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The Nelson Report

Nov 15, 2012

**OBAMA WARNS NETANYAHU IF ISRAEL HITS IRAN...
GEN. DEMPSY PRIVATE VISIT, SUBSTANCE, CONFIRMED
WAR TALK STILL MAINLY KABUKI...BUT...REALITY IS
THE ASIA PIVOT IS JOINED AT THE HIP TO M.E. PEACE
US-CHINA RELATIONS...the discussion continues
"PERSPECTIVE" PICKERING/LUERS ON AN IRAN DEAL**

SUMMARY: we were asked repeatedly on our Sasakawa Peace Foundation trip to Japan and Okinawa about the Israel/Iran situation, not just the risk of war in the Middle East, and thus to Asia's oil supply line, but also whether continued crisis in the Middle East and South Asia would sabotage President Obama's "pivot" to Asia.

Tonight's Report looks at key aspects of those questions. First off, as we repeatedly told the Sasakawa audiences, since Israel has no history of "announcing in advance" a military strike, we can...for now...see all the threats as the continuation of several years of attempts to pressure everyone involved...Teheran, Washington, Moscow, Brussels, Riyadh, and so on.

Pressure to what? To recognize that however much Obama and other leaders may personally detest Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu (a measurement difficult to exaggerate, and it's reciprocated!) the fact is Netanyahu as the leader of Israel sincerely believes he's facing a genuine threat to the very existence of his people.

The downside of under-estimating the Iran/nuclear threat is simply unacceptable. So given the stakes, there's also absolutely no question that most Israeli officials see time as running short, while many, perhaps including Netanyahu, see time, in fact, as just about up.

In that sense, it is safe to say that Obama "gets it", hence the increasingly public warnings to Israel not to launch an attack on Iran, implicitly not before all possible avenues to a deal have been exhausted, and...most importantly...it really looks like Iran is pushing through to a nuclear weapon. (See Gareth Porter's reporting on Gen. Dempsey, below...)

For any outsiders, predicting outcomes by parsing the competing interests and factions is even more difficult because each country has deep divisions internally, with often bitter, to-the-political-death wars on-going, and playing large roles in the international, multilateral decision-making competition, including the strategic conversation between the principals.

If you can set aside the question of whether Iran is really pushing for a nuclear bomb: one of the best reasons not to attack Iran is that it would unify a regime increasingly rent by internal dissatisfaction...it would achieve a sense of national unity of which the regime itself is incapable. And in Israel, the hard-liners, the ultra-hard-liners, the peace faction, the liberals...are at each other every day in the Knesset, and the news media...and each plays to their supporters in the US.

Here, Obama faces the natural but very damaging Republican presidential candidate's vying with each other to pander to their perception of how to secure the "pro-Israel vote" in the US, a stance potentially doubly damaging to American national interest by its tendency to reinforce the ultra-hard line in Israel, regardless of the ultimate consequences.

Throw-in the Christian evangelicals who sincerely believe that restoring the Biblical Israel will clear the way to the Second Coming of Jesus, and you can see how devising a politically acceptable American policy, a policy which includes a realistic assessment of the real stakes involved in getting it wrong...just how terribly replete with dangers that is for any US president, but particularly a Democrat up against Republican, often base-driven extremism.

This policy and emotional maelstrom can warp both perceptions and judgment. Here's an example: a serious Democratic foreign policy player this afternoon said he thinks Netanyahu will attack Iran because a major Middle East war would force Obama to commit US troops to defend Israel...thus robbing Obama of his claim to have stopped direct US military involvement in the Middle East, and so paving the way for Republican (and hard-line Christian evangelical) ascendancy to power in 2013.

But another observer said he thought Netanyahu was over-estimating his leverage on Obama, because the Israeli right wing is so estranged from liberal US Jews ("the J Street crowd", he said) that Bibi falsely thinks the "Jewish vote" would abandon Obama in November unless he commits the US to war. He summed up: "Bibi is in a very dangerous place, as his hatred of Obama cannot be underestimated."

In any event, it cannot be coincidental that several observers whom we trust, both emotionally and factually (!) this afternoon warned "the next three or four months will be exceptionally dangerous." Added one, "between now and Labor Day, Bibi faces three choices, one very good, and two very, very bad..."

So the situation is hopeless? Maybe not. Sensibly not...but people are angry and frightened and in that situation, at a certain point, the tendency is to stop listening and do something...hence the rising public pressure by Obama on Netanyahu.

For an Asia-linked example of adult thinking, see tonight's "Perspective" by

Amb. Tom Pickering and a colleague, posted by the American Academy of Diplomacy, reminding us how Nixon and Mao gamed-out the task of reconciling opposites...

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WORRIED THOUGHTS from an anonymous expert, including on the [Middle East link to the Asia Pivot](#):

"Chris,

I've been thinking a great deal about the pivot and what it means for the Middle East and, in particular, what it suggests (at least to me) about how the President sees this very quarrelsome and narrowly important region. What's been striking to me, having spoke to a number of other ME-types is how few of them-or people in Washington in general-have grasped the significance of what the Administration has done in Asia and the Pacific.

Best I can tell, people haven't connected the dots and there are, admittedly, a lot of them ranging across the economic, trade, multilateral, bilateral, and security domains. Personally, I consider the pivot to be the most important redirection of American national security focus since the end of the Cold War, which lets' recall was 20 years ago. Yes! Two decades! The 1990s saw little to nothing change in our overall perspective; the "aughts" we hysterically wasted yoking nearly our entire national strength to the task of "fighting terror" in Iraq and Afghanistan, when all we really needed to do was kill a bunch of radicalized goat-roapers hiding in Pakistan.

But we are now slowly extracting ourselves from these distractions and getting back to the business of grand strategy. Other than the serious problems of preserving the free flow of natural resources from the Arabian Gulf and assuring Israel and our other regional allies' security from attack or external domination, while promoting an Arab-Israeli peace, our interests in the ME are thin.

And now, with the Arab Awakening reshaping national politics and political philosophy within the region, and turning an already inward-looking region even further toward naval gazing, there's less and less reason to focus so much of our resources and attention to an area that produces next to nothing other than oil and gas, and that generally contributes more problems to the international system than solutions.

Oh, what, you think I've forgotten the Iranian nuclear program? I assure you I have not. I suspect it is, or will become for President Obama what Vietnam was to LBJ-the rotten bitch the threatens to keep him from winning his true love. LBJ dreamed of the Great Society; Obama dreams of America's Pacific Century. Iran's nuclear program directly threatens both of our vital interests in the ME (oil and peace) and seriously threatens a President who has bent his will to extracting America from useless and penurious wars with yet another conflict. Even as he is working to expand and move through the door to the Pacific, the President is being pulled ineluctably toward yet another fruitless confrontation in the Middle East.

And that's the real tragedy: even if the President succeeds in threading the needle and successfully deflating the Iranian nuclear threat without resort to war, something I doubt will actually happen, America gets almost nothing for it except the preservation of the status quo. Yes, the President gets a political bump (remember how big a lift he got from killing Osama? About a week?), but our national interests are scarcely advanced at all.

But let's say he fails and the Iranian nuclear effort comes to a head. Either we or the Israelis feel compelled to act to prevent the Iranians from acquiring a nuclear arms capability, or he must acquiesce to their successful proliferation. In either case, our national interests would be deeply set back, our focus and attention on the Middle East would have to grow, and the promise of a period of peace in which we pursue deeper engagement in Asia, and the prosperity it can deliver, would have to be, at least in part, deferred or diminished.

Obviously, America can walk and chew gum. The pivot has been orchestrated while fighting continued in both Iraq and Afghanistan. But I think the underlying idea, of capitalizing a period of peace to reorient our national security strategy toward Asia and the Pacific--while not altogether ignoring the other regions of the world--would inevitably be set back if the Middle East continued to force itself to the top of the agenda, something an Iranian nuclear capability would guarantee.

Despite your ongoing efforts to connect all these dots, I suspect the Asia-types have little idea how important the Iranian nuclear issue is for the future of the pivot and I'm certain many ME-types don't have a firm grasp at the scope and implications of the pivot for America and our role in the Middle East.

I've thought of writing all this down before, but you've prompted to finally do it."

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GARETH PORTER'S report on the Dempsey mission to Israel...the top section:

WASHINGTON, Feb 1, 2012 (IPS) - Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey told Israeli leaders Jan. 20 that the United States would not participate in a war against Iran begun by Israel without prior agreement from Washington, according to accounts from well-placed senior military officers.

Dempsey's warning, conveyed to both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak, represents the strongest move yet by President Barack Obama to deter an Israeli attack and ensure that the United States is not caught up in a regional conflagration with Iran.

But the Israeli government remains defiant about maintaining its freedom of action to make war on Iran, and it is counting on the influence of right-wing extremist views in U.S. politics to bring pressure to bear on Obama to fall into line with a possible Israeli attack during the election campaign this fall.

Obama still appears reluctant to break publicly and explicitly with Israel over its threat of military aggression against Iran, even in the absence of evidence Iran has decided to build a nuclear weapon.

Dempsey's trip was highly unusual, in that there was neither a press conference by the chairman nor any public statement by either side about the substance of his meetings with Israeli leaders. Even more remarkable, no leak about what he said to the Israelis has appeared in either U.S. or Israeli news media, indicating that both sides have regarded what Dempsey said as extremely sensitive.

The substance of Dempsey's warning to the Israelis has become known, however, to active and retired senior flag officers with connections to the JCS, according to a military source who got it from those officers.

A spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Commander Patrick McNally, offered no comment Wednesday when IPS asked him about the above account of Dempsey's warning to the Israelis.

The message carried by Dempsey was the first explicit statement to the Netanyahu government that the United States would not defend Israel if it attacked Iran unilaterally. But Defence Secretary Leon Panetta had given a clear hint in an interview on "Face the Nation" Jan. 8 that the Obama administration would not help defend Israel in a war against Iran that Israel had initiated.

Asked how the United States would react if Israel were to launch a unilateral attack on Iran, Panetta first emphasised the need for a coordinated policy toward Iran with Israel. But when host Bob Schieffer repeated the question, Panetta said, "If the Israelis made that decision, we would have to be prepared to protect our forces in that situation. And that's what we'd be concerned about."

Defence Minister Barak had sought to dampen media speculation before Dempsey's arrival that the chairman was coming to put pressure on Israel over its threat to attack Iran, but then proceeded to reiterate the Netanyahu-Barak position that they cannot give up their responsibility for the security of Israel "for anyone, including our American friends".

There has been no evidence since the Dempsey visit of any change in the Netanyahu government's insistence on maintaining its freedom of action to attack Iran.

Dempsey's meetings with Netanyahu and Barak also failed to resolve the issue of the joint U.S.-Israeli military exercise geared to a missile attack, "Austere Challenge '12", which had been scheduled for April 2012 but had been postponed abruptly a few days before his arrival in Israel...

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ABOUT THE NEXT CHINESE PREMIER...Loyal Reader Prof. Kirk Larson explains what's up with "shi" for "xi" and "chi" for "Q"... and McGill University grad school mate Robert Blohm, from Beijing, comments on the difference between Chairman of the NPC and the Premiership. First, on the linguistics, from an "anonymous" at State:

Chris -

It has to do with presenting in English two very different sounds in Chinese:

xi is "shee" (light, sibilant) because shi is "sher" (heavy, dark, tongue back in mouth; rhymes with "her", in Beijing dialect)

qi is "chee" (light, tongue touching teeth) because chi is "cher" (heavy, dark, tongue back in mouth; rhymes with "her", in Beijing dialect)

To which Kirk Larson (gently correcting our spelling last night) adds: "*Li Keqiang*" appears to have an extra "u" (should be *Li Keqiang*) [Editor's note...damn muscle memory... "u" after "q"...]

As for "xi = she and q = chi," this was a result of a conscious effort on the part of the folks who came up with pinyin. Unlike older systems that used apostrophes and umlauts to indicate different sounds of Chinese (today's "Qing" was written "Ch'ing" which was a different sound than "Ching" (which would be "jing" in pinyin), pinyin attempted to have only one letter to correspond to one sound with no extra symbols. It works quite well from a native Chinese speaker's viewpoint but has been the cause of no small amount of confusion for outsiders. To make matters worse, even pinyin uses an umlaut in a few cases ("lu" is different from "lǜ").

Your Editor personally never recovered from the death of Wade-Giles. On the substance of the difference between the job of Premier and Chair of the National People's Congress, from:

Robert Blohm

Re last night's newsletter, there's other obvious information to take into account in assigning Li or Wang to likely NPC-Chair or Premier. The Premier is Chief Economic Officer (and Chief Operating/Administrative Officer, over the State Council "cabinet", the running of day-to-day governance and policy). That's Wang's expertise, salability, and value as the Chinese economy faces increased challenge.

It's the job Zhu Rongji had and we know how instrumental and effective he was in the last stage of reform so far. Li is a lawyer. Guess what NPC-Chair is? Chief Legislative Officer, as that's what the NPC does, Chief Legal Officer if you like. It's deputy president of everything, but from a legal perspective, and there's a dearth of lawyers in the NPC unlike in the US Congress. So, this makes the outlook pretty clear/logical in my mind.

What's new is that until now nobody ever paid much attention to that #2 party NPC position since legislation was viewed as "rubber stamping" of already-made executive/Party decisions. Ascribing more autonomy to the NPC's role, and need for the NPC leader to be technically qualified and for much further legal reform generally, would seem a minimal precondition for democratic reform.

So, suddenly raising that NPC job to number two (in prestige and visibility, rather than just on paper) could augur well for democratic reform prospects, and create a win-win for both Li and Wang, as opposed to a struggle between them for the old #2 position of Premier when the prospect of a weakening economy increasingly favors Wang, and otherwise loss of face for Li and the whole political base that set him up. This creates a whole new, greater purpose in life for Li, precisely in tune with his ability.

This is particularly important with the rising concern with "social management", hopefully beyond the old brute force of police brutality, and the whole (Guangdong Party Secretary) Wang Yang development in Wukan.

Editor's comment: what Robert explains makes good sense, but we'd add that Zhu had the advantage of working under Jiang Zemin, who genuinely supported reform for both internal, and WTO external reasons (mutually reinforcing), while Wen has served with Hu Jintao, seen by US business and government alike as backsliding on badly needed economic and financial reforms, but particularly on human and religious rights practices in so far as they affect activists and their legal defenders, and the news media's efforts to cover the stories. In addition, Hu sees the US as in decline since at least the 2008 world financial crisis, and China as already the big winner.

Summing up pithily, well-known China expert here comments: *"I think you're both right. Jiang reigned and Zhu ruled. Hu and Wen don't have Zhu's guts."*

Xi Jinping? Stay tuned...

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"PERSPECTIVE"...

Envisioning a Deal With Iran

By WILLIAM H. LUERS and THOMAS R. PICKERING

"IF you deal in camels, make the doors high," an Afghan proverb cautions. As the dangers mount in the confrontation between the United States and [Iran](#), both sides will have to raise the doors high for diplomacy to work, and to avoid conflict.

A diplomatic strategy must begin with the United States' setting its priorities and then defining a practical path to achieve them. To achieve its top priorities, it will have to learn what Iran needs. Since the United States will not get total surrender from Iran, it must decide what it can put on the table to assure that both sides can reach a deal that will be durable.

American leaders have been masterly at diplomatic strategies - "building high doors" - to make deals. Franklin D. Roosevelt opened relations with the Soviet Union in 1933 to balance the ascendance of menacing forces in Germany and Japan. He was acting for geopolitical reasons, and in spite of his objection to Communism. [Richard M. Nixon](#) opened relations with [China](#) to enhance American leverage in dealing with the Soviet Union. He re-framed - but did not give up on - the American commitment to Taiwan to accomplish his objective. In each case, the presidents were acting against the advice of most of their close advisers.

In our own time, [President Obama](#)'s initial instincts on Iran were correct: only he can lead the United States to agreements with Iran that advance American national interests.

The first question is how to get such diplomacy started, and on that, Nixon's strategy toward China is instructive.

Before traveling to Beijing in 1972, Nixon outlined on his ubiquitous yellow

pad three analytical pillars of his strategy: What do they want, what do we want and what do we both want? The Chinese, he continued, wanted to "build up their world credentials," to recover control of Taiwan and to get the United States out of Asia, while the United States wanted to succeed in Indochina, establish communication "to restrain Chinese expansion in Asia" and, in the future, "reduce threat of confrontation by China Super Power." The United States and China both wanted "to reduce danger of confrontation and conflict, a more stable Asia, a restraint on U.S.S.R."

In the Shanghai Communiqué, issued at the culmination of the meeting in Beijing, the continuing differences were highlighted, but both sides agreed to expand the common ground between them.

In developing a diplomatic strategy toward Iran, President Obama might respond to Nixon's three questions as follows: Iran wants recognition of its revolution; an accepted role in its region; a [nuclear program](#); the departure of the United States from the Middle East; and the lifting of sanctions. The United States wants Iran not to have [nuclear weapons](#); security for Israel; a democratic evolution of Arab countries; the end of terrorism; and world access to the region's oil and gas. Both Iran and the United States want stability in the region - particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan; the end of terrorism from Al Qaeda and the Taliban; the reincorporation of Iran into the international community; and no war.

With those assumptions as a skeleton, the shape of a final agreement with Iran is imaginable. The United States would agree to full recognition and respect for the Islamic Republic, and Iran would agree to regional cooperation with the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq. Both sides would agree to address the full range of bilateral disputes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency and the [United Nations Security Council](#) could accept an Iranian civil nuclear program in return for Iran's agreeing to grant inspectors full access to that program to assure that Iran did not build a nuclear weapon. Once international agencies had full access to Iran's nuclear program, there could be a progressive reduction of the Security Council's sanctions that are now in effect. Iran would agree to cease making threats against Israel, and the United States would agree to support efforts toward achieving a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

It would be important to make arrangements for Israel's security; the exact shape of those measures would have to be worked out in the negotiations. An agreement in which there would be full access to Iran's nuclear program, with a monitored limitation of 5 percent enrichment, would offer Israel additional reasons for confidence in the deal.

Both sides would agree to cooperate in reducing the influence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan; in combating [drug trafficking](#); and in keeping open the routes through which energy flows to the world from the Persian Gulf. Both sides would agree that while wide differences between the two nations remained, those differences must be resolved peacefully.

The China analogy for American-Iranian relations falls short in some areas. The most important is that Mao was ready for an American approach, while

Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is not. Instead, he is convinced that the United States will not work with Iran until his regime is gone.

For Iran's leadership, the notion that the United States is bent on overthrowing its rulers is rooted in historical experience: the United States did overthrow Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953, supported the Shah afterward, supported Saddam Hussein's war against Iran in the 1980s, and now backs increasing efforts to weaken and isolate Iran.

Reducing the malign influence of this legacy on the thinking of Ayatollah Khamenei will be essential to achieving any deal. Simply "keeping the door open to diplomacy" will not be sufficient. So the Iranian leader must be approached directly, but discreetly, by someone he trusts who conveys assurances from President Obama that covert operations and public pressure have been demonstrably reduced. The interlocutor might be a leader from a country in the region, enlisted when the American president felt the time was right.

Ayatollah Khamenei will have to be convinced by actions, not just messages. Just as Nixon halted covert action in Tibet before approaching China, a similar signal will be needed with Iran.

There is no guarantee that diplomacy will succeed. But that is also true of war. And only diplomacy can offer Iran's current rulers a stake in building a secure future without a nuclear bomb. Only diplomacy can achieve America's major objectives while avoiding the mistakes committed in Iraq or Vietnam.

William H. Luers, a career diplomat, served as United States ambassador to Czechoslovakia and Venezuela, and was president of the United Nations Association from 1999 to 2009. Thomas R. Pickering, an under secretary of state for political affairs in the Clinton administration, served as United States ambassador to Russia, Israel, Jordan and the United Nations.

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THAT'S IT FOR TONIGHT...have a great weekend...Go Giants!

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SAMUELS
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The Nelson Report

Feb. 2, 2012

**ROMNEY BETS ON AFGHAN FAILURE...
CSIS' CORDESMAN LISTS OBAMA'S RISKS
CHINA'S WEN DANGLES BAILOUT TO EUROPE...
UUMMM...NOT EXACTLY (KIEKEGAARD)
TPP DISCUSSIONS..Barfield/Brookings, et al
"PERSPECTIVE" Chip Gregson...China "not the new best enemy"**

SUMMARY: the politics of winding down the Iraq and Afghanistan wars...adventures...disasters...is getting more pointed, with Mitt Romney playing the classic challenger's game of implicitly hoping for failure he can criticize (let's be fair, that's how the game works).

Romney's "risk" is that good news for the country, and Obama, is bad news for him and the GOP, since coming out strong for continued, massive US boots on the ground, plus his call for a big global boost in overall troop, ship, and aircraft levels, flies in the face of bipartisan public sentiment, and a key factor in Obama's election in 2008 - "war weariness" and the screamingly obvious need to redirect American resources toward domestic revival.

Of course, Romney's chest-thumping call to reverse Obama's cutbacks with "100,000 more troops" is just politics...no one involved takes that seriously...but it justifiably opens him to questions like "hey, Mitt, what war you planning to *fight* with all these extra troops? How you gonna pay for all this, and still cut taxes? Didn't we already go through war on the credit card with 'W' and it broke the bank, not to mention the National Guard!"

But despite the risks, Romney has plenty of potential ammo following Obama's State of the Union speech, and DOD Sec. Panetta's remarks yesterday...see, for example, the objective criticisms/warnings today from CSIS strategic expert Anthony Cordesman (both Romney and Cordesman in full, below).

Also chipping in (pun intended...hey...you can't pass these up) is former A/S DOD Wallace "Chip" Gregson, in his excellent Brookings statement

on the Pivot in Asia (tonight's "Perspective", in full, below), in which he warns, from his experience as a Marine Corps Lt. Gen., especially his tour on Okinawa, that planned ship levels (with cuts) may make doing the job difficult, and reinforce Asian concerns about US staying power.

Appearing on a panel with AEI's Claude Barfield, who spoke on trade policy and TPP, Chip made a cogent point about TPP from the strategic context, calling it "symbol of the US ability and willingness to pivot", but warning that the Executive Branch always faces the threat that Congress can't or won't deliver on these deals.

And he reinforced the point, saying TPP, like all FTA's, "is a strategic agreement, but interest groups and Congress don't see it as such until the very final stages". Claude agreed, noting:

"TPP has become a symbol of US leadership, and is therefore more important than the usual trade agreement, and this is good. US trade policy is always intertwined with diplomatic and security issues, especially in Asia". (More on Barfield/TPP below.)

We thought Gregson's most important point "fed" our overall take on the Brookings discussions (Nelson Report 2/1) with Richard Bush, Ken Lieberthal, Jeff Bader and Jonathan Pollack, was that the pivot shows the US "can't have a bipolar China-only US-Asia policy", and he cited Poppa Bush's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, right after the collapse of the Soviet Union:

"What do we do now that we've lost our 'best enemy', one that dictated all of our defense plans? We're [today] still looking for our 'best enemy - the villain is gone - and China is definitely not...NOT...the Soviet's replacement!"

However, Gregson firmly underlined the Obama/Clinton focus on the S. China Sea, adding "if the world has a communal intersection, the S. China Sea is it...and that's why all the challenges now to China's assertiveness." But as any good strategist must, Chip noted how China sees its situation:

The PRC is surrounded by 6 maritime neighbors, 14 land powers ("four possessing nukes") with only Burma, Pakistan and N. Korea as "friends which offer no advantages"...and a region abounding in multiple, interlocking security and national interest risks, including energy, food and water, and environmental threats.

And on China...classic Chinese "soft power diplomacy" made some Europeans feel a bit better today, as Premier Wen Jiabao does what he does best...telling the West things that it wants to hear. For us Asia hands, Wen always offers hope that some in the Leadership grasp at least the PR of continuing to promote reform, but we've also noted that with all the backsliding under President Hu Jintao, "Grandpa" Wen's "delivery rate" is pretty discouraging, likely also for him, too.

But at least Wen has a track record of urging reform in public, sometimes

even while in China and via the local media. That helps explain the interest here over who will be Xi Jinping's premier...to be explained in a parenthetical in the text, below.

Anyhow..this from today's China *Caucus Brief*:

CHINA'S WEN: MAY BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN EUROPEAN UNION

RESCUE. Reuters reports that China's Premier Wen Jiabao has said publicly that Beijing is considering playing a larger role in the rescue funds aimed at resolving the European debt crisis. From the piece: "At a joint media briefing in Beijing with visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Wen said China is still studying how it might lend further support. 'China is also considering increasing its participation in the solution of the European debt crisis through the channels of the EFSF and ESM,' Wen said. The ESM, a 500-billion-euro (\$650 billion) permanent bailout fund that is due to become operational in July, is expected to replace the EFSF, a temporary fund that has been used to bail out Ireland and Portugal and will help in the second Greek package... However, Beijing has consistently been reluctant to make specific promises about any contributions to the rescue funds." <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/02/us-china-europe-wen-idUSTRE8110TU20120202>

As is our habit, we asked Euroguru **Jacob Kirkegaard**, at Peterson IIE, for his take on the likelihood of Chinese involvement:

"Chris, I find it unlikely that China will 'contribute directly' in any other way than through the IMF as part of a concerted new G-20 capital pledge to the IMF - the \$500bn that Lagarde is trying to drum up. On the other hand, I think the Chinese will be a sizable part hereof, but numbers will only come out after the Euro group has raised the ESM ceiling of EUR500bn at their next summit in early March. I can't see the Chinese being sizable direct investors in either the ESM or EFSF - leverage will have to come through the IMF. Jacob"

Parenthetical on the next Premier: China hands will tell you that while the West pays more attention to this political position than it does to the Chairman of the National People's Congress, any sensible official in China pays more attention to the NPC, as it's the senior Communist *Party* position.

But while it now seems clear that Xi Jinping will be named President (hence his "audition tour" to the US next week) the next Premier and NPC Chair selections apparently have not been fully firmed-up, and even senior Chinese politely express interest in American views or gossip over the two choices:

Li Keqiang is a Hu Jintao "self-made bureaucrat" and has been assumed, here, at least, as the likely next Premier, but now one also hears that a Xi ally, a fellow "princeling", Wang Qichan, might be Premier. But having been warned that the "real" #2 job in Beijing is the NPC chair, sophisticates urge keeping an eye on Li vs Wang for the Party job, and not the international spotlight-grabbing Premiership.

No one in DC wants to say so on the record, but Wang Qichan is

preferred over Li. (And remember, "xi" is pronounced "she", and "q" is pronounced "chi"...but we don't recall why.)

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TPP/BROOKINGS...from our notes on Tuesday...picking up from his agreement with Chip Gregson about the strategic importance of TPP, Claude Barfield noted that except for some media summaries, there's no factual text out to study.

"However, it sounds like the main template is KORUS, and TPP will be 'KORUS+', 25 or 30 or so chapters with all the usual areas", so on that basis, Barfield predicts that "Australia and New Zealand will probably back the us on substance, but not the usually highly legalistic US approach."

Barfield also argued, with no disrespect to Australia and N.Z., that "TPP only matters if you can get the major economies Japan, S. Korea, Canada and Mexico to join, and this really goes beyond USTR's writ, to State, and this will be a dicey situation." And, he added, based on KORUS, "Korea could join tomorrow", but that given "so many still-empty texts, negotiations will go well into 2013, when Canada and Mexico might join."

On the TPP factor for China, Claude notes that Beijing is "stepping up pressure on S. Korea and Japan for a 3-way deal. Japan wants it, S. Korea might, and the US should not try to stop that, especially for S. Korea. We should tell them 'OK if it helps you, but also please go forward with TPP'."

In response to Jeff Bader's question, Barfield noted for that any "new" country joining the original 9, "the consensus must be that everything is on the table. We can't let Japan exclude Rice or Canada their Wheat Board...a number of big agricultural groups always want to pre-negotiate in advance, and this you can't sell!"

Editor's note: the Canadian Wheat Board situation may be on its way to the dustbin of history...promises have been made in Ottawa for Canadian domestic reasons, and dates set...stay tuned.

The question of NAFTA's clauses "vs" TPP came up, as it always does, and Claude agreed that TPP "will of course change NAFTA, and note that others of the original 9 also have existing bilateral. So the question is how much is new, especially on market access, what will supercede existing FTA's (see especially the US-N.Z. FTA...it's too soon to know how they want to deal)."

The notion of S. Korea jumping to join TPP anytime soon was challenged, and Barfield agreed that in the wake of KORUS negotiations with the US, and months of battle to pass implementing legislation through the National Assembly, the Lee government is "exhausted".

To which your Editor added that the opposition liberal Democrats have spent the past year battling KORUS, and have promised, if they capture a

majority in the mid-April National Assembly elections, they will move to reverse as much of the implementing legislation as they can.

So given the presidential election set for the Fall, it seems simply ill-advised for President Lee Myong-bak to take a domestic political risk over a trade deal which doesn't actually exist yet...especially as Lee is already in negotiations with China, and perhaps even China/Japan, to supplement existing FTA's with ASEAN, the EU, Chile and perhaps, soon, Australia.

NOTE: not surprisingly, with Gregson on stage, the Futenma question came up. We're still noodling that around with friends and sources, so stay tuned.

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THE LIBERAL "AFGHANISTAN STUDY GROUP"...a regular email/blog...today's shows that Obama is catching criticism from all sides...and shows the pressures the White House must navigate...AFG is followed by Mitt Romney's very political statements, and is concluded, for tonight, with a brief but very pointed set of questions needing answers from CSIS defense expert Anthony Cordesman.

ASG: Defense Secretary Panetta made headlines this week for [commenting](#) that the US may end combat operations in Afghanistan "hopefully by the mid to latter part of 2013." Is this the [sign](#) we have been hoping for? Maybe not.

Sec. Panetta went on to say "we've got to stick to the Lisbon strategy" - meaning the deadline for transitioning to local forces is still December 2014. This summer 22,000 troops, all that remains of the surge, will come home from Afghanistan. It is, however, unclear how many of the remaining 68,000 will be withdrawn in 2013. And the plan for after 2013 is just as obscure.

This year we spent \$120 billion on the Afghanistan War. In addition, the administration is requesting almost \$90 billion for 2013. Our current fiscal environment demands that these costs be reduced as rapidly as possible. Inconsistent and misleading statements from the administration on the Afghanistan drawdown timeline will not change this fact.

From ASG
1/31/12

[Average American Weekly Income: \\$1,200. Weekly War Costs: \\$1,800,000,000](#)

Afghanistan Study Group by Mary Kaszynski

Americans now see that the few benefits of the war in Afghanistan are not worth the enormous costs. At a time when many American families are struggling, the amount of money spent on the war in Afghanistan doesn't make sense.

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ROMNEY'S BET ON AFGHANISTAN...is he exaggerating the average voter's zeal to keep to the "mission" regardless of the cost in American lives and treasure?

LAS VEGAS - Mitt Romney offered harsh criticism of a [plan outlined by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to possibly withdraw U.S. combat troops from Afghanistan in 2013](#), calling the administration's decision to announce its military plans to the world "misguided" and "naive."

"The president's mistakes, some of them are calculated on a philosophy that's hard to understand and, sometimes, you scratch your head and say: How can he be so misguided and so naive?" said Romney during a visit to a Brady Industries warehouse, where janitorial supplies lined the shelves.

"Today, his secretary of defense unleashed such a policy," said Romney. "The secretary of defense said that on a day certain, the middle of 2013, we're going to pull out our combat troops from Afghanistan."

Panetta told reporters en route to a NATO meeting in Brussels that the administration hopes to remove combat troops by 2013 and continue a training and advisory role with Afghan forces through 2014.

"He announced that. He announced that. So the Taliban hears it, the Pakistanis hear it, the Afghan leaders hear it," said Romney. "Why in the world do you go to the people that you're fighting with and tell them the date you're pulling out your troops? It makes absolutely no sense."

"His naivete is putting in jeopardy the mission of the United States of America and our commitments to freedom," he said. "He is wrong. We need new leadership in Washington."

Romney has said repeatedly on the campaign stump that his own decision regarding withdrawing troops from Afghanistan would be based on advice from generals on the ground.

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CSIS'S TONY CORDESMAN WARNS the President on policy holes to fill (or Romney might be right):

The Real Issues in Afghanistan: Looking Beyond Undefined Policy Statements and Slogans

By Dr. Anthony Cordesman

February 2, 2011

Secretary's Panetta's comment about ending the US combat role in Afghanistan in 2013, and focusing on building up Afghan forces, have triggered a predictable firestorm of criticism, guesswork, and speculation. The practical problem is that the Secretary did not define what he meant, and more importantly, any shift in the role of US forces involves critical issues and uncertainties that make a policy statement almost meaningless without far more detail on what the US is seeking and the overall level of resources it is willing to provide.

In practice, the Obama Administration does not seem to have any clear plan as yet for transition. It has concepts and debates, but does not seem to have come to grips with any of the key issues it must deal with in shaping the outcome of the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan:

*** The US has never set meaningful strategic goals for the war. It has**

talked loosely about ending the threat of terrorism, but has not set any goal for what it is seeking in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or the region in terms of a post-withdrawal relationship with the governments involved, the level of development and security it desires, and what kind of peace - if any -- is desirable. It is fighting a war without a defined and meaningful objective.

*** There is no overall plan for transition and withdrawal that links US and other allied forces, changes in the aid efforts of the US and other countries, and the build-up of Afghan security forces and governance in given areas. The military may have a campaign plan, but the US and its allies do not have an integrated civil-military war plan.**

*** The development of Afghan national security forces (ANSF) is in a state of total confusion. It is being rushed forward while spending is being drastically cut, long before it is clear how long it will take to create effective force elements and how serious the limits will be to the quality of much of the military and police forces. This is particularly critical because major elements of the ANSF cannot possibly be ready to stand on their own by the end of 2014, and the Afghan government officially stated at the Bonn Conference that it will need major outside aid and support through at least 2020. It is all too clear that the ANSF will not be ready to take on a major combat role in 2013 without significant ISAF support, and that the current ISAF campaign plan to secure key areas in the east and consolidate gains in the south cannot be implemented if major US and ISAF force cuts take place.**

*** The US and its allies clearly understand that they are going to be making reductions in military and aid spending in Afghanistan during 2012-2014 that are so serious they could plunge the more developed sectors of the economy into a major recession and lead to massive capital flight from the country. Like the development of the ANSF, there is a flood of competing ideas, but no clear plan and no clear picture of the need for new forms of transition aid, how it will deal with the Afghan government's request for transition aid, or what level of aid will be forthcoming.**

*** It is easy to talk about a transfer of responsibility to the Afghans, but as similar statement in Iraq showed, this can be little more than cosmetic or be based on real Afghan capabilities. So far, there seems to be no clear standard for Afghan security and governance capabilities, or for defining what level of US and allied capability will remain once the official "transfer" takes place.**

*** There is no consensus between ISAF and much of the US intelligence community over the effectiveness of US and allied military operations, the strength and determination of insurgent forces, and attitudes and capabilities of the Afghan government and forces, and the depth of the problems with (and within) Pakistan.**

*** The US is talking about peace negotiations without a clear definition of what kind of peace it can accept, and in ways that are causing considerable tension with the Afghan government and Pakistan. It talks**

about fighting, negotiating, and leaving at the same time without explaining whether there is really a plan for doing any of this. Moreover, this is occurring at a time when the new US strategy announced in January puts a major emphasis on not fighting the kind of war the US is now fighting, and there are far more debates in the Administration and Congress over staying in Afghanistan than either would like to publicly admit.

* There is no consensus within the US government over the level of troops that should be kept, how to phase down US and allied forces through 2014, how to phase down US aid efforts, what level of defense and foreign aid spending will be needed through 2014 and beyond. Concepts are not plans, and intentions are not money.

* The US government has not developed any clear picture of how it should deal with critical problems in the Afghan government, deal with its lack of capability in governance and its corruption as the US and other leave, handle the problems inherent in its over-centralization, and deal with the fact that Karzai is supposed to leave and a new election is supposed to be held in 2014.

* The US has not come to grips with the growing tensions between Karzai and the various ethnic and Hazara elements of the "Northern Alliance," and how it wants power to be distributed between the central government and regional and local power centers. There already is a risk of a major power struggle in the Afghan government over such issues as the US leaves, but the US is approaching this more through a state of denial than with any practical plans.

* The US cannot talk about transition in Afghanistan without having clear policies and goals in dealing with Pakistan. This is particularly critical as Pakistan, and its relationship with the US, is far more important to long-term US strategic interests than Afghanistan.

These are the issues the US needs to address immediately, and the devil lies in the details - not in making more undefined policy statements and in advancing yet another series of new concepts without plans and resources. There are now less than three years until the end of 2014, and it takes months or sometimes over a year to actually begin implementing major shifts in programs in Afghanistan. It is also time to stop largely meaningless speculation over broad policy statements and demand specifics and a credible set of goals and plans.

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GEN. WALLACE "CHIP" GREGSON former Asst. Sec. E. Asia, DOD 1/31 at the Brookings "Pivot/TPP" conference...note that Gregson is frank in his warnings about planned or likely defense cuts in Asia, but also (to our theme last night) that China is not the "new best enemy"...

Overall Thrust of Obama administration military/security policy in the western Pacific

Secretary Clinton provided the most enduring description of our emerging military and

security policy in the Western Pacific. She said we stand at a "pivot point" as we prepare to withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan, that we have to be smart and systematic about where we invest our time and energy, and that "One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore be to lock in a substantially increased investment -- diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise -- in the Asia-Pacific region."

"Pivot point" may not have been the best metaphor. The press, no doubt aware of the President's round ball prowess, immediately shortened this to "pivot". In basketball, pivoting to something means pivoting away from something else. But it's hard to see how we can get Asia right without some acceptable degree of stability and security in the Middle East - the source of much of Asia's energy. In fact, in both our rhetoric and our actions we are maintaining a significant presence in the Gulf, both afloat and ashore.

Nevertheless her description of our policy, strategy, and intentions was welcome in the Asia Pacific region. This continued a positive trend that began with her earlier statement at the ASEAN Regional Forum that reconfirmed our support for peaceful settlement of the many territorial disputes in the region. Later she reaffirmed that the Senkaku Islands do indeed fall under Article 5 of the US-Japan treaty. Throughout her tenure, she has provided consistent, and welcome, attention to our allies, particularly Japan, and friends, most recently Burma.

In all of this, we can see an unstated but powerful theme of our Asia and the Pacific policy, that of "friends first". We have an Asia and the Pacific policy, covering all aspects of national life - business, commerce, economics, energy, education, the environment, as well as traditional security. They are all connected and mutually reinforcing. We can't have a bipolar, security-only, US-China policy and strategy. It has to be embedded into our regional and extra-regional policy and strategy.

This notion is a bit harder to drive into public opinion and the bureaucracy than it might appear. As the Soviet Union was collapsing, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff summoned his Chairman's Study Group. This 4-person group was three colonels and a Navy captain, chosen carefully by each service chief. The Chairman had a simple question: "What do we do now that we've lost our best enemy?"

For nearly 50 years of Cold War, the national security structure, pentagon planning and acquisition processes, and military planning had all developed in response to a reliable and predictable enemy. Suddenly all of that was no longer relevant.

In many ways we are still looking for a new "best enemy". Life was much simpler for our bureaucratic functions when we had a single, well-defined villain, right out of central casting. The villain is gone. China is most definitely not the new answer.

The US needs China to be a successful contributor to the international system. At the same time, we need to work with our allies and friends, and be there to support their interests, many well beyond those considered as "traditional" security interests.

"Asia and the Pacific" stretches from the Indian sub-continent to the western shores of the Americas, north and south. It spans two oceans that are increasingly linked by shipping, energy, trade, and strategy. It includes 5 US treaty allies. It includes sovereign US territory, one island nation in "covenant" with the United States that is treated like a territory, and three island nations in compacts of free association with the US. It includes the world's most populous country, and the future most populous country. The world's largest and 2d largest Muslim populations within single national boundaries are in this region. It's home to three maritime straits - the Malacca, the

Sunda, and the Lombok - that permit the easy passage of well over 1100 fully laden supertankers per year, most passing on into the South China Sea bringing energy to China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, and other countries.

This body of water is bounded by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Singapore. Many nations have competing claims to various islands and reefs in the South China Sea, and thus competing claims to fishing grounds, sea-bed resources, and exclusive economic zones. 50% of the world's seaborne commercial tonnage and 1/3 of the world's value in trade traverses this sea. If the world has a commercial intersection, this is it.

Traditional international law, as favored by the United States, calls for freedom of navigation and peaceful settlement of disputes. This is being increasingly challenged by China's claim of historical rights to the entire South and East China seas. The Chinese National Oil Corporation has placed a \$20B dollar bet that the South China Sea has enough oil resources to be a "second Persian Gulf".

China finds itself pulled in two divergent directions by continental and maritime interests, but on a truly trans-regional scale. Fourteen land powers share terrestrial frontiers with China while six maritime countries together enclose the entire Chinese coastline. Of these twenty neighboring states, six rank among the world's top ten in population, eight rank among the top twenty-five in military forces, and four possess nuclear weapons.

China settled twelve of fourteen land border disputes. China no longer has any natural enemies on her borders, but neither does she have any natural friends. The closest "friends" might be North Korea, Pakistan, and Burma. It's not obvious that provides any advantages.

The region as a whole has many built-in stresses that can cause conflict. Some of the more dominant, or powerful, include demographics, energy, food and agricultural, and fresh water. All are interrelated, as numbers of people and their movement affects food security, water availability and purity, and energy production and use. Often these goals conflict. For example the use of hydropower to produce energy often reduces the availability of agricultural land and fresh water.

The world will add nearly 60 million people per year, reaching over eight billion by the 2030s. Most growth will be in developing countries. The United States, alone among developed countries, is expected to add 50 million people. Europe, Japan, Russia, and Korea will join those in absolute population decline. China will add some 170 million, but the population will be aging, and predominantly male. India, in contrast, will add 320 million people, becoming the world's most populous nation before 2030.

Aging and declining populations will stress support systems. Welfare systems in developed countries are based on assumptions of moderate economic and population growth.

Remittance flows are essential parts of the economies of many states. In 2007, the top three recipients of emigrant remittances were India, China, and Mexico. Disruption or alteration of these flows due to failing governments, war, pestilence, natural disaster or other phenomenon can affect peace and stability. When economic conditions collapse in a region, or remittance flows are altered, uncontrolled population movements result.

India will continue to grow, risking tension between the rich and the poor, as well as among Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists. The Maoists in much of eastern India are

India's most important security challenge.

Rapid development in China, India, and other countries creates a relentless drive to assure adequate and secure supplies of fuel to sustain growth, maintain satisfaction, and prevent internal strife and chaos. Multiple disputes over access to seabed resources in the South China Sea regularly fill the news. Massive additional production and refining capacity is needed to avert resource shortages as world population grows. Japan is currently coping with energy shortage caused by a natural disaster, illustrating the fragility of energy infrastructure.

Every fresh water system on the east, southeast, and south Asian littoral is under heavy pressure from pollution. The search for affordable energy invites upstream countries to build hydroelectric dams on rivers coming out of their mountains. Ungoverned, this can cause devastation to downstream nations and cultures that depend on nutrients in the rivers to sustain their aqua-culture-dependent lifestyles. Needless to say, Asia has a poor record of collegial dispute settlement.

Ocean fish stocks are already under pressure from overfishing and illegal fishing. Without some agreement, some code of conduct on fishing and effective enforcement means, many species, and nations, are in danger. Recently such disputes caused the death of a Korean Coastguardsman at the hand of a Chinese fisherman.

The impact and purpose of the intended rotation of Marines through northern Australia

The Marine presence in Australia has been much in the news. It must be important. According to some accounts, China seems to feel that 2500 Marines 3,600 miles from Beijing are a dagger pointed at their heart.

A few principles should be stated to put this in context.

We deploy forces overseas to operate in support of the policy and strategy of the United States. We do this with the active cooperation and support of our allies and friends.

Military and naval bases overseas are very useful things. They make a profound political statement long before they make a military statement. Any presence of foreign forces in another country requires a compromise of various principles of sovereignty on the part of both countries involved. Any such presence is a strong validation, at some cost, of commitment to common security goals.

Bases are also very useful, and cost-effective, means to develop, train, and maintain forces. Bases can also support alliance training and development. Bases also provide valuable deployment platforms and support for forces operating throughout the region. Whether one fights from these bases in conflict, or from other locations, is a different question driven by a number of factors.

Our forces overseas have an important deterrent role. But if that was all they did, it would be a very expensive and unprofitable undertaking. The role of our forward deployed forces is far broader and more constructive than simply waiting for someone to turn the master arming switch on. Broad, active, widely distributed presence throughout the theater dampens sources of instability, deters conflict, gives substance to US security commitments, and ensures continuing American access to the region. The presence and the efforts of our forces helps shape the regional geopolitical climate, and they remain immediately available to respond if needed.

Our bases in Asia and the Pacific are concentrated in Alaska, Hawaii, Korea, and Japan. Guam, after a long period of decline following Vietnam, is again growing. These

bases generally are of the type that supports our personnel on long tours, with families. As a result, they have schools, commissaries, exchanges, movie theaters, hospitals, dental clinics, recreational facilities, and so on. Our concentration in Japan and Korea reflects the enduring, and urgent, threat of North Korea, our historic obligation to Taiwan, and our Cold War history.

Secretary Gates introduced the concept of a "widely distributed, operationally resilient, politically sustainable" presence for our forces. This signals recognition of the importance of South East Asia and the Indian Ocean area. It points to an expansion of the geographic distribution of our forces, and the geographic reach and distribution of our alliances. In all the rhetoric and discussion of our alliance transformation and realignment agreement with Japan, very few observers note the potential for the US to provide for the continuous presence of Japanese forces and their training in Guam. This is an expansion of the alliance to Guam, and a major strategic step forward to rapidly create increased efficiency and effectiveness of our alliance forces when we are operating together in hi-intensity, modern operations.

It also calls for a more lean, agile, and expeditionary posture. Expeditionary in this sense means self-sustaining, stepping lightly on the local infrastructure, making do with things as they are. It means not building a "Little America" inside a fence line.

It signals an increased emphasis on robust, continuous, bi- and multi-national training, accomplished through expansion of the US and Australian synthetic training environments. These systems, already in place, permit combinations of live, virtual, and constructive forces arrayed in an interactive, hyper-realistic simulation system that replicates faithfully the uncertainty, friction, fog and stress of high-intensity air-land-sea-space-cyberspace combat for commanders and their staffs.

The Marine presence in Australia is, along with Guam, a big first step to these goals. It is a training presence, not a base. It will be a deployable, combat-capable combined arms air-ground-logistics force. Forces there will be expeditionary, self-sustaining and self-contained. One mission will be to work and train with forces from Australia, and in the future Japan and other friends and allies. They will be supported by Prepositioned Ships, amphibious ships, Joint High Speed Vessel, and commercial High Speed Vessel mobility, as well as their organic aircraft, including FA-18, F-35B in the future, MV-22 and KC-130. Combined deployments with Australian, and eventually other forces, are possible.

The effect of the Defense Department January report on "Priorities for 21st Century Defense" for US security policy in the region.

In summary, it will make things more difficult. We're headed for a fleet of 246 ships, significantly short of the 346 called for by the bi-partisan Quadrennial Defense Review independent panel. This is important because, no matter how capable the ship, it can be in only one place at a time. And power projection that stays is about ships.

Already we hear from friends in Asia that they fear this will be like the last such force reduction episode in the 1990s. In their memory, we reduced our presence in Asia then, and called it an increase in capabilities, because individual weapons systems were better. Even the January 2012 document calls for preserving readiness over more force structure. Smaller but better, in other words.

It talks about "Rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific and Middle East Regions", calling for a renewed emphasis on air and naval forces while sustaining ground force presence. Along with the calls for rebalancing we will no longer size ground forces for long-term stability operations. The number of ships will be reduced by stretching out new ship

programs while retiring others early. Tactical fighter programs will also be reduced.

There is a stated bias toward the maritime environment, an emphasis on self- and rapidly-deployable forces, and power projection.

The public reaction to the announced strategies has shortened all this to reducing personnel to invest in technology.

What this means to the region depends on how we play this. Rhetorically we always extol the virtues of working with our allies and friends. Now is the time to really increase our combined training and deployments in response to both policy and budgetary imperatives. Some suggestions:

- Distribute forces in a constant pattern of training and exercises
- Train in the SW Pacific zone vice an exclusive focus around a small number of large, permanent bases in Japan and Korea
- Counter growing precision interdiction threats with a constantly changing array of locations throughout east, SE, and South Asia.
- Expand the deployment pattern into Riau Archipelago and Indian Ocean
- Build on existing relationships with Maldives, Seychelles, Comoros
- Provide renewable energy systems in return for training access
- Exploit oceanic vice land-based presence
- Leverage islands and atolls along the key energy routes

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THAT'S IT FOR TONIGHT...

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