



Recently, we discussed the “pro” side of the February public forum resolution,

**Resolved: On balance, the rise of China is beneficial to the interests of the United States.**

Today, we’re discussing the possible negative effects of China’s rise on American interests. As we discussed previously, this in large part has to do with winning a characterization of China. The authors we’ll review shortly cast China as far less benign and more **imperialist** (looking to promote their influence broadly even at the expense of others). Many commentators believe that China’s recent economic and military policies reveal aggressive intentions toward the U.S. and other great powers and indicate a desire to become the world’s sole superpower regardless of the cost.

The first realm in which analysts question China’s motives is the economic realm. We will begin there.

- 1. Currency manipulation – Some say China artificially undervalues their currency (money) in relation to other currencies on the global market (like the dollar, the Euro, etc.). This allows China to sell goods and services very cheaply on the global market, giving China an unfair advantage versus countries who value their currency highly. If China continues to grow and capture more of the global market, this unfair competition can damage the U.S. and Europe. Brian Palmer explains:**

**Brian Palmer, 2012** [“If Currency Manipulation Is So Great for Exports, Why Don’t We Do It?” October 17, Slate.]

President Obama and Gov. Romney agreed on at least one thing in Tuesday night’s debate: China cheats at international trade. Romney accused China of stealing our intellectual property. The president said China flooded the U.S. market with cheap tires. Worst of all, China depresses the price of its exports by manipulating its currency. Now that currency manipulation a major buzz phrase in the presidential campaign, it requires the full Explainer treatment. How does China manipulate its currency? By buying U.S. government debt. In a free market, a trade surplus should increase the value of a country’s currency. People want to be paid in local money, creating demand for the currency, which in turn raises its value. Over time, this provides a counterweight against runaway trade imbalances. That process doesn’t happen in China, because the government constantly prints new currency and uses it to buy U.S. dollars and U.S. government debt, thereby flooding the market with Chinese currency and increasing demand for American dollars. As of this writing, China holds \$1.15 trillion in U.S. government debt, and the country’s foreign exchange reserves are nearly as great as those of all advanced economies combined.

The currency issue is a complicated one, but here are the basics: Normally, when a country grows (rises) their currency goes up in value because their goods and services are more widely used. This is why nations with relatively small economies have currencies (money) that is not worth very much relatively. China, however, keeps the value of their currency low by using it to buy U.S. government **debt** (the amount by which the government spends but is unable to pay up-front). This allows them to push the value of the dollar up while maintaining their currency as low. This wouldn’t be a big deal, but it allows China to sell their products more cheaply on the global market. For example, a tire that costs \$5.00 to manufacture may need to be sold for \$100.00 to make a profit. To achieve that same profit margin (amount of money made) a Chinese tire may only need to be sold for \$50.00. For this reason, many companies prefer to save money on Chinese products. If China can out-compete the U.S. on price every



time, American goods become less competitive and American industries become less profitable. That's bad for the economy.

Additionally, China's laws allow them to infringe on **intellectual property rights (IPR)**. Intellectual property rights are essentially the laws that ensure companies have the right to be paid for their own ideas. It's the reason you can't open a computer company and start building brand-name computers and selling them for less. The idea isn't your **intellectual property**.

2. **IPR issues. Chinese companies sometimes violate the intellectual property of U.S. companies and sell "knock-off" products (fake products made to look exactly like the real thing) cheaply. This costs American companies lots of money because the real products can't compete with cheap imitations and have difficulty prosecuting violators overseas. The Huffington Post explains:**

**Huffington Post, 2011** ["Timothy Geithner: China 'Very, Very Aggressive' In Stealing U.S. Technology," September 23.]

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said on Thursday that China is holding to its decades-old strategy to steal American intellectual property, in a pointed statement reflecting U.S. officials' growing impatience with Beijing. "They China have made possible systematic stealing of intellectual property of American companies and have not been very aggressive to put in place the basic protections for property rights that every serious economy needs over time," Geithner told a forum in Washington. "We're seeing China continue to be very, very aggressive in a strategy they started several decades ago, which goes like this: you want to sell to our country, we want you to come produce here ... if you want to come produce here, you need to transfer your technology to US," Geithner said. Although unusually direct, Geithner's comments echo a common refrain from U.S. officials and executives. The new U.S. Ambassador to China, Gary Locke, who has assailed China in the past for its trade practices, has put the defense of U.S. intellectual property among his chief priorities. China has said it would drop some of its "indigenous innovation" rules that have riled foreign companies who say access to government equipment and technology orders hinge on their transferring patents and other intellectual property.

This is because of China's "indigenous innovation" laws that require companies to transfer some of their **proprietary** (that is, secret to everyone except the people at that company) information to China to produce there. Robert Samuelson explains:

**Robert Samuelson, 2010** ["The China Miscalculation," RealClearPolitics, February 15.]

China's worldview threatens America's geopolitical and economic interests. Just recently, 19 U.S. trade associations wrote the Obama administration warning that new Chinese rules for "indigenous innovation" could "exclude a wide array of U.S. firms" from the Chinese market -- or force them to turn over advanced technology. (British firms are so incensed by "overwhelming protectionism" that some may quit China, reports the Telegraph newspaper.)

This is a devastating choice for U.S. companies. If they choose not to invest in China or sell their technology there, they miss out on one of the fastest-growing markets in the world. If they choose to sell their products there, they risk their intellectual property being stolen and sold to other companies who then unfairly compete for market share. As China rises, more companies will face this choice and will end up with serious problems no matter what they decide.



As an additional economic problem, a rising China presents the related issue of pollution as an unpleasant byproduct of rapid development.

- 3. Pollution – Laws restricting environmental damage in China are not as strict as they are in the U.S. or other developed countries. For this reason, development of the industrial base may be very damaging to the global environment (and thus not in the interests of the U.S.) Jonathan Watts explains:**

**Jonathan Watts, accessed 2013** ["Environment," The Diplomat.]

From a purely economic perspective, it looks very much like a juggernaut. Having overtaken Japan and still motoring along at double-digit pace with a fifth of the world's population on board, the speed and size of China's GDP is awe-inspiring. But from an environmental viewpoint, it more closely resembles a jalopy—belching fumes, wasting fuel and constantly in need of a radiator refill. Over the past five years, China has become the world's biggest energy consumer and greenhouse gas emitter. Its longstanding problem of water scarcity in the north has been compounded by pollution, overuse and drought, to leave an accumulated deficit of more than 200 billion cubic meters. These problems show no signs of abating without an overhaul. On the latest trends of population growth, rising affluence and energy use, the emissions of the average person in China will surpass those of Europeans within five years and Americans within 10. Demands for water, energy, food and almost every other resource will also intensify, despite warnings that they are already beyond sustainable levels. Until now, Beijing has managed to avert a crisis with a series of supply-side solutions to provide more water and fuel, while tinkering with the engine mid-drive.

The argument here is simple: Development can be messy. China's "rise" refers to its attempt to become a fully industrialized economy equal to, or exceeding, the United States. This requires many things to be built, resources to be used, and wildlife habitats to be cleared. All of these things have a serious potential to be destructive to the environment. In China's case, there are many analysts who would argue that the effect has been pronounced. Although this may seem like a regional problem, the environment is **interconnected** (linked) globally. Thus, if a river in China becomes a toxic waste dump, that affects the ocean, the ocean affects the coasts of other nations, which can affect subsistence fishing, migratory birds, and other delicate ecosystems. Thus, if China's rise is really destructive to the environment it will inevitably affect the U.S. as well, and not in a way as would benefit America's interests.

As previously stated, the potential downsides of China's rise cannot be restricted to the economic. There are a variety of security issues as well. We'll discuss those now.

- 4. Security issues – China is modernizing the military. Some analysts say it's mostly defensive, but many disagree and fear that China is gearing up for confrontation with the United States. Bill Gertz explains,**

**Bill Gertz, 2009** ["Inside the Ring," November 5, The Washington Times.]

Recent Chinese military advances include the deployment of a new attack submarine, the development of a long-range cruise missile, precision-guided ballistic missiles and new high-technology warships. Navy Capt. Lydia Robertson, a spokeswoman for Adm. Willard, would not elaborate on the admiral's claim. However, she said "the admiral's remarks were a comment about the lack of clear intent from China on developing capabilities." "As he said in that interview, one of his responsibilities is to better relations and levels of understanding regarding their intentions and military development, with a focus on collective regional engagement," Capt. Robertson said. John J. Tkacik Jr., a China specialist and former State Department intelligence



official, said China's new military technologies **"are now coming out to bite us."** "And we haven't prepared for them because we have always been surprised," Mr. Tkacik told Inside the Ring. "And we're always surprised because we simply can't believe that China really is seeking regional military pre-eminence. I think that's changing now, but it might be too late." Mr. Tkacik said a number of outside academics and researchers have been warning for years about apparent new advances in terminal guidance technologies for high-speed Chinese missiles that can re-enter the atmosphere and target moving naval ships at sea without the hypersonic speeds affecting their targeting. "China is moving ahead across the full spectrum of new offensive military technologies and capabilities," Mr. Tkacik said, noting that some defense intelligence officials understand the problem. "But I think there are others in the intelligence community that either don't think China is a real threat or worry that defending against new Chinese technologies might offend Beijing," Mr. Tkacik said. China, for its part, continues to insist that its military buildup is benign. One of China's two most senior military officers was in Washington recently to outline the People's Liberation Army's position on war amid calls by U.S. military leaders for greater transparency. "To deter and win wars remains the top priority of the armed forces, and the capability to win local wars in conditions of informati[on]ization is vital to the capabilities for multiple military tasks," said Gen. Xu Caihou, vice chairman of the Communist Party of China's Central Military Commission, in a speech Oct. 26 to the Center for Strategic and International Studies. In addition to war-fighting, Chinese military forces will be called on to work domestically, Gen. Xu said, noting that the 2.4 million troops of the PLA will conduct counterterrorism, disaster relief, peacekeeping and "protection of rights and interests," international relief, and "security and protection," an apparent reference to putting down internal dissent, as took place in Tibet in 2008 and western Xinjiang province earlier this year. Gen. Xu also blamed recent incidents of Chinese ships harassing U.S. surveillance ships on "intensive reconnaissance missions conducted by U.S. naval ships in China's [Exclusive Economic Zone], which infringed upon Chinese interests." The Pentagon has said the incidents were "harassment" by Chinese vessels in international waters and led to the dispatch of U.S. warships in the South China Sea and off China's northern coast.

Wines and Wong continue this line of argument, stating:

**Michael Wines and Edward Wong, 2011** ["China's Push to Modernize Military Is Bearing Fruit," January 5, New York Times.]

The Pentagon's official view has long been that it welcomes a stronger Chinese military as a partner with the United States to maintain open sea lanes, fight piracy and perform other international duties now shouldered — and paid for — by American service members and taxpayers. But Chinese military leaders have seldom offered more than a glimpse of their long-term military strategy, and the steady buildup of a force with offensive abilities well beyond Chinese territory clearly worries American military planners. "When we talk about a threat, it's a combination of capabilities and intentions," said Abraham M. Denmark, a former China country director in Mr. Gates's office. "The capabilities are becoming more and more clearly defined, and they're more and more clearly targeted at limiting American abilities to project military power into the western Pacific." "What's unclear to us is the intent," he added. "China's military modernization is certainly their right. What others question is how that military power is going to be used." Mr. Denmark, who now directs the Asia-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security in Washington, said China's recent strong-arm reaction to territorial disputes with Japan and Southeast Asian neighbors had given both the Pentagon and China's neighbors cause for concern.

If China's rise really has the goal of unseating the U.S. as sole global superpower, some argue that they will eventually clash with the U.S. militarily. Unlike offshore balancing theorists like Layne, many believe the transition away from U.S. hegemony would not be a peaceful one and, as the U.S. would fight to maintain dominance, China will need a military capable of winning that war. Thus, when intelligence reports indicate that China is building such a military, it's reasonable to question if the intent is to ultimately confront the U.S. and other great powers.

Additionally, Robert Samuelson outlines an important framing issue:

**Robert Samuelson, 2010** ["The China Miscalculation," RealClearPolitics, February 15.]



Most American-Chinese disputes reflect China's unwillingness to endanger domestic goals for international ends. It won't commit to binding greenhouse gas cuts because these could reduce economic growth and (again) jobs. On Iran, it values its oil investments more than it fears Iranian nukes. Likewise, it worries that unrest in North Korea could send refugees spilling across the border. Because Taiwan is regarded as part of China, U.S. arms sales there become domestic interference. And censorship is needed to maintain one-party control. China's worldview threatens America's geopolitical and economic interests. Just recently, 19 U.S. trade associations wrote the Obama administration warning that new Chinese rules for "indigenous innovation" could "exclude a wide array of U.S. firms" from the Chinese market -- or force them to turn over advanced technology. (British firms are so incensed by "overwhelming protectionism" that some may quit China, reports the Telegraph newspaper.) It would be a tragedy if these two superpowers began regarding each other as adversaries. But that's the drift. Heirs to a 2,000-year cultural tradition -- and citizens of the world's largest country -- the Chinese have an innate sense of superiority, Jacques writes. Americans, too, have a sense of superiority, thinking that our values -- the belief in freedom, individualism and democracy -- reflect universal aspirations. **Greater conflicts and a collision of national egos seem inevitable.** No longer should we sit passively while China's trade and currency policies jeopardize jobs here and elsewhere. Political differences between the countries are increasingly hard to ignore. But given China's growing power -- and the world economy's fragile state -- a showdown may do no one any good. **Miscalculation is leading us down dark alleys.**

This argument speak to the nature of China's **decision calculus** (the guidelines Chinese leaders use to make important decisions about national policy.) Samuelson argues that China fundamentally prefers its domestic interests over other concerns **even if** they may engender conflict with other great powers. Let's discuss a few security-based scenarios. We'll start with Iran:

**a. China's alliance with Iran may provoke conflict or miscalculation with the U.S.**

**Scott Warren Harold and Alireza Nader, 2012** [China and Iran Economic, Political, and Military Relations, RAND Corporation.]

Over the past few decades, China and Iran have developed a broad and deep partnership centered on China's energy needs and Iran's abundant resources as well as significant non-energy economic ties, arms sales and defense cooperation, and **geostrategic balancing against the United States. This partnership presents a unique challenge to U.S. interests and objectives.** In particular, China's policies have hampered U.S. and international efforts to dissuade Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability. This paper examines factors driving Chinese-Iranian cooperation, potential tensions in the Chinese-Iranian partnership, and U.S. policy options for influencing this partnership to meet U.S. objectives. The authors conclude that the U.S. ability to fundamentally reshape China's relationship with Iran is fairly limited, but that the United States should continue to forestall an Iranian nuclear weapons capability and pressure China to reduce ties to Iran.

One of the most urgent foreign policy issues confronting the U.S. is Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. Iran, a "rogue nation" concerns many analysts because of the rhetoric of some of their leaders and allegations that they have been a state sponsor of terrorist groups. The U.S., in conjunction with the United Nations, and many allies, are trying to pressure Iran to forego nuclear weapons. China, however, has allied itself with Iran because Iran controls a lot of energy resources (such as oil and the Strait of Hormuz). This alliance means China has come to Iran's aid on multiple occasions to water down sanctions and block international efforts to curb Iranian nuclear weapons projects. This could be a distinct area of conflict between the U.S., Iran and China because the goals of the three actors are so at odds. China at the very least complicates the equation because Iran on its own is not really a formidable foe for the United States. If the U.S. needs to fear that China would become involved in a conflict over



Iran, particularly with its nuclear weapons and military upgrades, then China's rise is distinctly problematic.

In a similar vein, the South China Sea is an area for resource-based conflict:

- b. China has resource interests in the South China Sea (natural gas, etc), territory interests the Spratly Islands and economic interests in the sea lanes which are all contested regionally. China may behave aggressively to assert its authority here, provoking U.S. response. Charles Scanlon explains:**

**Charles Scanlon, 2011** ["South China Sea tensions rattle China's neighbours," November 3, BBC News Asia.]

But China has been showing a very different face to countries closer to home in an increasingly tense confrontation over rival claims to the resource-rich waters of the South China Sea. It is a region where the peaceful nature of China's rise is starting to be questioned as it pushes a long-standing maritime claim that stretches deep into South East Asia. "If these countries do not want to change their ways with China, they will need to prepare for the sound of cannons." It may be the only way for the dispute in the sea to be resolved," said the state run newspaper, the Global Times, in a recent editorial. Hard power "China is becoming much more confident in the region and there are signs it is becoming giddy with success. It has become much more influential much more quickly than it expected," says Dr Kerry Brown of the Asia Programme at Chatham House in London. Vietnam and the Philippines in recent months have seen the snarl of a resurgent regional power that is fast losing patience with the gripes of smaller neighbours over maritime borders. Chinese officials have been more restrained in their comments, but foreign ministry spokesmen have issued a series of warnings about what they see as encroachments into Chinese waters. Beijing says it does want a peaceful solution. But Vietnam and the Philippines say Chinese ships have stepped up harassment of vessels involved in oil exploration and fishing. "The growth of Chinese military spending is beginning to translate into hard power," says John Hemmings, an analyst at the Royal United Services Institute. "This is the first major sign that a more confident Chinese grand strategy is emerging. It is in the South China Sea that there is a real risk of discord between the US and China." The disputes are about oil and gas reserves, lucrative fisheries and sea lanes that are crucial to the giant industrial economies of East Asia. But they also point to a strategic contest with the United States, which has been the dominant military power in the western Pacific since 1945.

Scanlon argues that as China rises, disputes that were formerly mere annoyances such as disagreements over the ownership of the Spratly Islands with Vietnam, disagreements with the Philippines over the shipping lanes, etc. are more likely to escalate. China's growing military makes Chinese leaders bolder and more likely to risk conflicts because they're surer that they'll win. This is problematic because the U.S. has been active in keeping the region secure in the past. Escalatory disputes are likely to draw in the U.S. Further,

- c. China is a key ally that may bolster, rather than temper the North Korean rogue regime's aggressive nuclear ambitions. Gady Epstein explains,**

**Gady Epstein, 2010** ["China Won't Help U.S. On North Korea, And Here's Why," November 24, Forbes.] The world knew before this week that China just won't pressure North Korea into playing nice with the rest of the region and the United States. But it's even worse than you think. Eight years after Kim Jong-il openly rebooted his nuclear weapons program and launched a new era of tensions, China may actually



be further away from helping the rest of the world contain North Korea. That is not to say that Beijing isn't exasperated behind the scenes with Pyongyang's provocations like yesterday's deadly shelling of a South Korean island — that's likely, especially after China's rather public displays of support recently as Kim sought to smooth the way for passing power onto his son Kim Jong-un. But diplomatically, China has in the last year cast its lot even more strongly with its historical ally. We saw that with the sinking of the South Korean ship the Cheonan, probably by way of North Korean torpedo but for which Pyongyang denied responsibility, and we are seeing it again now in China's muted response to yesterday's artillery fusillade (for now China is urging both North and South Korea to "exercise calm and restraint").

As we discussed in our "pro" analysis, North Korea and China have historic ties, share a border, and are more or less allies. This may increase. China was formerly tempered in its response to North Korea for fear of upsetting the U.S. As China rises, however, it has less incentive to distance itself from its historic ally because the U.S. presents less of a threat. This is potentially dangerous because a rising China may choose to shield North Korea, like Iran, from international criticism as it continues to develop nuclear weapons and engage in rhetoric that challenges and threatens the United States for its alliance with South Korea. China may also:

- d. **Make a play for Taiwan. A resurgent China may dislike the idea of Taiwanese quasi-independence and provoke conflict, forcing a U.S. response (the U.S. is an ally of Taiwan).**

**Nancy Bernkopf Tucker and Bonnie Glaser, 2011** ["Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?" Center for Strategic and International Studies.]

Is it time for the United States to rethink its Taiwan policy and walk away from Taiwan? Prominent Americans in influential publications insist that it is. The argument is not unprecedented. In a long and often discordant history of dealings between Washington and Taipei, there have been repeated calls for severing this uncomfortable and dangerous relationship. Taiwan has been characterized as a strategic liability, an expensive diversion, and most often, an obstacle to more important U.S.-China relations. In the past, a prosperous, strong, and self-confident United States chose to ignore such calls. Today, however, China is rapidly becoming more powerful, and many fear the United States teeters on the brink of decline. Is U.S. support for Taiwan about to end? Would it be a good idea? Taiwan remains the single issue which could spark war between the United States and the People's Republic of China, a war that might quickly go nuclear but would be devastating even were it to remain conventional. Apart from being a potential trigger for war, Taiwan impedes improvement in U.S.-China relations because of suspicion and mistrust. Beijing firmly believes that Washington seeks to keep the PRC weak and divided to obstruct China's rise. Meanwhile, Americans are adamant that resolution of the cross-strait impasse happen peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan, although the United States is uncommitted to any specific resolution.

Taiwan, a small, semi-independent island off of China split from China long ago under communism. For this reason, the U.S. has historically supported Taiwan (at times even selling it weapons) against China. China desires full reunification with Taiwan but has historically shown restraint out of fear and deference to the United States. As China rises, the Taiwan issue may continue to be an irritant to the relationship and the deference China has historically shown may decrease. A resurgent China with a large military may choose to force reunification with Taiwan, daring the United States to go to war to protect Taiwan as an ally. Additionally,



- e. **Miscalculation – A resurgent China may not be aggressive, but the U.S. will be more wary and thus more likely to mistake innocent military testing, etc. for aggressive actions.**

**Michael Swaine, No Date (accessed 2013)** ["Avoiding US-China Military Rivalry," The Diplomat.] Despite the mostly friendly nature of President Hu Jintao's state visit to Washington last month, the potential still exists for the US-China relationship to become much more adversarial, especially in the military-security arena. A combination of deepening strategic distrust (found most notably within the militaries of the two countries), China's steady acquisition of maritime power projection capabilities, the persistence of bilateral tensions associated with territorial issues along China's maritime periphery, and a growing sense in China of the United States' economic decline could prod both countries to view Asia as a zero-sum game and look for ways to counter each other's military actions. If this is to be prevented, the two countries will need to start considering more long-range, strategic communication.

All of these scenarios for conflict are made more severe and frightening if one considers that China's intentions may not even be the deciding factor. As China's military grows, military leaders and strategists may increasingly distrust their motives. This distrust is dangerous because it fosters paranoia which may cause U.S. strategists to interpret **benign** (harmless) acts by China as aggressive and escalate conflict quickly.

- f. **Russia alliance. China may ally with Russia in an attempt to counter-balance the U.S. RT explains,**

**RT, 2012** ["Russia and China pull together to counter US Asia drive," June 6.]

President Vladimir Putin has said Russia will cement its military alliance with China, including an increase in joint exercises in the Asia-Pacific. The move follows a US pledge to step up its naval presence in Asia in a bid to extend its influence. "Recently joint navy exercises were held in the Yellow Sea, and they were the first of such exercises. We have agreed with Chairman Hu that we will continue such cooperation," Putin said following a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao in Beijing. The Russian leader said that security in the Asia-Pacific region was a top priority for both countries and they will work together to further develop ties. "We favor the formation of an open and equal-minded security and cooperation architecture in the region, based on the principles of international law," Putin said. Russian and Chinese naval forces recently held six days of military drills in the Yellow Sea. The first drills of their kind, they included anti-submarine exercises and hijacked vessel rescue operations. Russia deployed four warships from its Pacific fleet for the drills with 16 Chinese ships and two submarines. The strengthening of Sino-Russian relations also serves to counterbalance US influence in Asia. US defense minister Leon Panetta announced on Saturday that the US plans to step up its naval presence in the Pacific as part of the so-called "Asia re-balancing" initiative. Panetta has also announced that the US intends to cement military ties with India. The American government plans to maneuver 60 per cent of its battleships into the Asia-Pacific region by 2020. It currently has around 50 per cent of its fleet stationed there. China views an increased US military presence in the Asia-Pacific as a challenge to its own sovereignty and an attempt by America to curtail the country's rise.

As the U.S. and China begin to clash in the Pacific, it's conceivable that China may turn to Russia for support. Although the Cold War has ended and the U.S. and Russia are pursuing mended relations, there is still uneasiness about the relationship that China may seek to exploit. China may look for a great power ally to counter-balance the United States in the Pacific. Russia, still partially distrustful of the U.S. and desiring more equality in international relations, may accept this offer. This could be dangerous for the U.S. because, while the U.S. is still an undisputed superpower, China and Russia together are a much





more formidable counter-weight than either would be on their own and conflict would escalate quickly. Finally,

- g. **A rising China may make our allies doubt our ability to protect them and seek weapons of their own (South Korea and Japan). Proliferation is arguably bad – it increases the volume of nuclear weapons and undermines stable deterrence by breeding mistrust internationally.**

**Michael Mazza and Daniel Vajdic, 2012** ["Obama's rudderless China, Russia policy," September 26, CNN World.]

In Asia, China is working to undermine the decades-old U.S. alliance system and assert itself as the region's dominant power. China's ongoing military buildup opposite Taiwan (during the friendliest period of Beijing-Taipei ties in years) continues to upset the cross-Strait military balance, which has long contributed to stability in Asia. Beijing's strategic forces modernization, meanwhile, puts at risk the U.S. nuclear umbrella under whose protection South Korea, Japan, and others have forgone developing their own nuclear weapons. And the harassment of U.S. naval vessels by Chinese maritime forces is part and parcel of a larger effort aimed at changing how U.S. ships operate in Asian littoral waters.

**Michael Swaine, No Date (accessed 2013)** ["Avoiding US-China Military Rivalry," The Diplomat.] China's neighbours—notably Japan and Southeast Asian nations—are worrying about how they might counter China's growing ability to regularly deploy forces in the region, and are concerned that China will directly confront other countries over territorial and resource issues in the South China Sea and East China Sea. In response, Japan is shifting the deployment of its military southward, while Southeast Asian nations are acquiring greater offshore capabilities. They are also looking to the United States—as the region's dominant military power—to provide a counterbalance to China's growing power.

Many of the U.S.'s allies near China have decided to keep their militaries small. This is because the U.S., desiring a world with fewer nuclear weapons and large militaries, guaranteed many of these nations protection under their "nuclear umbrella." Essentially, they promised that if these nations would not seek nuclear weapons or large militaries then the U.S. would use its own nuclear weapons and military to defend them. As China rises, however, it becomes a more credible competitor with U.S. military power. This causes problems. Allies such as Japan may begin to doubt that the U.S. would risk its own troops to defend them against China because China is more dangerous now. The lack of alliance credibility may spur U.S. allies to develop more weapons and offensive capabilities. This makes the world less safe because it increases uncertainty and also increases the possible scenarios for conflict.

That's all for today! We hope this was helpful.

As always, let us know in the comments if you have questions or send us an e-mail at [lauren.sabino@ncpa.org](mailto:lauren.sabino@ncpa.org)

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