

With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S became the world's only "hyper power". A state defined as possessing such overwhelming economic, technological, political, and military powers and resources, it has no rivals. No individual state, nor any alliance of states are capable of challenging its global primacy. Washington can project its power anywhere across the globe at any time. Power so intimidating, it should fulfill the maxim of Sun Tzu, China's great military strategist: "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting." Power that has, however, experienced unanticipated limitations, writes Joseph E Fallon.

First, Washington's vast array of forces have failed to achieve a political victory, let alone peace, in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, or Yemen.

Second, and more importantly, Washington's geopolitical strategy to maintain U.S. global primacy by checking the rising power and ambitions of China has been checkmated by Beijing.

The period, 1992-2012, are the years during which a containment policy was formulated, debated, and implemented. It began with general goals and unnamed rivals. It ended with clear objectives and a specified threat -- China.

In 1992, a year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, The Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) -- which "reflects the President's National Security Strategy (NSS), the SECDEF's National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the Chairman's National Military Strategy (NMS)" as well as the "results of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), and the annual Chairman's Program Recommendations (CPR)" -- summarized what the strategic goals of the U.S. were to be in the post-Soviet world. "Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival... that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union..." To accomplish this, "we [must] endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power." This would become a bipartisan foreign policy position supported by both Democratic and Republican Administrations.

In 1997, late American scholar and presidential adviser to Democratic and Republican presidents, Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* arguably his most important work. It was an in-depth historical and political analysis of international relations, geopolitics, and geostrategy defending, but more

importantly, expanding upon the recommendations of the Defense Planning Guidance.

Dr. Brzezinski asserted Washington needed to preserve America's position of global primacy "to shape a truly cooperative global community, in keeping with long-range trends and with the fundamental interests of humankind."

He explained how U.S. global primacy is to be maintained. "For America, the chief geopolitical prize is Eurasia...A power that dominates Eurasia would control two of the world's three most advanced and economically productive regions. A mere glance at the map also suggests that control over Eurasia would almost automatically entail Africa's subordination, rendering the Western Hemisphere and Oceania geopolitically peripheral...The most immediate task is to make certain that no state or combination of states gains the capacity to expel the United States from Eurasia or even to diminish significantly its decisive arbitrating role."

In 2000, in an article in Foreign Affairs Condoleezza Rice, future U.S. Secretary of State in the Republican Administration of President George W. Bush, named China as the rising threat to America's position of global primacy.

"China is not a 'status quo' power but one that would like to alter Asia's balance of power in its own favor." To prevent China from becoming a regional power, let alone a world power, Ms. Rice advocated, in effect, adoption of a containment policy toward China. "The United States must deepen its cooperation with Japan and South Korea and maintain its commitment to a robust military presence in the region", and should "pay closer attention to India's role in the regional balance."

In 2002, the National Security Strategy of the United States of America affirmed the official policy of Washington is insuring "Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States." It then criticized China for "pursuing advanced military capabilities that can threaten its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region...."

In 2005, Washington portrayed China as a direct threat to the rest of Asia. On June 4, 2005, in a speech he delivered in Singapore, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asserted China was "expanding its missile forces, allowing them to reach targets in many areas of the world"

adding "Since no nation threatens China, one must wonder: Why this growing investment? Why these continuing and expanding arms purchases? Why these continuing robust deployments?"

On February 5, 2006, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), "a legislatively-mandated review of U.S. Department of Defense strategy and priorities", was released. It reasserted the official American position, first articulated in the DFG in 1992, Washington will not permit emergence of a competing superpower. The U.S. "will attempt to dissuade any military competitor from developing disruptive or other capabilities that could enable regional hegemony or hostile action against the United States." It then singled out China as the most likely threat. "Of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could over time offset traditional U.S. military advantages absent U.S. counter strategies."

Counter-strategies were adopted by Washington, the foundations for which were already in place. There are 400 U.S. military bases throughout Asia and the Pacific that effectively encircle China to the west, south, and east.

To China's west, the U.S. has joint military exercises with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and military bases in Afghanistan. But they have been ineffective in containing Chinese influence in Central Asia due to political volatility in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and Washington's continuing war against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

To China's south, the U.S. has "strategic partnerships" with India and Vietnam and a military alliance with Thailand.

To China's east, the U.S. has military alliances with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Australia and security relationships with Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

It is the implicit threat posed by U.S. alliances surrounding China's vulnerable eastern coastline, the centre of Beijing's economic power which fuels her military modernisation and expansion programs that was thought to insure the success of containment. These alliances are part of the greater "island chain strategy". First proposed during the Korean War by US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles to contain the Soviet Union, now being applied to China, it consists of two

chains of islands, each chain at a different distance from China's coast. The first extends from Japan to Okinawa to Taiwan to the Philippines to Malaysia. The second stretches from Japan to Guam to Palau to Indonesia. The first island chain is the more important as it enables the U.S. and its allies to be in a position to blockade Chinese ports, thereby neutralising the Chinese fleet and crippling the Chinese economy.

Containing China also requires establishing an Asian counter point to Beijing to insure a balance of power on the continent. India was the logical choice.

In territorial size, China is the third largest country in the world; India is the sixth.

In population size, China has the largest population in the world; India, the second largest.

In terms of economic power, China has the second largest economy in the world; India the fifth.

In terms of world military power, China ranks third, India fourth.

China responded with counter measures. First, India the "crown jewel" in the U.S. containment policy has been checkmated by Beijing. Through a network of naval bases called "string of pearls" stretching west to east from Pakistan to Maldives to Sri Lanka to Bangladesh to Myanmar to Thailand and a series of roads from China to Pakistan, Myanmar and Bangladesh, India has been completely encircled by land and sea.

Second, Vietnam with an export-dependent economy has also been checkmated. China's "string of pearls" stretching north to south from Hong Kong to Hainan to the Paracel Islands to the Spratly Island to Sihanoukville, Cambodia surround Vietnam's coast.

Third, China's build up in the contested Spratly Islands has compromised the first island chain strategy by neutralizing the southern islands. China now has the ability not only to prevent a blockade of all of its ports, but to project its military force against the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, if needed.

Fourth, China's good relations with Myanmar to Thailand's north and west and Cambodia to Thailand's east effectively limits the political options and contains the military power of Bangkok.

In January 2012, the Defense Strategic Guidance document, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense" was circulated by the Democratic Administration of President Barack Obama. It stated the focus of U.S. foreign policy will shift

from Afghanistan and the Middle East to Asia and the Pacific. A move dubbed the "Asia Pivot". In June of that year, Democratic Defense Secretary Leon Panetta delivered a speech in Singapore sending "a clear signal that the United States opposes China's claim to island territories [Spratly Islands] far beyond its shores" and stating the bulk of the US naval fleet would be shifted to the Pacific by 2020.

To paraphrase Chatham House, "the U.S. plays poker, while China plays chess". With an increased U.S. military presence to its east, China turns west. Beijing has responded with the "One Belt, One Road" initiative. This will create a "new silk road" financed in part by China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Consisting of complementing land and maritime routes connected by networks of roads, railroads, sea ports, and air ports, it will economically and physically integrate 68 countries across Asia, Europe, and Africa, 4.4 billion people, representing 40 percent of global GNP, to China.

Beijing's power in Eurasia will increase. Washington's influence in Eurasia will diminish. Beijing has checkmated U.S. containment policy

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