

**Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,
Subcommittee on East Asia and Pacific Affairs**

***“A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING OUR
ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE ASIA
PACIFIC”***

A Statement by

Dr. Michael J. Green

Senior Vice President and Japan Chair

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Associate Professor

Georgetown University

April 25, 2013

419 Dirksen Senate Office Building

A Strategy for Enhancing our Alliances and Partnerships in the Asia Pacific
Dr. Michael J. Green
Senior Vice President and Japan Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies
Associate Professor, Georgetown University

Chairman Cardin, Senator Rubio and Members of the Committee. Thank you for asking me to testify before you today.

For two Centuries the United States has pursued policies that kept Asia and the Pacific open to our trade and our values and that prevented a rival hegemon from closing the region off to us. Today Asia is returning to the center of global affairs, and Americans knows it. 60% of our exports go to the region now and polls show that for the first time Americans consider Asia to be the *most* important part of the world to our national interests.

However, just as global power is shifting to Asia, power dynamics within Asia are also shifting. Some scholars argue that we are returning to a Sino-Centric system in Asia, pointing out that China trades more with America's major allies –Japan, Korea and Australia –than the United States does. This thesis is popular in Beijing, of course, where the forces of history are measured primarily through such material metrics. However, these trade figures miss something more fundamental about prevailing Asian views of their own region's future. That vision is one in which regional integration is guided by the kind of open and rules-based order we have sought throughout our history of engagement with Asia. Recent surveys by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and other institutes have demonstrated that a growing number of elites across Asia are embracing democracy and the rule of law as essential *Asian* values. Burma's transition, despite remaining pitfalls, stands as an example of this trend. And Burma's leaders tell me that their example was Indonesia; and Indonesia's example of democratic transition was Korea.

China stands out in the region as a country where the elite do not yet embrace these norms, and polls across the region demonstrating wariness of China's rise reflect this to some extent. The so-called "Beijing consensus" of authoritarian economic development may resonate in other parts of the world, but among the major states of the Asia Pacific region this is not an attractive ideology. Nor, frankly, is there that much of a consensus in Beijing about the so-called "Beijing consensus."

In terms of U.S. interests, therefore, the key is to ensure that the future vision of Asian order is written by all the powers in the region without fear of coercion, and with confidence in American forward presence and engagement. China's rise may be the central issue in Asia, and every administration since Richard Nixon's has worked on improving trust and cooperation with China. That will be even more important and challenging in the years ahead. However, to get

China right (as Richard Armitage, Joseph Nye, and a number of us have argued in a series of reports at CSIS), we have to get Asia right.

Today, almost every country in the region wants closer ties to the United States because of China's growing power. We must remain mindful that none wants to ever be forced to choose between Washington and Beijing, but the appetite for increased engagement across the Pacific is strong.

Last year CSIS was asked by the Congress and the Department of Defense to conduct an independent assessment of the administration's strategy for realigning our forward presence and expanding engagement in the Asia Pacific. After extensive investigation, a team I led with my colleague David Berteau determined that the general thrust of the administration's so-called "rebalance" to the region was consistent with U.S. interests and resources. Frankly, despite the hype about a "pivot" to Asia, we found that the policy largely built on existing plans and policies started in the Bush and even Clinton administrations.

There were a number of areas, however, where we determined that the administration's strategy was flawed in terms of either concept or communication to the Congress. The Defense Department has addressed a number of these areas and I would single out Deputy Secretary Ash Carter and Assistant Secretary Mark Lippert in particular for taking the initiative to ensure better articulation and implementation of the Department's policies. Four broad areas of concern remain with respect to engagement of allies and partners, however.

First, I do not believe that there is a consensus within the administration about why there are growing tensions along the First Island Chain, which extends from the Japanese archipelago through the Senkaku Islands, the Philippines, and the disputed islands in the South China Sea. Some administration officials' comments seem to suggest that the Philippines, Japan or Vietnam are provoking Beijing and that our goal should be to prevent these allies and partners from entrapping us in an unwanted confrontation with China. Others see the disputes as the result of China's effort to establish dominance over its so-called Near Sea and to complicate any U.S. intervention in security crises along the Asian littoral. The assessment of this struggle is fundamental to our understanding of what deterrence and reassurance strategies are necessary with our allies and partners. I would place more of the causality on the second factor—China's pursuit of a Near Sea strategy—but if the administration is worried about our allies entrapping us in a conflict, then it is important to understand that *insecurity* on their part makes accidental conflict more likely. We should be deepening our security cooperation and working through these maritime security problems with them so that we are inside their decision-making loop and able to both reassure and advise on de-escalation strategies in the event of a crisis. The administration also needs to establish greater consistency of message. We cannot say enough that while we do not take a position on the territorial disputes

themselves, we do have a strong national interest in ensuring that coercion is not used against our allies or any nation seeking peaceful resolution of these territorial issues. This goes to the fundamental question of who decides the future regional order and how it will be decided.

Second, we have not established a coherent vision of what partnership capacity is necessary in the region. If we did, our allies and partners would know what it is. Instead, I have heard from senior Australian and Japanese defense officials who say that they cannot find an authoritative voice in the administration who can tell them what requirements we would like them to have. The Air Force tells their Air Force and the Navy tells their Navy, but we need a top-down integrated assessment of the capabilities we think our allies and partners need to support the larger strategic goals in the region and then we need a comprehensive plan to build that capacity. The decision to review the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines will provide an important opportunity to do just that with Japan; recognizing, of course, that the Japanese side will appropriately have a view on the capabilities they would like us to retain or strengthen. In Korea we have made progress along these lines with the planning for Wartime Op/Con transfer in 2015. However, the U.S. vision of partnership capacity across the region has to be integrated in PACOM and the Office of the Secretary of Defense on a region-wide basis. We did this in the 1980s when the Soviet build-up prompted the U.S. maritime strategy at PACOM and a common vision for the capabilities we and our allies needed to maintain deterrence and the common defense.

Third, we need to sustain our support for networking of alliances, particularly through trilaterals such as the U.S.-Japan-Australia, U.S.-Japan-India, or U.S.-Japan-Korea groupings. Unfortunately, and through no fault of the administration's, the Korea-Japan leg is very weak right now. Seoul refused last year to sign a basic agreement on military information sharing with Japan and contentious politics over history have prevented much forward movement. Yet given North Korean provocations, this is probably the most important of the trilaterals to get on track. I do not think the United States can solve the historical and territorial issues complicating Japan-ROK relations, but we can make clear to both allies that moving forward is a priority for us. I know that that your two witnesses from the administration are working this, but frankly, they will need back-up from the White House as well.

Fourth, we need to keep moving forward on realignment of our forces. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has committed to implementing the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) plan and we should support him. We concluded in our CSIS assessment that this plan was the best of a series of politically complicated options. With Prime Minister Abe's personal commitment the prospects are improving and worth pursuing. The same stands for our plans for consolidation of U.S. bases in Camp Humphreys and other facilities in Korea. I know from our CSIS assessment that there is frustration in Congress with the vague cost estimates and complicated politics of the realignment plan, and we had a number of adjustments we recommended in the

report, including built-in reviews of progress with the Congress. However, a stop-in-place with respect to realignment plans would undercut support for our presence and confidence in our ability to execute strategy. Ultimately, realignment makes sense in terms of dispersing assets in the face of new ballistic missile threats; improving engagement along the Asian littoral and the southern part of the First Island Chain; and reducing the burden of a concentrated military presence in places like Seoul and Okinawa.

Finally, we need to recognize that the threat environment is constantly evolving in this region, particularly with respect to nuclear, cyber and outer space challenges. We need constant dialogue with our allies to ensure that our extended deterrent capabilities and doctrine with respect to nuclear threats are credible to them; that they have the necessary capabilities—particularly missile defense—and that we are developing the necessary capabilities and doctrine to ensure credible deterrence and defense in cyber and outer space. We have dialogues on all these areas with our key allies, but we have considerable work to do before we begin to turn those dialogues into joint strategies.

Thank you...