

A NEW TYPE OF GREAT POWER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA: THE MILITARY DIMENSION

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The relative economic and military rise of China is likely to lead to a major shift in the world's strategic architecture, which, in the age of its pivot and rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region, the United States will need to accommodate. China's rise could take a variety of forms—with a wide range of possible consequences across a spectrum that has pure cooperation at one end and pure conflict at the other. The form that China's new role takes will have a decisive impact on the interests of the United States and its allies and partners in the region. For the outcome to be generally beneficial, China needs to be dissuaded from hegemonic aspirations and retained as a cooperative partner in the world system.

President Xi Jinping's recent suggestion that a newly empowered China and the United States adopt a new relationship that is different from previous ones between the great powers provides an ideal opportunity for the United States to consider its strategic options in the region. Its policy will likely require three elements, that, to some extent, are at odds with each other. First, China, or at least those hard-line elements within its decisionmaking circles, will need to be deterred and dissuaded from adopting overly assertive and aggressive policies in a region where it has a major stake in a worrying number of local disputes. Second, China will need to be persuaded of U.S. peaceful intentions and of the very real community of interest that the two countries share. Third, local allies and partners need to be assured of sufficient American support through a policy of active engagement while avoiding counterproductive outcomes of encouraged adventurism and a "China v. The Rest" structure in the region. Pursuing these three

policies simultaneously will therefore call for a very delicate touch.

Given the importance of the issues at stake and the difficulty of the task, all of the levers of American power, both "hard" and "soft," will need to be brought into play. This is especially true for the U.S. Armed Forces deployed in the region. Since the Asia-Pacific region is primarily a maritime theater a leading role will need to be played by the U.S. Navy, Marines, and Air Force. The U.S. Army will, nonetheless, have a substantial supporting and facilitating role in shaping the new relationship with an emergent China.

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