerns to Chinese leaders.

Generally speaking, China has the sympathetic attitude on Russia, but many people also ask is Russia’s response right or not. The mainstream view is that it is not Russia’s interest to have too strong response. There is an internal challenge to China’s realist view: on the one hand, the Chinese sympathize with Russia, but on the other hand, the Russia’s annexing of Crimea put China into an awkward dilemma because China cannot support that considering the sovereignty issue.

This crisis put China into a difficult position to balance Russia and the West. China and Russia’s strategic cooperation and alignment seems unlikely. It is quite clear that in China the main stream view is a real meaningful alignment with Russia cannot be achieved on this issue. Although the two countries have some kind of strategic cooperation to support Russia, it is a challenge for them to balance.

China’s Approach to Ease its Realist Concern:

China's realist worldview stems from the fact that for a long time China's foreign policy has been defensive and responsive to the outside world. In recent years, President Xi put forward that China wants to be more proactive and China launched a lot of new initiatives and declared that it will not follow the pure realist logic. However, China still lacks the detailed and practical strategic planning, and the language China is using sometimes seems too realistic and its theoretical basis is still not very clear. Now China has two-fold approach: hard realist defense and soft idealist cooperation.

The harsh policy can be seen when China perceives its interests being affected. China use the harsh policy to ease its concern over issues as, for example, the South China Sea issue and East China Sea issue and other core interest issues like Taiwan, Tibet and so on. In recent years, China has tried to modernize its military capability and strengthen its internal balancing to ease such concerns.

On the other hand, partially since the last half of last year, China launched massive cooperative policy agenda, trying to go beyond realism. China tries to manage the realist relationship with major countries like the US. China calls for the so-called "New Model of Major Country Relationship" with the US and other major countries. Although it is still a realist logic, but China tries to manage it very well. With regard to the relationship with neighboring countries, China tries to strengthen the interdependence and build the new institutions, with "One Belt One Road", RCEP, and FTAAP being the examples.

As China's capability grows, China will have a clearer and well-elaborated foreign strategy. The proportion of realism in China's future strategy depends on how realist the West strategy is viewed by China. Therefore, it is an interaction process.

HOW DOES THE UKRAINE CRISIS INFLUENCE
RUSSIAN-CHINESE RELATIONS: CURRENT TRENDS
AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Vladimir Portyakov: *Deputy Director, Head of Research, Institute of Far Eastern Affairs, Russian Academy of Sciences*

Ukraine crisis to some extent affects Russia's relations with the People's Republic

of China. China's attitude to Russia in this crisis was benevolent or at least objectively neutral, thus sharply contrasted the reaction on the part of the US and European leaders and mass media.

China did not join the West in political and economic sanctions against our country. On the contrary, it positively responded to the willingness of the Russian authorities to expand ties. Some realist experts begin to say the rapprochement between Russia and China, and Ukrainian crisis would become a "turning point" in their relations. In order to understand why our bilateral relations resistant to any large changes, it may be worth to look at the Pre-history in brief.

During 25 years of history, Russia-China relations developed from "good-neighbourliness" to "comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction". As a result, bilateral relations have a self-sufficient nature, and have stable immunity against all sorts of perturbations in the world that developing gradually. Bilateral relations are shock-resistant, because as allies they struggle for preservation of cultural and civilizational diversity of the world and struggle for strategic stability in central Asia against the so-called Colour Revolution.

The partnership ties are important and targeted at supporting their independent and autonomous foreign policy, and also the other to sustain chosen respective way of societal development. Sino-Russian relations are not a static phenomenon. They react to the most important global processes and challenges of the time as well as to adapt to the changing situation. In the case of the Russia-Georgia conflict in 2008, China did not deter from abiding to its universal principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and the same time to take the position that generally satisfied Russia. Essentially, China worked out the matrix of its self-positioning in case such or similar crises arise in future. In the essence, such matrix is meant not to damage relations with Russia in whatever the circumstances, to declare abidance by the principles of territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of conflict by means of negotiation and sustaining strongest possible ties with the other conflicting party.

China sees economic and political support to Ukraine promised in December 2013 as a huge help. The agreement on Strategic Partner-

ship achieved at that time does not only meet China's own pragmatic interest, but also help in stabilization of the situation in Ukraine and prevent it strongly moving towards the West. But unfortunately the situation developed the other way.

Major Features of China's Reaction to the Ukrainian Crisis

China found itself in an "uncomfortable position" or "in difficult situation" and demonstrated its "strongest unwillingness" to be involved in this crisis. The cautiousness of Beijing at the initial stage of the crisis can be explained partly by the traditions of Chinese diplomacy.

The main one is how to minimize the actual and potential damage that might be caused to China by events in Ukraine. Ukraine is seen as a link to the Silk Road Economic Belt, and Ukraine was one of the largest suppliers of military and technology production to China in the post-Soviet period. That is why when the events that lead to the ousting of Victor Yanukovich on February 21, 2014, China demonstrated its willingness "to respect the choice made by the Ukrainian people" and to develop ties with Ukraine as with "important strategic partner". When Petro Poroshenko was elected as the President of Ukraine, China hoped the situation turn stable. Xi Jinping congratulated President Poroshenko on his election and sent Cai Wu as a special representative of China to take part in the new Ukrainian President's inauguration ceremony. After the first agreement was signed in September 2014, Xi Jinping met Putin in Dushanbe and called upon Ukraine "as soon as possible to start the inclusive dialogue in order to reach comprehensive political resolution of the crisis."

At the same time, China asked Ukraine not to become a pawn in the Western game and not to "burn bridges" in its relations with Russia. China explained its position in the *Global Times* that "the conflicting parties are waiting for China to take a clear position in this crisis." However, China did not play a decisive role in the conflict. This is arguably a very reasonable position. What is important to stress is that, China maintained its neutral position for several months regarding the confrontation between Kiev and militia in the south-east of Ukraine. But after the so-called election in Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics in November 2,

2014, Beijing's news analysts began to mention the militiamen in the eastern region as "anti-government forces."

The next important assessment is the role of the US in the Ukrainian crisis. They were very cautious because China is interested in forming a "New Type of Major Powers Relations" with the US. Also some Chinese experts in the first stage of the conflict hoped that the US begin to pay more attention to Europe, thus the course of "Return to Asia" would be weakened. But after Obama's visit to East Asia in April, it was clear that the frictions with China would remain as much as before.

Indeed, there are two perspectives among Chinese experts: those who study Russia, especially Central Asia, assess America's position quite sternly and negatively, emphasizing that "from the very start of the crisis America chose to interfere in the Ukrainian situation by all available means". Furthermore, they argue that the US position is in response to Russia's vetoing of the US draft resolutions on Syria and Iraq. On the other hand, Chinese specialists on the US ignore the Ukrainian crisis in the bilateral relations between China and the US. An example would be Professor Wang Jisi, who recently published an article on "Contemporary World" in which he, while reviewing in detail "the international problems, on which the views of Beijing and Washington are not similar", granted no attention to the Ukrainian crisis.

China made no pronouncement on the vote on the anti-Russian resolutions submitted by Western countries at the UN Security Council. Beijing did not join the anti-Russian sanctions of the West and condemned them as an acceptable instrument of political and economic pressure. China and Russia continued to cooperate actively within multilateral formats and Xi Jinping supported Putin many times during the member's meetings of last year. As for the bilateral trade of China and Russia last year, it achieved more than 95 billion USD. Perhaps, China substitutes Western countries in Russia's trade. European Union's share in the RF trade declined by one percentage in 2014, but the share of China increased from 10.5 to 11.2% last year.

Agreements on joint designing of the wide-body aircraft for non-military exploration and foreign-exchange swap were signed last year.

The West sees China as the major “beneficiary” in the Ukrainian crisis because of the natural-gas supply agreement, but Beijing rejected such claims, saying that it is totally unreasonable. There are also some differences in the Chinese position in Russia’s role in Ukrainian crisis, which to some extent may influence the future.

Despite criticism on this idea, China favours a ‘Russian zone of influence’. As for the position on Crimea, many Chinese newspapers including Renmin Ribao, try to remain objective. At the official level, some Chinese scholars stated that Crimea’s entry into Russia was justified, but this position was not effectively expressed in the print media. On the other hand, the view that having acquired the Crimea, Russia lost Ukraine – was expressed in print and discourse.

Prospects for Russia-China Relations

There has been a major decline in Russia’s economic growth and the IMF predicts a decline in GDP over the next two years. There role of Russia in China’s foreign trade might decline and there are not any good prospects for trade due to devaluation of Rouble. It is likely that the share of China in Russia’s trade will increase to 13-15% but it is still comparatively less than its share trade with the US. Several complexities downplay two national projects of international cooperation – that is, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) being propelled by Russia, and the concept of the “Silk Road Economic Belt” (SREB) being actively promoted by Beijing.

There are three realistic scenarios for evolution of bilateral Russian-Chinese:

1. sustaining of the reached level;
2. consistent improvement;
3. some deterioration.

It can be argued that after the Ukrainian crisis the probability for realisation of the second scenario slightly grew from 25 to 30% (from total 100%), while the probability for realization of the first scenario – preservation of the status-quo – would reduce from 70% to 65%. The third scenario hypothetically can be realised in case of coincidence and synergetic effect of all afore-analyzed unfavourable factors. Nevertheless, its probability at the level of 5% would remain insignificant.

IS CHINA TRYING TO PUSH THE US OUT OF EAST ASIA?

Wang Dong: *Associate Professor, Institute of International Studies, Director, Center for Northeast Asian Strategic Studies, Peking University*

The rise of China, both economically and militarily, has increasingly posed a challenge to the US primacy in East Asia. Arguably, the interactions between China, the rising power, and the United States, the incumbent dominant power, will to a great extent shape a future regional strategic landscape. One of the key questions for understanding the future trajectory of regional order, of course, is China’s strategy of dealing with the predominant power the United States. Is China trying to push the United States out of East Asia and build a China-dominated regional order? Contrary to some Western analysts’ accusations, it will be argued that rather than intending to push the United States out of East Asia, China is pursuing a hedging strategy.

There is an emerging discourse of China pursuing of the so-called “Monroe Doctrine” in the past few years. This discourse is because of the growing perception of China’s assertive behaviour. But this has misread China’s intention and misinterpreted China’s behaviour attributed to an absence of the Chinese perceptive. The recent example of Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) and how that has been misread by part of the community will be discussed.

China’s hedging strategy in East Asia can be defined as an insurance strategy that aims at:

- Reducing or minimizing risks brought by the uncertainties in the system,
- Increasing freedom of maneuver,
- Diversifying strategic options,
- Shaping the preferences of adversary.

It is a portfolio or mixed strategy that consists of both cooperative and competitive strategic instruments ranging from engagement, enmeshment, fang fan (taking precautions measures), qian zhi (something softer than hard balancing and harder than soft balancing) and balancing. Any hedging portfolio will be a combination of both these cooperative and competitive strategic instruments.

China and ASEAN

For many years since the end of the Cold War, under the guidance of “peaceful develop-

ment” strategy, Beijing avoided security competition with the unipolar hegemon, the United States, actively engaged and reassured ASEAN countries through “good neighbour” diplomacy, and successfully created a stable external environment for its economic growth. For example, in 2002, China and ASEAN initiated the process to establish a free trade area; in 2012, China and 15 other regional states formally embarked on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiation process, marking a key step toward a deeper level of regional economic integration.

In political and security arenas, China actively supported and participated in ASEAN-centered regional multilateral regimes such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). In 2003 China signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) with the ASEAN, and the two decided to establish the China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity. In 2011, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for the building of a more closely-knit China-ASEAN Community of Common Destiny.

Beijing’s expansion of its ties with the ASEAN is part of its hedging portfolio that aims at fulfilling the following goals: minimizing the risks brought by U.S. hegemonic behaviour through engagement and accommodation of U.S. primacy; diversifying its strategic options vis-à-vis the United States and preserving and expanding China’s freedom of maneuver; as well as shaping U.S. preferences through engagement and persuasion (both peaceful and forceful).

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and China’s Foreign Policy Activism

The SCO has evolved into a premier regional security regime that encompasses China, Russia and Central Asia states and keep expanding, China has expanded security ties with Russia and Central Asia states, diversified and secured sources of energy supply, and enhanced cooperation with member states against threats posed by the “Three Evils” (*sangu shili*), namely terrorism, separatism, and extremism. Since the President Xi Jinping assumed office, the new leadership has advocated the so-called *fen fa you wei* (proactive) policy agenda which includes ambi-

tious proposals to build a “Silk Road Economic Belt” extending through Central Asia and a new “Maritime Silk Road” with the ASEAN countries, “One Belt and One Road” in short. Supposedly, China’s “One Belt and One Road” was designed to promote economic growth through building connectivity in the region, boosting exports, enhancing access to natural resources, and to integrate China’s neighbours more closely with the Chinese economy.

China’s foreign policy activism naturally raises the question whether or not China aims to “push the United States out” of the Asia Pacific and form an exclusive, China-dominated regional order? Arguably, the SCO, where China remains the main architect and promoter, is a counter-balance to the United States, or as some western analyst puts it, “China’s NATO.” However, the worry that the SCO would be developing into an anti-U.S. coalition might be overstated. Chinese Foreign Ministry actually repeatedly ruled out the possibility that the SCO would “evolve into a political and military bloc.”

China-Russia Relations

Since his assumption of office, President Xi’s first foreign visit was to Russia. During that trip, he declared that the China-Russia relationship was “the most important bilateral relationship in the world”. Apparently, Xi’s visit was meant to send a message to the United States and the West that Beijing and Moscow had an option. It is not surprising that the two want to be close when Beijing is increasingly disturbed by perceived U.S. heavy-handed pivot/rebalancing to Asia, and Moscow’s relations with the United States more and more strained after Vladimir Putin was re-elected Russian president, particularly, in the wake of the recent crises over Crimea and Ukraine.

Despite some realist scholars’ urge for forming a China-Russia alliance, Beijing and Moscow apparently are not prepared to go down that road. In fact, Putin himself has publicly brushed aside the possibility of forging a political and military alliance between Russia and China, even when the Ukraine crisis broke out. Beijing has so far settled for the strategy of “forging a partnership without forming an alliance” (*jiebang er bu jiemeng*), which features a very typical hedging behaviour.

Falling short of the extreme pressure from US, which will be a serious strategic security

treats, Beijing and Moscow will continue to pursue a hedging strategy, forming a tactical coalition in groupings such as Group of 20 (G20) or the BRICS countries, but shy away from forging any formal alliance.

The CICA and New Asian Security Concept

In his May 2014 speech at CICA summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping unveiled China's "New Asian Security Concept," stating that "it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia." He also called for the development of regional security cooperation architecture and specifically criticized the Cold War mentality. Xi's speech was read by some Western analysts as a declaration of China's "Monroe Doctrine". However, such anxiety is overblown.

The reason is also very clear. Careful reading of President Xi's speech, is that there is nothing surprisingly new or by no means revisionist in nature. China has always been critical of the Cold War mentality and the alliance system associated with it, and China has always been stressing for the respect of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. At the core of Xi's "New Asian Security Concept" is his call for the realization of "common security, comprehensive security, cooperative and sustainable security", definitions and concepts that have been widely accepted by the international community. It is clear evidence that China has been socialized into the existing system, since these terms have been clearly internalized into China's foreign policy discourse.

China's efforts to revive the CICA can be viewed as part of its hedging portfolio, an effort to enmesh the United States into a region-wide security architecture so as to reduce strategic risks, increase China's freedom of action, and shape U.S.' preferences.

China-U.S. Relations

Both privately and publicly, Chinese leaders have acknowledged that the US is the dominant power in the region. In December 2011, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Le Yucheng noted in a speech given at the MFA-affiliated Foreign Affairs University that the United States "has never left the Asia Pacific", confessing that China "has neither desire nor capability to push the United States out of" the region.

Most recently, Chinese vice Premier Wang Yang acknowledged at a Forum on Sino-U.S. Commercial Relations, held in Chicago that "it is the United States that leads the world, and China does not have any ideas or capabilities to challenge the leading role of the United States". It is very clear that China wants to reassure the US its intention. But interestingly, in 2013 and 2014 respectively, Chinese president Xi Jinping reiterated his belief that "the vast Pacific Ocean has enough room to accommodate" the development of two major powers, the United States and China. The Chinese comment, sometimes misconstrued by Western analysts as implying for a division of sphere of influence in the region, in fact reflects Chinese leaders' conviction that China, as the rising power, does not need to be on a collision course with the United States, the established, dominant power. Rhetoric aside, these statements and remarks show that Chinese leaders are trying to avoid the emerging security dilemma between China and the United States, and thus seeking a non-zero-sum path forward for China-U.S. relations. Chinese leaders have been advocating the concept of build a new model of major country relationship between China and US, which is an intellectual framework for transcending the destiny of great power conflict between rising powers and established powers, the so-called "Thucydides trap." Policy makers and scholars in both countries envision the possibility of shared responsibilities and even shared leadership between the United States and China.

Conclusion

Rather than trying to push US out of East Asia, China has adopted a hedging strategy that helps minimize risks, expand freedom of maneuver, diversify its strategic options and shape the preferences and behaviour of the United States. Indeed, Beijing has explicitly acknowledged the U.S. predominance in the international system and reiterated its willingness to participate and reform the existing system. This is the message that Wang Yang gave last year.

Lastly, for a more peaceful future to emerge in East Asia, the United States and China, as an incumbent power and a rising power, would have to accommodate each other, and negotiate and renegotiate the boundary of their relative power, as well as their respective role

in the future regional order where Beijing and Washington would learn to share responsibilities and leadership.

Discussant: Kanti Bajpai:

The papers deeply analyze Chinese calculation, Chinese strategy and Chinese strategic thinking, and a few things could be said about China, where the three papers have reached agreement:

China is realist, fairly prudential realist. Although there is some disagreement, everyone seems to believe that China acts as a fairly predictable realist power.

China, like anybody else, seems to hedge between committing to a deeper relationship with Russia, and engage with the West and other countries in the Asia-Pacific.

China's estimation in respect to American policy seems to have changed. There is acknowledgement in China that the US is more powerful. Particularly, US's soft power, power of discourse or its ideologies seem to be quite important, and the acknowledgement of that in Beijing is more than earlier.

In respect to the Chinese calculations, any kind of very deep relationship with Russia, amounting especially to an alliance, is unlikely and will be very problematic. But the relations will be strengthened, and there are opportunities for China at this moment with Russia, not only economic but also diplomatic and political, and China will perceive those.

China still seems to be very attentive to its domestic instabilities and weaknesses, particularly ethnic issues, when it looks into the Ukraine problem and its broad grand strategic choices and its positions.

The crisis in Ukraine offers some changes, some varieties, and some longer term perspectives on Chinese foreign policy grand strategy.

All the parties are hedging: India is hedging, ASEAN states are hedging, China seems to be hedging, Russian is not quite giving up upon the West either and not quite committed to China, thus they are hedging, the Europeans are good hedgers, and even the US is hedging as it does not give up on giving Putin a way out and at the same time trying to balance against him to change his behaviour. The large systemic question is: if multiple countries are hedging, is that good for systemic stability? If most of the major

powers are fairly flexible and not committed to an alliance like structure, it induces more stability. But it could be the case that, deterrence theory and theories of alliance and so on, could bring on the wars and instability.

Question of international order: Taking into account the portrait of liberal international order, it seems that the state is a basic unit, and then sovereign, force is not acceptable, trade and investment flow should go in an unimpeded and globalized liberal order and should not be used as the instruments of diplomacy. Non-interference into domestic affairs seems to be key principles, expect in cases of violence or state failure. Institutions matter can help resolve conflicts and provoke stability.

Questions/Comments from the Audience

1. Is it reasonable or realistic to expect systemic primacy to be sustained forever in the indefinite future, and if it is not, what are the ways in which we can envision a more stable equilibrium, say, in 10, 15 or 20 years' time or is there sustained primacy as the source of order?

2. China and the US will learn to share responsibility and leadership. There is an argument that has risen recently, that there are two Asias, one is Economic Asia and the other is Security Asia. Some argues that Economic Asia is led by China while Security Asia led by the U.S, a dual leadership may be achieved if China takes its role as economic power and the US takes its role as a security protector in the region. What is your opinion on this?

3. Which Chinese foreign policy elites are realists? If China continues its growth, it will sooner or later develop its own detailed and practical foreign policy approach beyond the framework of realism. How exactly can the growth of capabilities make China to go beyond realism? What is the causal link between growth of capability and rejection of realism?

Responses:

Da Wei:

1) In China realism is too dominant limiting its freedom of action.

2) As China's power and capability grows, it will be more confident to feel safe. The sense of security is extremely important to develop foreign policy of major powers.

3) Among the elites, actually there are different ideas and debates. There are different

schools of thoughts, different academic focus and different levels among the elites. For example, there are some strong realists, and there are some ones who are more liberal. But I think the main stream is realist. There are different ideas among scholars who follow the US or the West and those who follow Russia. There is a huge difference between academic opinions and those that get reflected in the media.

4) Sino-Russia relations will not accelerate beyond a point and Sino-US will not deteriorate to an intense low-point either. This is a new type of major power relationship which is a strategic partnership.

5) Institutions are not necessarily neutral and realists try to emphasize the power manoeuvre within them. This view prevails amongst many Chinese observers.

6) There is no conspiracy about how China will take over the US. In fact, China does not have a consensus about the goal and the vision of itself in the future. We don't know what kind of China we are going to build in the future.

Wang Dong:

The new structure we are seeing now in Asia is perhaps unsustainable. In theory, at least five different future scenarios can be envisioned:

1) Unfolding of the new Cold War, very likely to happen if China follows the path Yan Xuetong advised to try to compete with the US for the regional dominance. It will be very perilous to follow this path.

2) Sustaining a "Status Quo" forever, but it sounds unlikely to be sustainable.

3) American's full recovery and China's rise is intermitted, for example, by the aging population, and China becomes another Japan. Then China will fail to overtake the US, therefore, US's dominance structure will be restored.

4) China-dominant order because of US's forever decline and China's full rise. But this is an unlikely scenario as well.

5) Gradually China, as an emerging power, and the US as the dominant power, try to learn to co-exist with each other, negotiate and renegotiate on their respective boundaries of power and share the responsibilities and leadership. It will be the most optimistic scenario, but still needs to be chartered out.

6) What kind of domestic constraints do Chinese foreign policy elites have? How much autonomy do they have for now? Do their strategies and does their rationality get affected as a consequence?

7) Chinese former leader Deng Xiaoping said, those countries that stand with America are richer and richer, and those who follow up with Soviet Union became poorer and poorer. Since that last century, Sino-US relations have become the cornerstone of China's foreign policy, and it has the most important position. While China pays more attention to the Sino-US relations, it also builds the partnership or the strategic relations with Russia. Since the Ukraine crisis, how to develop China's partnership relations with Russia while in the same time keeping the most important bilateral relations with US? What is Singapore's role in this crisis and how it can play an active role?

8) To what extent do the European and American sanctions seem to have restrained Russia's behaviour?

9) What would be a breaking point for Russian-China relations to go downwards? In contrast, what would be a promising point? There is 25-30% chance in this particular period for bilateral relationship to improve, more concrete points need to be established. There have been several hesitations and oil gas will not do it, so what would be more substantive points for the two countries to actually work it out?

10) Before the Ukraine Crisis, Prime Minister Abe went to Russia for 5 times, and Abe and Putin invested in each other significantly. Due to the Ukraine crisis, Japan retreated its arms and even went ahead to impose sanctions. What is a long term prospect in Russia-Japan relationship? Based on realism, Russia and Japan could build a partnership to counter-balance China's rise in the region.

11) According to China's peaceful rise strategy, China talks softly but acts very tough. All these are conspiracies to scheme take over the US. Is this a legitimate argument? On seeing China's trajectory over the years, it seems to have a good amount of weight.

12) It is a very typical hedging behaviour that China does not want to choose between Russia and the US.

13) It is very typical for Japan to hedge. Largely due to its alliance with the US, Japan initially wanted to hedge a little, trying to give itself more freedom or options, but it has no choice but to take the de facto position, which is to choose to side with the US. As a junior partner, Japan has no choice but to bandwagon with the US.

14) China wants to yield its power, increase its prestige, and wants to be a great power, but that does not mean China wants to overthrow the US and challenge US hegemony. This was a Cold War position that changed over time.

Panel 4:
Transformation of the world strategic balance after the Ukraine Crisis and its theoretical explanations: the Decline of Unipolar Structure and Behaviour of States

DECLINING UNIPOLARITY,
 GREAT-POWER RELATIONSHIPS AND SYSTEMIC TRANSITION

Liu Feng: *Associate Professor of international relations at Nankai University*

This article inscribes itself on the debate over U.S. decline by answering the following questions: To what extent is U.S. power declining? Does the world undergo systemic transition? What is the key determinate of a peaceful systemic transition?

First, it is inaccurate to equate the decline of U.S. power with the end of U.S. unipolarity. Decline is a process rather than a final outcome. The decline of U.S. power is thus reversible in the short or long term, if the U.S. can continue to boost its economy and reduce some unnecessary military spending. Second, through relative decline does not mean absolute decline, it has significant implications in international relations. As a consequence, we see continued competition for the reform of quota and voting shares between the U.S. and emerging powers in major international economic institutions, which reflects the need to redistribute benefits in the international system. Third, it is useful to make a distinction between the decline of a material unipolarity and the decline of social unipolarity. In this

sense, power and legitimacy are two essential pillars for the maintenance of U.S. hegemony or hierarchy.

On one hand, material unipolarity will be put to an end if a peer superpower will emerge. On the other, social unipolarity cannot be held if most secondary powers do not support the hierarchy and turn to balance against the United States.

Three possibilities have been put forward by scholars from many different perspectives. First, the unipolar system will last for at least a few decades, in which case U.S. power and hegemony would remain unchallenged. Second, a return to a multi-polar world “marks the end of era of the post-World War II Pax Americana”, as suggested by some realists. Third, the rise of a new bipolarity, in which case China could achieve power parity with the U.S. and share its global dominance.

Which possibility occurs is primarily determined by the alignment and realignment among great powers in the coming decades. This central argument has been informed by conventional wisdom that the specific relationships established between dominant powers and rising powers determined the prospect of peaceful systemic transition in the past few centuries. It has been argued that the transition of power from the Great Britain to the United States was relatively peaceful because these two countries were friends with similar domestic institutions and shared culture.

In reality, however, it is not so easy to identify the nature of the relationship between great powers in a specific period. Today, is China a friend or a foe for the United States? Are Russia and China truly friends?

The relationship between great powers or between any social actors in general, can be better understood by making a clear differentiation between the nature of the relationship and the status of the relationship.

The nature of the relationship refers to the “fundamental or essential characteristics” – or the essence of the relationship, which can be classified into three types: friends, rivals, and enemies. Although the friend/enemy dichotomy has been commonly employed in international relations, bringing rival as a “middle type” into the analysis helps us to clarify some misleading and inaccurate concepts like “neither-friend-nor-

enemy” or “half-friend-half-enemy.” The status of the relationship means the current form or manifestation of interaction, usually identified in a specific period. It also has three types: cooperation, competition, and confrontation.

Three European powers – France, Germany, and Great Britain – and Japan belong to the first group; all of them are long time formal allies of the United States. These countries are the friends in the sense that they have no core interest-disputes with the United States. Sometimes, tensions in the security realm may arise with the United States but are often mediated through consultation and coordination. In these instances, their relationship could be labeled as competing friends, but the competition usually limited in a relative short period as well as on a few issues. For example, the rift between the Bush administration and France and Germany over the Iraq War in 2003 was the most salient intra-alliance tension in the post-Cold War era.

For the U.S., China and Russia are real or potential challengers of its hegemony in the post-Cold War era. The strategy towards China and Russia is a mixture of containment and engagement. The considerations of containment are focused on the security realm, as the United States has moved to further expand the NATO frontier into the central European heartland, to strengthen its military ties with traditional Eastern Asian allies as Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Australia, and to develop a global antiballistic missile defence system. There has been a continuing debate on the likelihood of a serious rivalry between China and the United States.

These Powers are not trying change the US-led world order, but at times they pursue their national interests especially in the neighbouring areas. China feels ‘uncomfortable’ with the US strategy towards it, at times making it feel that is being contained. However, Chinese leaders think pragmatically in this regard as it has benefited from participating in the US-led international order, especially with its participation in international economic institutions.

President Xi Jinping stated that China is a builder and contributor to the international system and this remains world view of most Chinese leaders. This is why Chinese lead-

ers have good reason to avoid conflict. Hence ‘does friendship matter’? Some argue that the peaceful transition from the UK as a major power to the United States occurs because of their ‘friendship’. However, this might not be the case. It has been argued by Charles Kupchan that diplomatic engagement can change enemies to friends. China, Russia and the United States need to find a common ground for diplomatic engagement.

NEOCLASSICAL REALIST THEORY OF U.S. ALLIANCE DYNAMICS
IN A (POST?) UNIPOLAR WORLD

Jeffery Taliaferro: *Associate Professor of Political Science, Tufts University*

Recent events such as China’s increasing assertiveness in the East China Sea, Russia’s annexation of Crimea, Russia’s support to insurgents in Eastern Ukraine to the emergence of the so-called Islamic State, might amount to the conclusion that the post-Cold War order which has been largely dominated by the United States is undergoing major change, this view is mistaken. We are still in a unipolar system and the US still holds an overwhelming preponderance on all forms of material power. None of the middle powers such as Russia and China have or are seeking to build material capabilities to challenge the United States on a global scale, especially when it comes to military capabilities and the ability to project power in different parts of the globe.

That said, there are two important things to note: 1) like every other past configuration power in the history of inter-state politics, unipolarity will come to an end and there will be a new distribution of power, eventually. Currently, a transition not of the international system, but within the international system is being witnessed. The 2 questions in this paper are: First, what might explain the variation in the ability of United States to organize collective efforts (alliance management) to deter or contain revisionist major powers, such as Russia and China, and revisionist non-state (or quasi-state) adversaries such as the al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, and more recently the so-called Islamic State? Second, what might explain variation in the ability of the unipole to restrain allies in volatile regions (alliance restraint) from under-

taking particular strategies deemed harmful to U.S. national security interests over time?

The argument is that this depends on the intersection between the international system and American domestic politics. Since the US has had such an abundance of power and that the past challenges it has faced are not existential threats. That has had the perverse effect of raising the domestic hurdles American presidents face when it comes to mobilizing resources when it comes to pursuing their security policies.

Neoclassical realism is to some extent an offshoot of structural realism. It begins with the supposition that the international system and the distribution of power matters. But it parts company with the structural realism of Mearsheimer, Waltz and Giplin in two respects: (1) the information that the international system provides to states, varies. Sometimes states find themselves in highly prescriptive environments in which the identity and the magnitude and time frames of the external threat they face are quite clear. The realm of possible options available to states to redress threats or seize opportunities is also quite clear. But there are other situations in which states face more permissive strategic environments, in which the identity and the magnitude of the threats they face are not quite clear. There is a greater level of uncertainty and the number of options available to states is much broader. It is this 'permissive strategic environment' that the United States has been in since the demise of the Soviet Union. None of the threats that the US has confronted have been the types of existential threats that it confronted during the Cold War or during World War 2.

The type of adversaries the US has confronted over the past 25 years fall into 4 categories:

(1) Recalcitrant minor powers, generally suspected of building nuclear weapons, such as states like Iran, Iraq (2003) and North Korea;

(2) Minor powers with revisionist aspirations like Serbia;

(3) Failed or failing states: Afghanistan, Somalia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Haiti;

(4) Transnational terrorist organizations: AQ, AQAP, ISIS.

None of these are actors that can threaten the survival of the USA. This means that it the US has had considerable latitude in defining

how it could respond to these threats and the resources to addressing these threats is relatively minor. This does not amount to alliance management and restraint.

Neoclassical Realism does not only look at the relative distribution of power among states. It also tries to look at how do international systemic variables play themselves out through the intervening variables of domestic politics and elite perceptions. During the Cold War, with an ever-present threat, domestic hurdles for successive presidents were relatively low. NCR states that FP executives never have unfettered access to material resources. They need to extract material and human resources and generate political support for doing so. Since the end of the Cold War and the existential threat to the United States, mobilization threats for US presidents increased. The types of selling tactics that the Bush, Clinton and Obama administrations have had to use, have to be far more strenuous than those of their Cold War predecessors. It is harder for Obama and his successor that it will be more difficult for them to put screws on their allies. The abilities of them to get Congress to accept economic sanctions, restrictions on foreign military sales, cancelation of foreign military programmes or restrictions on technology transfer will be more difficult.

The paper represents an attempt to develop a framework on the US' ability to mobilize bilateral allies to deal with recalcitrant 'new' powers such as Russia in Ukraine and China in the South China Sea.

FROM THE HEGEMONIC UNIPOLAR TO THE MULTIPOLAR
WORLD: TRANSFORMATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM
AND GLOBAL STRATEGIC BALANCE, PLUS ITS CONSEQUENCES
FOR THE FUTURE

Alexei Voskressenski: *Dean, School of Political Affairs and World Politics, Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO-University)*

The global economy must be seen as a single system and however regions configure differently in international political order and partially, by not wholly in political economic order. From these 2 premises, 3 conclusions can be drawn: (1) the international system is based on European/Western political and economic rules – they were accepted because they were extremely Universalist; (2) Rising non-western states must be

accommodated within the system. The system could be revised by military conflict or evolutionary means. Two spheres can be looked at, economic and then political order.

Economic Sphere:

USA: In today's single economic system, there are trade and financial imbalances between states, which weaken the US economy. This is interpreted as a relative decline in the US economy. Would this result in balancing? Currently, this appears to be an interim period. In the past 110 years, the segment of the US economy within the world economy was no less than 25%. There is no sign of military decline of the USA. Three key things can change the structural dominance of the United States: (1) Loss of internal capital in USA; (2) USA will need to purchase foreign technology; (3) demographical factors. While the latter two are intact, imbalances in these respects will influence debt, there may be a rise in unemployment, possible rise of the Euro against the Dollar and what is important is risks of default in some European states that became important in making economic and other decisions on a global level.

China: Its model of economic rise was based on high income tax, small provision of social benefits, growth in subsidies and cheap labour. This is not sustainable. China needs to rebalance its internal sphere which accompanies challenges. China needs to increase its consumption by 10% a year which is very difficult to do for China. Moreover, the growth in China could be much less than official figure, some analysts predict no more than 3%. USA grows at 2.5% and some analysts predict that growth may be 3%. So largely, both countries will be growing at the same rate.

Russia: Russia used petrodollars to rise economically. Then it tried to de-link from the financial system to lower the risks of losing material capability. Russia tried to do it partially, though now the economic system is a whole unit and it is difficult to predict to what extent Russian attempt may be successful. Russia wants to strengthen itself economically by creating the Eurasian Union (where it is important to see the rules that would be imposed on the members of the Eurasian Union). Like China, Russia then tried to de-link politically from the West to make a con-

siderable point that Russia does not need democracy at least in a Western sense. It linked itself with more compatible countries where it felt it could play a leadership role and regain former status.

Political Sphere:

There is a view that the world is unipolar, but the reality is different. The rise of other powers will change US dominance. There will be a realist-style international competition and this would give a chance to Russia to raise its status, power and so on.

The other vision is that of multipolarity, put forward by China and Russia. Through multipolarity China tries 1) to adjust better between different factions of their ruling elite; 2) to play US globalist elements against US hegemonic militarism; 3) to limit protectionist restrictions on trade; 4) to reduce vulnerability to US pressure despite the increasing dependence on US markets. It is important, in this vision to enhance regionalism as it is a source of capital accumulation and to use middle powers and to reach resources in the developing world. This Chinese vision of multipolarity is different from the Russian vision of multipolarity. Hence, rebalancing may not solve current problems, but new great power cooperation is needed.

The open socio-political order is more competitive and more legitimate since it is based on democratic governance. There is a competition that is going on and the open political access cannot be constructed in some countries for certain reasons. Liberal democratic theory underestimated the ability of authoritative or autocratic states to modernize. This called a trade imbalance and most of the current problems. The transition to open socio-political access in some states became subject to stricter conditions and this was then seen as a loss of democracy. The transformation was vulnerable to external impacts. The theories of national and international security confront the need to consensus and the need to development.

Conclusions:

The main challenges of the existing political order must be dealt with:

1) De-securitization of financial and trade imbalances must be achieved;

- 2) Constructive and political ties must be built with states which have different socio-political structures;
- 3) De-personalize foreign policy interaction;
- 4) De-westernize IR theories;
- 5) Curb unconstructive nationalism in internal politics that subvert rebalancing;

BALANCE OF POWER, COMPONENTS OF POWER, AND SINO-AMERICAN COMPETITION

Steven Lobell: *Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Utah*

What impact will the decline in the unipolar structure and the emergence of a hegemonic multipolar world have on the behavior of the United States and the other major powers? What are the logics and mechanisms of balancing under the conditions of declining unipolarity? In Asia, is great power competition, counter-balancing, and contestation an unfortunate tragedy of great power politics and is it occurring already between a declining U.S. and an emerging China? Is the “Thucydides Trap” of hegemonic war inevitable between the U.S. and China or are President Xi Jinping and some American officials correct that a New Model of Major Power Relations (NMMPR) is possible? Is the American pivot or rebalancing to Asia, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and the Air-Sea Battle (ASB) strategy a form of economic and military containment, as Chinese officials maintain? Will the crisis in the Ukraine impact America’s pivot from Europe?

The Obama administration’s pivot to Asia reflects heightened U.S. economic, diplomatic, security, and military attention to the Asia Pacific region. The pivot entails boosting the U.S. presence in the Pacific including new troop deployments to Australia, new naval deployments to Singapore, and U.S. military personnel stationed in the Philippines and to possibly include air or naval forces; new agreements such as the U.S.-Singapore agreement to allow for four U.S. warships, the new Littoral Combat Ship (LCS); reaffirming existing alliance agreements; a commitment by the Navy to deploy 60% of its fleet in the Pacific rather than 50%; the development by the Navy and Air Force of a joint operating concept known as the Air-Sea Battle (ASB) strategy to better integrate surveillance

and airstrike platforms to attack coastal powers; and greater U.S. engagement with multilateral institutions in the Asia-Pacific region including membership in the East Asia Summit (EAS), enhanced commitment to ASEAN including a permanent ambassador to ASEAN, the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, and negotiation of the TPP. The pivot also signals that the U.S. is balancing its historic involvement in North-east Asia with a renewed emphasis to countries in Southeast Asia including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

Though Sino-American relations have witnessed an uptick in competition, it does not mean that conflict, competition, counter-balancing, and hegemonic war – or more broadly that the tragedy great power politics is inevitable in a post-hegemonic order.

In February 2012, then Vice President Xi Jinping introduced the concept of a “new model of major power relations (NMMPR).” Hillary Clinton later stated that “together the United States and China are trying to do something that is historically unprecedented, to write a new answer to the age-old question of what happens when an established power and a rising power meet?”

In an interview with Evan Medeiros, the Senior Director for Asian Affairs in the National Security Council, the belief of a new model of great power relations was repeated:

“Medeiros stated that “We see the concept as a way to encourage – to ensure that China’s rise is a force of stability in the region... When we say a ‘new model,’ the question is ‘what’s new’? And my point is its new only insofar as we are able to develop patterns of interaction and habits of cooperation that allow us to avoid the historic trap of an established power and a rising power inevitably coming into conflict.”

In a post hegemonic multipolar order, two alternative realist strategies for the United States challenge the optimism of NMMPR and reflect a return to great power politics. Deep engagement entails maintaining and possibly expanding America’s hegemonic leadership. Proponents contend that America’s military preponderance dissuades China from territorial expansion and from challenging U.S. leadership, and reassures allies such as South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and Japan.

An alternative realist strategy is offshore balancing which entails American retrenchment in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Proponents argue that the concentration of American power including the pivot to Asia, the ASB, and the TPP is self-defeating, and is antagonizing and provoking soft and even hard balancing by China including Beijing's A2/AD asymmetric strategy.

A New Model of Realist Major Power Relations (NMRMPR) is possible.

An alternative theoretical paradigm can better explain the current and future trends in the international arena; the extant realist approaches miss how states assess power trends, the fungibility or usefulness of material capabilities, and whether states balance against the accumulations and concentrations of power. Aggregate power is not very fungible. More important than increases in China's relative share of material capabilities is whether Beijing has or will have the appropriate real assets. Finally, when states balance, they target their counter-balancing against the specific elements of a rival power.

U.S.-Chinese territorial, economic, and military competition is on the rise. In terms of Sino-American territorial and maritime disputes, one point of contestation is China's unilateral change to the status quo in the form of the nine dashed map that includes a 'u' shape line (the so called nine-dash line) which claims the bulk of South China Sea as China's - much like Russia's unilateral change to its borders with the Ukraine.

Another recent Sino-American territorial dispute is that China unilaterally declared the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Sino-American military contestation is also on the rise. Since the 1990's, rather than directly challenging the United States, China has advanced its anti-ship missiles, short and medium range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, stealth submarines, and cyber and space arms to challenge U.S. naval and air superiority, especially in China's littoral waters. These anti-access/anti-denial asymmetric weapons raise the cost for the U.S. in projecting American force by undermining fixed bases in Japan and Guam, and aircraft carriers.

Economically, Sino-American contestation has resulted in competing regional trade organizations.

The U.S. is working to advance TPP and China is pushing to advance the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which excludes the U.S. In the debate over the direction of America's post-Cold War grand strategy, two alternative realist grand strategies for the United States challenge the optimism of Xi Jinping's NMMPR and reflect a return to great power politics of counter-balancing, competition, and contestation.

Offshore balancing maintains that the concentration of U.S. power has provoked China to counter-balancing through soft balancing such as the RCEP and hard balancing through an A2/AD asymmetrical strategy.

Alternatively, a second realist strategy of deep engagement maintains that American primacy requires improved capabilities to defeat A2/AD strategies and to discourage China from moving beyond this asymmetrical strategy to build a blue-water navy. Moreover, American allies have complained that Washington needs to play a more engaged role in the region including new naval deployments and new military cooperation.

For the United States, offshore balancing entails that Washington engage in a policy of global restraint, wherever possible. Based on the premise of balance of power theory, offshore balancing translates into U.S. retrenchment though not complete withdraw and rejection of treaty commitments from locales including Europe, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and Asia, and re-negotiating security treaties with Japan, South Korea, and NATO. Offshore balancing is not an isolationist grand strategy and it does not call for the U.S. to rely on weak neighbours, large oceans, and nuclear deterrence to retreat.

American off-shore balancing involves regional states playing a larger role of counter-balancing China. By the U.S. playing a more restrained global role, regional balances will be restored by local states. An attempt by China to achieve local dominance will provoke the other regional states to counter balance. Specifically, China's rise will be countered by India and Russia, as well as Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam. American retrenchment from Asia is particularly easy since there is no imminent regional hegemon and therefore time for local states to form a counter-balance.

For offshore balancing proponents, a strategy of deep engagement or attempting to extend

America's global leadership is self-defeating for three reasons. First, the underlying assumption of offshore balancing is that the accumulation of American power, including a strong U.S. military pivot to Asia and the Air-Sea Battle concept, is self-defeating and is provoking soft and hard counterbalancing by China.

Second, deep engagement encourages reckless behaviour on the part of America's allies. Based on the logic of moral hazard from the insurance industry, U.S. treaty and security commitments embolden allies to act more recklessly and aggressively than if they had no security commitments. Moreover, they risk pulling the United States into their local disputes.

Third, deep engagement is expensive and contributes directly to American economic decline. The logic is two-fold: first, military expenditure squeezes-out and diverts resources (both financial and human capital) available for domestic investment, which reduces the size of the pie for future spending, including military and entitlement programs. Second, deep engagement encourages free riding and discourages burden sharing by allies.

To be the security partner of choice by regional states requires that the U.S. remains powerful and engaged in the region. By extending the American security umbrella to its allies, they do not need to provide as much of their own security. By keeping their own military spending artificially low they do not provoke the security dilemma. Deep engagement proponents challenge the claims of offshore balancing. Finally, deep engagement proponents do not accept the claim that military spending contributes to imperial overextension, overstretch, and decline. First, they argue that the U.S. is a wealthy country and can afford to spend 4.5% or more of its GDP on defense. Second, they discount the claim that there is a direct connection between military spending and economic decline.

The "Thucydides Trap" and the tragedy of great power politics between the U.S. and China are not inevitable, even in a post-hegemonic and multipolar world order. In recent testimony before Congress, Daniel Russel stated that "there are those who argue that cold war-like rivalry is inevitable and that the United States and China are condemned to a zero-sum struggle for supremacy, if not conflict. I reject such mechanistic thinking."

Disaggregate Power: When American decision-makers assess China's power trend to forecast future power projections and enmities, they ask themselves several questions. First, which components or elements of China's national power are increasing and will they peak above or below their own components of national power? The four general categories of national power include: changes in political leadership or ideology; shifts in territory or population; growth in real assets including equipment, plant, knowledge, technology, and inventory; and the increases in land-based military, naval, and air power.

Moreover, in assessing trends, state leaders ask themselves whether specific components of China's power will peak above critical thresholds and red-lines of power? Finally, state leaders will ask how interchangeable are resources intended for one task used for another?

For the United States, the foundation of its military security is its Command of the Global Commons. Command of the Commons allows Washington to extend its reach far beyond its waters edge. Command of the Commons represents the United States' command over the globe's sea, space, and air. According to Barry Posen, this is supported by nuclear-attack submarines, surface fleet and aircraft carriers, satellite communication and anti-satellite technology, fighters and bomber aircraft, air and sea lift capacity, explains why there is no balancing against the United States.

In contrast to the expectations of balance of power theory, components of power can explain why there is no significant Asian counter-balancing against the U.S. despite its unprecedented strength. First, continental land-powers such as Russia do not assess America's Command of the Commons as a major challenge to their vital interests. Second, China's barrier to entry to developing a naval capability of command of the global commons is high. In disaggregating U.S. power, the real assets for Command of the Commons include specific weapons and platforms that are expensive, and require a huge scientific and industrial base.

Third, China is a continental land-power and shares borders with fourteen neighbouring states, some of whom have nuclear weapons and large land armies, and whom Beijing has engaged in border disputes and wars. Instead, as continental powers, they have pursued a maritime asymmetric strategy of access-denial

capability to defend maritime approaches and shores. Moreover, China has limited geographical access to open seas, which like Germany and Russia, can easily be blockaded and choked.

In disaggregating China's power, one element of concern for Washington is that Beijing is acquiring access and area denial capability. It might also undermine the resolve of America's allies in the Pacific, encourage bandwagoning with China, and lead Beijing to believe that the U.S. will abandon its allies. Concomitantly, though China is a continental land-power, Beijing does not need to become a peer or even a near-peer naval competitor with the U.S. and its allies to pose a major danger. In contrast to the expectations of power transition and long cycle theories, China will not necessarily wait until its GDP or military spending surpasses America's to challenge.

China's military power is increasing relatively to the past levels and at a faster ratio according to reports by the Defense Department and IHS Jane's. However, China's military power does not necessarily translate into outcomes; China needs the appropriate elements of power to pose a credible threat. In disaggregating China's national power and given that Beijing does not have a blue-water navy but just commissioned its first aircraft carrier, its first at-sea landings, and has no integrated carrier task group, Washington should not exaggerate China's challenge. Washington should monitor China's naval power trend and specifically the supporting production, plant, skilled labor, and capacity to construct a green or a blue-water navy to determine whether Beijing is in fact challenging America's Command of the Commons.

Targeted Balancing: When states counter-balance, they target their balancing against the particular power trend that challenges vital interests, in both unipolar and multipolar orders. If no components of power of an emerging state challenge vital interests, then no targeted balancing will occur even if the state's aggregate capability is growing or is large. Targeted balancing includes a combination of naval construction to maintain naval supremacy, technology such as anti-ballistic missile and anti-rocket defense, blinding cyber warfare capabilities, and stealth attacks to destroy its anti-ship missiles, submarines, destroyers, and fighters.

The U.S. pivot or rebalancing represents an enhanced economic, military, and diplomatic

presence in the Asia-Pacific. However, it does not mean that the United States and China are destined for strategic rivalry, confrontation, or hegemonic war. The import of this model for understanding what role America sees for China and Russia in the Asia-Pacific is several-fold. First, if no components or elements of power of China's power (or Russia's) poses a threat then it should not provoke American counterbalancing or a preventive war despite China's growing material capabilities.

In contrast to arguments which emphasize shifts in power alone, China does not need to become a peer or even a near-peer competitor to pose a major danger to the United States. China does not need to possess a comprehensive toolbox of capabilities. Rather, as a partial power, what matters is whether China has the correct elements. The same holds for Russia. American leaders should assess power trends based on components or elements of national power rather than balancing against aggregate shifts and transitions in capability. Specifically, relative American military or economic decline and even if the U.S. is surpassed in 2027 or 2035 by China does not mean that America is necessarily less secure.

Discussant Alexander Korolev:

1) Liu Feng: The typology of great power relations is slightly complicated.

2) Jeffery Taliaferro:

a. There are differences between the objects balancing is targeted against as discussed in the paper. China and Russia are continental nuclear powers, are in the same category as terrorist organizations like Taliban and ISIS. There are different dynamics of mobilizing in both these categories is entirely different.

b. International system in transition is when there is ambiguity. When there is a clear unipole, is it really ambiguous?

c. Is the ability to project power across different regions a good indication of American superiority? Due to its geographical characteristics, does it have choice to project power in any other way?

d. The discussion about domestic politics loses the neoclassical realist link between domestic and systemic levels.

e. If the US fails to mobilize its allies, what will it mean for the sustainability of unipolarity?

3) Alexei Voskressenski: While the distinctions between the categories of modern political systems are clear, do 'natural' and 'open' access societies really differ in their international pursuits? Are they not driven by national interests?

4) Steven Lobell:

a. According to the argument made, it seems that there is assumption that policy makers make right and correct evaluations of power. Who decides what component of power should be balanced against?

b. While power is multidimensional and there are many components of power. Can this mere fact, guarantee confrontation will be avoided?

Questions from the Audience

1) Russia's main challenge is not America's navy, but NATO as it gives institutional power to the US. Hence, which competent of power matters in the emerging order? In the case of China, America's navy and alliances would be the biggest component of American power to balance against it. China attempts to break these alliances have only reinforced American hegemony. What action would challenge its hegemony like Britain did towards Germany?

2) Susan Strange provides a similar assessment of the sources of structural power that justify give America's power longevity. Do emerging powers have the ability to challenge these forces? America has been able to socialize its hegemony and has greater freedom to use force because it is advantage of being the hegemon.

3) In reference to the argument that China's growing blue water navy is a challenge to American hegemony in the Pacific, it is unclear what the 'Chinese challenge' means? Do China's naval capabilities rising numerically attribute to a challenge? Or will it be a challenge only if China deliberately builds up an offensive naval strategy to push USA out of East Asia?

4) Examples of Chinese 'behaviour' in the South and East China seas are referred to. From the Western perspective, it is easy to see this as 'assertiveness'. But from the Chinese perspective, while the ADIZ may have been handled in a clumsy manner, it must be acknowledged that China has the right to set an ADIZ. There is Lot of hypocrisy in the way China is analyzed. China is prepared to work on joint development.

5) To what extent domestic hurdles in mobilizing resources in American foreign policy apply to the post-9/11 context?

6) If the hurdles at the end of the Cold War were so high, why are foreign policy executives pursuing a demanding strategy of primacy and not off-shore balancing?

7) When does public opinion become a constraint on elite decision making?

8) How does 'international status' fit into neoclassical realism?

9) If the USA is going to remain in power for the foreseeable future, why is the USA so anxious about security?

10) Being a unipolar power, the US has to take a disproportionate share of the burden of maintaining order. How does it divide its commitments?

11) Can some sort of mutual deterrence be achieved between the US and China in the area of 'cyber-space' and 'the outer space'?

Responses:

Steven Lobell:

1) The problem with aggregate paper is that states act according to dictates of aggregate power. They risk the pathological outcome of balancing against a state that does not really pose a challenge.

2) In the case of Britain and Germany, there was a very powerful Germany in the 1880's. There was no British balancing against it, though this would be expected according to balance of power logic. The reason for this was that there were no German 'elements' (such as the navy) that existed. As Germany developed its navy in 1902 onwards, that's when the balancing behaviour occurred in Britain. If Britain began balancing against Germany in the 1880's, it would have led to the pathological outcome of doing so against a power that did not really pose a challenge.

3) States can misperceive power. The danger of this is balancing based on aggregate power.

4) In order to define 'which elements' should be monitored it is important to look at the 'structural modifiers'. Hence, if the US is a naval power, then it will see naval elements as a challenge.

5) In order to define what the 'challenge' is. It is important to look at specific elements such as manpower, capacity and so on.

Jeffrey Taliafaro:

1) After 9/11, there were less domestic hurdles indeed. But the aftermath of the Iraq War and the subsequent events that followed, domestic mobilization hurdles became greater.

2) Off-shore balancing may not necessarily be less costly for the USA. There would need to be an enormous network of foreign bases and elaborate security alliances.

Liu Feng:

1) There are three schools of thought pertaining to understanding China's naval strategy:

- a. China should be a continental power,
- b. China should be a naval power,
- c. China should be both.

The debate surrounds the notion that whether China should develop its own aircraft carrier. The debate is not relevant now as it has done so. For China's leaders there are 3 reasons for China to develop its naval capabilities:

- a. China tries to deter US in its neighbourhood,
- b. Defend its right on territorial rights in disputed areas,
- c. Tries to achieve a comfortable regional environment.

2) A two dimensional analysis is less linear than Wendt's single dimensional analysis.

Alexei Voskressenski:

1) Misperception of the elite can result in conflict.

2) The perception amidst the Russian elite is that USA will collapse and so will the dollar. Hence the strategic perception - the USA will collapse.

3) Stability is also a fundamental interest. Stability is a specific equilibrium between a country and a region, political order and development.

4) Rising powers challenge the West differently (China economically and Russia militarily). There are chances of an accord and the future is still unknown – BRICS is a symbol of it.

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