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Session IV: Great Power Competition

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Great Power Competition in Asia: An American View

China's arrival as a great power is no longer a possibility, but a reality.¹ Thanks to the sustained growth of its economy, China has narrowed the gap in military strength with the U.S., made initial investments in projecting soft power, and moved into world regions beyond Asia as a major economic and diplomatic actor. It has joined the international regimes that govern trade, human rights, weapons proliferation, and other global interactions, and begun to use its influence to shape the future evolution of these regimes.

At the same time, China continues to face serious security challenges within its territory and around its borders. The government has trouble with its major ethnic minorities and rules with difficulty over a rapidly changing society. The country is surrounded by unreliable friends and potential adversaries. It presses territorial claims that others refuse to recognize. Most of its neighbors view its rise with suspicion. Beijing exerts less influence than it wants to in the regional balance of power and in international regimes. China is in many ways a dissatisfied power.

Yet on balance China has stronger interests in favor of than against regional stability, and for rather than against cooperative relations with its great-power rivals – chiefly the U.S., but also India, Japan, and Russia. China's security interests create stronger incentives for China to accept a voice in shaping the global order than to opt out of the global order. Therefore, China's growing strength does not inevitably spell confrontation with the U.S. and its allies in Asia.

To prevent a confrontation from developing, China's new strength must be accommodated within an Asian balance of power. The task for U.S. China policy in the coming decade or more is to construct a new equilibrium of power that meets the interests of the U.S. and its allies without damaging Chinese security.

A China Threat? The rise of China so far has been more beneficial than damaging to Asian and Western interests, but it may not continue to be that way.

On the economic front, China has benefited some actors in the West, especially consumers and investors, and hurt others, especially those seeking manufacturing jobs, although many of those jobs had already moved to other developing countries before they moved on to China. It has put heavy new demands on global commodity markets, but much of that demand is to feed production for the West. Its foreign trade has been globally balanced for most of the reform period, but it has run a large trade surplus with the U.S. Its currency, although undervalued, has appreciated gradually, and it is moving toward full convertibility, although too slowly for its critics and too

¹ This essay is drawn from the concluding chapter of Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell, *China's Search for Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

rapidly for those who fear a challenge to the supremacy of the dollar. China's rise has helped drive economic growth in many Asian economies and in countries in Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere, although in doing so it has taken away some local jobs and stepped up resource extraction in fragile environments. The balance sheet is mixed in any economic relationship, but on the whole the rise of China has contributed to prosperity not only in China, but in Asia, the West, and the world.

On the political front, China has given its citizens more personal liberty, opened its culture to outside influences, encouraged Chinese to go abroad for education and travel, promoted the study of English and other foreign languages, and fostered the rise of a Western-oriented consumer lifestyle among the large urban middle class. China is integrating with the world in many ways, but it has not become a democracy, nor has the state given up its control of the economy and society. The PRC is still an authoritarian regime that in many ways offends Western values. Even though the regime is repressive at home, however, it has not tried to undermine democratic political systems in the rest of the world.

On the strategic front, the rise of China has brought a broad convergence of its interests with those of the West. China has joined world regimes and by and large complies with them. It favors stability rather than revolution in Asia and the Fourth Ring. It stations no troops abroad and is unable to prevent Western powers from deploying their military forces wherever they want. To be sure, China's interests are seldom identical with those of the West, and it often has different ideas about what policies work. Its cooperation comes at some cost. In all important global institutions and regimes, it works to modify the rules to suit its interests. Its goal is to influence, but not to undermine, the world order that the West has created.

On the military front, China remains almost exclusively concerned with missions within and around its own borders. Even though it has acquired economic interests far away from Asia, it has not put in place the means to defend those interests with force. There is no sign that China intends to use military force to seize territory beyond what it already claims, to drive the U.S. out of Asia, or to compete with Western military influence in the Fourth Ring. U.S. alliances in Asia remain robust. But the rise of the Chinese military is presenting new challenges to the existing balance of power in Asia. China is building the capacity to frustrate an American intervention in the Taiwan Strait and to enforce territorial claims against Japan and other U.S. allies or quasi-allies in the East China and South China seas. These developments are changing what was once a one-sided military balance in favor of the U.S. in the western Pacific.

On the ideological front, China has mounted a public-relations effort to improve its image around the world, seeking to show that it is a benevolent, civilized, and peace-loving society that does not deserve the criticism and suspicion leveled against it. This

effort has so far been primarily defensive in character. Chinese spokesmen respond to criticism of their own policies—for example, in human rights—with criticisms of the other side, but China does not try to promote change in other countries' ideologies.

In short, although China today is a dissatisfied power, it has acquired a large stake in the stability of the world order and the prosperity of the West. In pursuit of its own interests, it has often challenged the interests of the U.S. and U.S. allies. But in the post-Mao period these frictions have not expanded into direct economic, political, or military conflicts. In this sense, the engagement policy pursued by the U.S. since 1972 has achieved its key strategic goal.

Despite these considerations, it is possible that China's future leaders may decide to challenge U.S. preeminence. If China's economic growth continues for another decade or two at the rate it has sustained in the past three decades, it will possess enormous resources to build up its military and acquire bases overseas, and it will face an increasing imperative to use force to protect its expanding interests.² As China comes to own more assets beyond its borders and to import more resources from the Asia-Pacific and world regions beyond Asia, it may decide to project power farther from its shores to protect its interests. Technological diffusion under conditions of globalization might erode the U.S. lead in military and information technology, so that even if the U.S. continues to modernize its military, China might be able to close the gap.

If China were to mount such a challenge to American dominance, it would have to acquire access to military bases in South Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, where it has important interests to protect. Within a few decades, the Chinese navy would roam the oceans the way the American navy does now, even patrolling along the American coasts. The renminbi would replace the dollar as the largest international reserve currency. Chinese culture and values would achieve global influence along with Chinese products. The U.S. would have to decide whether and when to resist. If it did, the two countries might go to war.³

The potential of this kind of threat is inherent in China's growing power, but not inevitable. The task for the coming decades is to define a role for China that is more constructive than damaging to the interests of other actors. Three factors will

² Jonathan Holslag, "Embracing Chinese Global Security Ambitions," *The Washington Quarterly* 32:3 (July 2009), pp. 105-118.

³ Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: Norton, 2011); Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001); Arvind Subramanian, *Eclipse: Living in the Shadow of China's Economic Dominance* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2011).

determine whether it is possible to do so: changes within China, changes in its regional environment, and changes in U.S. policy.

How Will China Change? Although China today is a strong country with a strong regime, it is also troubled and fragile. Chinese society is turbulent, questioning, and often angry. A revolution of rising expectations is under way that places growing pressure on the state to run faster to keep ahead of people's demands for both wealth and administrative responsiveness. People have more freedom to express their unhappiness on the Internet and in private. No one believes the regime's current official myth: that the ruling party is legitimate because the people put it in power during the revolution; that it is implementing Chinese-style socialism, which serves all the people; and that the top party leaders have a monopoly on knowledge about what policies are best for society. Few Chinese, even in the leadership, think the system has reached the end of its evolution. There is a pervasive feeling, which we share, that the current political system is a transitional arrangement on the way to something else.

There are three main possibilities for political change.⁴ These possibilities do not include a military coup or a Soviet-style ethnic breakup. The former is unlikely because the PLA has an ethos of loyalty to the party, and its complex chains of command make it difficult to organize a coup. The latter is unlikely because the minorities are too small and too tightly controlled by the Han state to break away.

The first possibility is the one that the regime seems to be aiming for: gradual evolution to a new form of rule that might be called "responsive authoritarianism"—an authoritarian system that is efficient, effective, popular, and stable. Such a system might claim to be democratic because of its responsiveness to public opinion, but it would ban open political competition in the name of stability. China would become an enormous Singapore. The current leaders seem to believe they can achieve this kind of stable authoritarian rule by reining in corruption, providing good public services, allowing limited transparency, and engaging in conspicuous if not necessarily authentic policy consultation. The idea makes sense to many Chinese because the Chinese conception of democracy historically places little emphasis on political competition and greater emphasis on the state's service to the people's interests. This conception accepts a heavy concentration of power in exchange for governance that is viewed as effective and just.

But this model is filled with internal contradictions. If the regime wants to avoid open political competition, it has to use repression, and repression generates a sense

⁴ See Andrew J. Nathan, Larry Diamond, and Marc Plattner, eds. *Will China Democratize?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), for a collection of essays from the *Journal of Democracy* discussing China's possible evolution.

of injustice. Without increasing repression, civil society is likely to grow and challenge the regime's policies and ideologies. Society will spawn interests too diverse for the regime to adjudicate in the absence of political competition. A growing middle class will continue to generate its own ideas about what it wants. If the regime allows open political debate and competition, one-party rule will eventually founder.

To be sure, such tensions might take a long time to destabilize a regime that is adaptive and resilient. Some evolving version of the current Chinese system might continue to function for a long time to come. As long as the regime stays on this path, the domestic political conditions will continue to exist for economic growth, although not necessarily at the rate of the past three decades, and economic growth would provide the material basis for China's continuing international assertiveness.

The second possibility for internal change is a peaceful transition to democracy. If the country faces a major economic or social crisis, a group within the leadership might try to reach an accommodation with society by opening up the political system to political freedoms and the open competition for power. The CCP leader at the time of Tiananmen, Zhao Ziyang, wanted to do something like this, but he was blocked by conservatives in the leadership. In Taiwan, this kind of opening from the top began in 1986 and served the ruling party well because it has managed to retain power by democratic means for much of the time since the transition to democracy.

Democratization is unlikely to bring a fundamental change in China's foreign policy objectives. Democratic rulers in Beijing will still want to preserve control over Tibet and Xinjiang and assert Chinese authority over Taiwan because these territories are crucial for the defense of China's heartland. A democratic leadership will still want to press its claims to strategic and economic assets in the East China and South China seas; build up the PLA Navy so that it can participate in the defense of the sea lanes that are crucial to the country's prosperity; project influence in neighboring regions such as Central Asia, Korea, and Southeast Asia; maintain the military capability to deter attacks; exercise influence in the far-flung territories where it acquires resources and sells goods; and, in general, pursue much the same national security agenda as the regime follows today.

If democratization is achieved peacefully, China's power assets would not necessarily diminish and might even increase. The economy might become more efficient and more innovative. Some of the country's internal challenges might become less severe. The West would no longer mount efforts to change the Chinese regime, removing a key security worry of the regime today. One source of Taiwanese distrust of the mainland will disappear. Beijing might be able to manage relations with ethnic minorities in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Mongolia less repressively. These changes would free up military resources for other uses and create new soft-power

resources. Distrust between China on the one side and the U.S., Europe, and Japan on the other around issues of ideology would diminish, removing some sources of friction and making it easier to handle issues such as trade deficits, currency valuation, and the naval balance.

Thus, a democratic China may in some respects be harder for foreign governments to deal with than the current regime. On the other hand, if democratic transition causes government authority to weaken, China might face slower economic growth, generate more cross-border population flows and crime, and have a harder time implementing commitments on arms control, public health, and climate change. Beijing may assert itself more impulsively than it does now as the government responds more to public opinion, which is likely to be nationalistic. These developments would present new challenges for the West as well, but of a different kind.

The third possibility is that the Chinese system may be destabilized by an economic stall, inflation, a natural disaster, an environmental or public-health crisis, an international humiliation such as failure in a military clash with another country, a power struggle that splits the leadership or any combination of these events. Such a train of events would damage the economy, undermine military effectiveness, decimate soft power, and diminish China's ability to conduct a consistent, strategic foreign policy. It might exacerbate problems in Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang, alarm neighbors, and force leaders to give most of their attention to problems at home.

Such a breakdown would remove the possibility of a direct Chinese military and political challenge to U.S. influence in Asia for a long time but would replace this challenge with other problems. It might lead to worse repression against minorities and irrational lashing out against Taiwan, Japan, the U.S., and others. It might intensify refugee, environmental, public-health, and other cross-border issues. The military might be drawn into the power vacuum as the institution best able to hold the country together. In any case, turmoil in China would likely spill over into conflict beyond its borders as other states seek to exploit China's weakness and China struggles to respond. If so, China might become more aggressive about territorial disputes even if it has a reduced capacity to impose its will.

Aside from political changes, other internal problems may change the trajectory of Chinese power. China sits on three time bombs: a demographic time bomb—by 2050, one-quarter of China's population will be older than sixty; a water time bomb—it has the most severe water shortage of any advanced economy; and a climate time bomb—global warming will hurt China more than most countries because its rivers derive most of their volume from the Tibetan glaciers, which are melting. Even in the best of circumstances, if China's economic growth model goes well and does not fall victim

to any of these time bombs or to domestic inflation or foreign protectionism, it faces a likely economic slowdown as its economy matures.

In short, China will change. Each scenario for the future carries risks for China's neighbors, but each may also carry advantages. The first scenario would see China's strength and assertiveness increase but provide continuity in the country's foreign policy objectives and strategies, with experienced policymakers in charge. The second scenario would reduce the incentives for China to pursue an ambitious strategy of power expansion and possibly reduce the resources for China to do so, but it would also introduce some elements of unpredictability into China's international behavior. The third would weaken the country but create new kinds of instability in its relations with the rest of the world.

Will China's Regional Environment Change? The second factor that will shape China's future strategic options is the evolution of the political environment around its borders. Thanks to Chinese policymakers' efforts over the past three decades, the international environment is about as favorable for the exercise of Chinese power as it is likely to get. Most of China's borders are settled; most of its neighbors have accepted the economic benefits of engaging with it and have refrained from taking strong steps to resist its rise; China's role is accepted in multilateral organizations in Asia and beyond; and its business is welcomed, if with some ambivalence, everywhere in the world. The regions around China's periphery are basically at peace for the moment. Any foreseeable change in the external environment is likely to make things harder rather than easier for Beijing.

China is surrounded by two kinds of countries—unstable ones where almost any conceivable change will make life more difficult for Chinese policymakers and strong ones that have the potential to grow stronger in the future and pose sharper competition for China. In the first group of countries are North Korea, Pakistan, Burma, and the Central Asian states. Regime collapse or war in any of these places would likely draw China in somehow, whether politically or, in the extreme, militarily. Beijing would have to decide either to cooperate with other regional powers (the U.S., Japan, Russia, India) to manage the situation or to compete with them. China may conceivably emerge with more influence at low cost, but it is more likely that, like most states that intervene in unstable neighbors, it would end up expending large resources and achieving unsatisfactory results. In the aftermath, the neighboring regions might be dominated by another power or be continuously unstable or come under Chinese influence at the cost of a heavy long-term commitment of resources. Whatever happens is likely to tie China down more heavily on its immediate periphery than now and thus reduce Beijing's ability to project power beyond its region.

In the second group of countries are India, Japan, Russia, and Vietnam. All have the potential to become more serious competitors than they are now. India's population is growing faster than China's and will be both larger and younger by about 2030. The country has urbanized more slowly than China, so it can potentially enjoy a more protracted growth trajectory as its rural population moves to the cities and takes up more productive work. If India were to make peace with Pakistan—a long shot, to be sure, and one that Beijing makes less likely by Chinese military and diplomatic cooperation with Islamabad—its ability to compete with China in the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia would grow. Vietnam is too large for China to dominate, is growing rapidly, and has the capability to cause trouble for China either alone or in cooperation with others. Less likely but conceivable power shifts would involve the resurgence of Russia or Japan through a combination of smart economic policies and smart international strategies. Any of these four countries might multiply its influence over China by strengthening relations with the U.S. China now has stable relations with each of these regimes. Any shift in relative power or deterioration of relations can only make life more complicated for Chinese policymakers.

China has little control over changes in neighboring countries, and any changes that do occur are likely to tie it down even more in the problems of its periphery than it is today, postponing its ability to project power beyond its own region. The best option for China is stability in Asia.

A U.S. Decline? The most consequential change that might occur in China's international environment would be a marked decline in the U.S. power position. The idea of a U.S. decline is controversial.⁵ But many Western analysts and most Chinese strategists believe that such a decline is taking place. They believe the U.S. is overstretched militarily, has lost its economic dynamism, and is too politically polarized to solve its problems. Although the decline may be masked by Washington's intermittent efforts to reassert power, over time the U.S. will lose the ability to dominate international markets, provide security for the rest of the world, and influence people's ideas of the good life. Assuming Chinese power continues to grow as U.S. power declines, China would pass the U.S. to become the strongest global power, enacting what political scientists refer to as a "power transition."

This development, however, would be a mixed blessing for China. On the one hand, it would be able to take Taiwan with little fuss, take its share of the economic assets of the East China and South China Seas on favorable terms, print renminbi as a

⁵ Michael Beckley, "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure," *International Security* 36:3 (Winter 2011/12), pp. 41-78.

world reserve currency that other countries would pay a price to hold, establish the principles that it prefers for various international regimes, and gain wide acceptance for its way of doing business.

But China would not easily replace the U.S. as a global superpower with enough reach and influence to preside over a stable world system. Power transition is not the crossing of two straight lines. The descending power may decline slowly. The ascending power would have to undertake a long climb up an increasingly steep hill to translate economic strength into global military and political reach. One hegemon would not neatly replace another. To take over from the U.S. as a global policeman, China would have to stretch its economic and military resources to the breaking point and would be doing so from a less favorable geostrategic position than that which the U.S. has enjoyed.

In the initial stage of a power transition, six big powers—the U.S., China, Europe, Japan, India, and Russia—would be engaged in a complex balancing game with great risk of instability. To protect its interests, China would pay an increasing price and bear increasing burdens, likely without proportionate gain in most of its security concerns. It is of course conceivable that other countries in the international system would quickly bandwagon with China and help China to become the dominant power. But it is more likely that some or all of the other large powers would band together to resist China. Already in the 1990s, the U.S. began to supplement its engagement strategy toward China with a “hedge” or balancing strategy, strengthening the military and political assets needed to constrain the exercise of Chinese influence. As Beijing asserted its influence more forcefully in the 2000s, this U.S. strategy found a wide welcome among China’s regional neighbors. China’s continuing rise in the 2010s led the U.S. to pivot even more sharply to Asia as it drew down its forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. China’s neighbors are likely to continue to prefer to work with Washington instead of Beijing because the U.S. is located outside the region, has a reputation for providing public goods, and is a familiar partner.

China, by contrast, is close enough to be threatening, and its neighbors consider its strategic goals to be unclear. Unlike the U.S., it has few natural allies among the world’s stronger powers. For Japan, India, Russia, and the U.S., it is physically too close to their security zones to be an attractive partner. For the U.S., Japan, India, and Europe, it is an unlikely partner because it does not share their individualistic political values and democratic, free-market political systems. It seems unlikely that most of China’s smaller neighbors—including the ASEAN and Pacific powers—would tilt to China either, unless China’s power were to surpass their aggregate power by such a large amount that they have no other choice or unless China were to promote policies

that these other countries perceive as being as much in their own interests as in China's, which would be a hard balance for Beijing to strike.

Countries in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Europe have not yet started to balance against China because they have much to gain and nothing to lose at this point from an increasing Chinese role in their regions. But should China extend military power into the various regions beyond Asia and attempt to influence their strategic landscapes, then some regional powers can also be expected to balance against Beijing.

For all these reasons, if China's rise continues, it will climb a sharpening curve. The higher it goes, the more energy it will need to convert each unit of power into an increase in security. It would cost more to consolidate the advantages of preeminence than it would have cost to rise to that position. And if China fails to replace the U.S. as a global policeman, it is hard to see another candidate who can do so. Along with the rest of the world, China might have to suffer the consequences of a general decline in global security. This prospect is not necessarily more attractive for Beijing than the cooperative balance-of-power security regime it might be able to construct with a strong U.S. China therefore has no interest in an American decline. Even if it thought it did have this interest, it has no practical way to promote such a decline, and there is no sign that it is trying to do so.

Establishing a New Equilibrium. The better alternative both for China and for the U.S. and its allies would be to enhance Chinese security by creating a new equilibrium of power that maintains the current world system, but with a larger role for China. China would remain what geography has made it: a large, heavily populated land power. It would focus on raising the living standards and quality of life of its people and on protecting its environment.

China has good reasons for choosing this course. Even as the country's military grows, it will continue to need to invest in domestic security and territorial defense, which will make it hard to project force on a large scale far from its borders. Its security policy will still have to concentrate on the immediate periphery, stabilizing land borders, protecting the coasts, and upholding claims to valuable resources in nearby seas. In a crisis, disorder around its borders might tempt a Chinese military response, but, from China's point of view, intervening militarily even in its own neighborhood would be a distant second best to trading peacefully. Likewise, China will persist in its Taiwan policy of peaceful unification through economic integration and try to avoid war. Farther away, China will cooperate with other naval powers to protect the sea lanes and will rely on diplomacy to help maintain regional stability.

Even when China becomes the world's largest economy, its prosperity will remain interdependent with the prosperity of its global rivals, including the U.S. and Japan.

The richer China becomes, the greater will be its stake in the security of the sea lanes, the stability of the world trade and financial regimes, nonproliferation, the control of global climate change, and cooperation in public health. No fundamental conflict need emerge between Chinese and U.S. strategic interests.

The U.S. should encourage this choice by drawing policy lines—military, economic, and political—that meet its own needs without threatening China’s and by holding to them firmly. As China rises, it will push against American power to find the boundaries of Washington’s will. As it does so, Washington must push back to establish boundaries for the growth of Chinese power.

American interests in relation to China are uncontroversial and should be affirmed—a stable and prosperous China, peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue, freedom of navigation in the surrounding seas, the security of Japan and other Asian allies, an open world economy, and protection of human rights.

Two areas are especially important. First, the U.S. must maintain its military predominance in the western Pacific, including the East China and South China seas. This predominance will be difficult for China to accept because this area of the oceans is the closest to it and contains territorial features that it claims as part of its own territory. To maintain this predominance, the U.S. will have continually to upgrade its military capabilities, maintain its regional alliances, and act so as to maintain its credibility when facing challenges. While doing so, Washington must reassure Beijing that these moves are intended to create a balance of common interests rather than to threaten or contain China. Mechanisms for managing interactions and building trust between defense establishments are essential if crises are to be resolved and military confrontations avoided.

Second, the U.S. needs to push back against Chinese efforts to remake global regimes in ways that do not serve the interests of the U.S. and its allies. In regimes as diverse as arms control, trade, finance, and climate change—and in virtually all others—China has its own priorities. Although China’s attempt to pursue its interests in global regimes is legitimate, so too is the U.S. interest in making sure that these regimes continue the remarkable evolution they have enjoyed since the end of World War II and especially since the end of the Cold War. This is so above all in the case of the human rights regime, a set of global rules and institutions that in the long run bear major consequences for the construction of the type of world order that the U.S. has promoted since the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

These core American interests do not threaten China’s security. At home, China needs stability in the midst of rapid social and cultural change, ethnic reconciliation with its minorities, and peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue. Even though the current political system has improved many Chinese citizens’ livelihoods, it has failed

to achieve these political goals. The U.S. should continue to work for a more stable China in the long run, which means among other things a China that establishes rule of law and respects its people's human rights.

In the Asia-Pacific region around China's borders, the U.S. and its allies can accept a degree of expanded Chinese military, economic, and diplomatic influence that falls short of dominance. Defining a balance of American and Chinese roles that maintains stability in these regions will take time and require negotiation and even friction, but this goal is achievable. The hardest of China's Second Ring relationships to stabilize will be that with Japan. A strong U.S. defense commitment to Japan remains crucial to helping China and Japan find their way eventually to a balance in which both sides can be secure. The American "freedom-of-navigation" commitment is also important, to reassure Southeast Asian countries as China's influence increases.

In the world beyond Asia, economic competition, for all its harshness, should not be confused with strategic conflict. China should be afforded open access to the resources it needs to support its own people and to play its role in the interdependent world economy. At the same time, China must not be allowed to deny or restrict other states' access to resources or to dictate the terms of global economic interaction.

Resisting China's rise is not a realistic option for the U.S. The attempt to do so would require a break in mutually beneficial economic relations and enormous expenditures to encircle China, and would force China into antagonistic reactions. And the effort would fail because China is already too strong. Such a policy would have unpredictable consequences for Asia's stability and prosperity. There is no effective political support for such a policy in the U.S. or among U.S. allies in Asia. Although many Chinese policymakers think the U.S. is pursuing this strategy, it is not doing so, and it should not.

But neither is it necessary to yield too much to China's rise. China has not earned a voice equal to that of the U.S. in a "Pacific Community" or a role in a global condominium as one member of a "G2." China is not going to "rule the world" unless the U.S. withdraws from it.⁶

China's rise will be a threat to the U.S. and the world only if the U.S. allows it to become one. Therefore, the right China strategy begins at home. The U.S. must resume robust growth, continue to support a globally preeminent higher-education sector, continue to discover new technologies, protect intellectual property from espionage and theft, deepen trade relations with other economies, sustain military innovation and renewal, nurture relationships with allies and other cooperating

⁶ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "From Hope to Audacity: Appraising Obama's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 1 (January–February 2010): 16–30; Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011); Jacques, *When China Rules the World*.

powers, and by example, earn the respect of people around the world for American values. As long as the U.S. holds tight to its values and solves its problems at home, it will be able to manage the rise of China.