An Asiatic “Quadruple Alliance” or “Stately Quadrille”?:
Today’s Sino-American Geopolitical Rivalry and Shifting Alliances in the Asia-Pacific Region

Abstract

A sea change in relative power between the United States and China has bewildered policy makers and strategists on the globe. While heavily dependent on China as an unparalleled and irreplaceable engine of economic growth, Japan has become more vigilant against China’s power projection capability. In the meantime, the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are now perturbed by an agonizing question of how to court Washington without offending Beijing. Therefore there have emerged not a small number of policy makers and strategists who are inclined to cogitate over a Sinocentric system in the Asia-Pacific region by breaking decades-long ties with a doddering America and adopting bandwagon policies toward a rising China. Thus the combination of America’s waning influence and China’s assertive posture has made a prominent scholar to suggest an Asiatic “Quadruple Alliance” comprising the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, to better balance against China. Based upon the above observations, this material tries to capture the gist of the argument developed in a newly published book titled *A Contest for Supremacy*, and argue its implications for Japan’s global strategies.

1. Introduction: A Special Seminar on Sino-American Rivalry in Tokyo

On December 9, 2011, the Canon Institute for Global Studies (CIGS) had the honor of welcoming Aaron L. Friedberg, a professor at the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, and held a special seminar “A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia,” i.e., the title of his most recent book. The professor’s speech offered a wonderful opportunity for a Tokyoite audience to think about Japan’s global strategies.

1-1. *A Contest for Supremacy*: Providing Western Perspectives and Interpretations That Asians Fail to Recognize

Friedberg’s book looks like a marvelous and inexhaustible fountain of knowledge and wisdom regarding today’s Sino-American rivalry. Especially the Japanese reader finds the book filled with novel perspectives and interpretations that Westerners would have when they react to Chinese thought and action (see Table 1). At the same time, the book provides the reader with insightful quotations ranging from Thucydides and Karl Marx to François Jullien and Yan Xuetong/Yán Xuètōng (阎学通). It also has appendixes for gleaning accurate and in-depth information so as not to be deceived by perfunctory and stereotyped information often conveyed heedlessly by mediocre writers.

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2 A quadruple alliance is an oft-used term in Europe’s balance-of-power politics to describe a four-power alliance to contain a competing power, especially during the 18th century; the Stately Quadrille is a term to describe shifting alliances prior to the establishment of the 18th century Franco-Anglo bipolar system. See, for example, Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire*, New York: Basic Books, 2008.

Table 1. An Anatomy of Friedberg’s *A Contest for Supremacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Structure, and Impressive and Memorable Lines</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intro-duction</strong></td>
<td><strong>A Contest for Supremacy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The United States and the People’s Republic of China are today locked in a quiet but increasingly intense struggle for power and influence, not only in Asia but around the world.</em> [p. 1]</td>
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<td><em>Throughout history, relations between dominant states and rising ones have been uneasy and often violent. . . . These age-old patterns are clearly visible today in the behavior of the United States and China.</em> [p. 1]</td>
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<td><em>Ideological differences add a crucial extra measure of mistrust and volatility to this mix.</em> [p. 1]</td>
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<td><em>China’s current rulers see the United States as the most serious external threat to their continued rule that they feel the need to constrict its military presence and diplomatic influence in the Western Pacific.</em> [p. 2]</td>
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<td><em>In addition to the powerful ideological and geopolitical forces impelling the United States and China toward rivalry, there are clearly other, countervailing factors at work. . . . at least for the moment, Washington and Beijing both appear to believe that time is on their side. American policy makers remain confident that in the long-run China’s economic growth will pave the way for political liberalization and lasting peace. While they are clearly nervous about navigating the near term, China’s current rulers also seem certain that the rides of history are running in their country’s favor. Both of these views cannot be correct.</em> [U.S. and China in a state of “Tóngchuáng Yìmèng/同志幷立/同志義勇”] [p. 2]</td>
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<td>*Former prime minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew has observed that “the 21st century will be a contest for supremacy in the Pacific because that’s where the growth will be. . . . If you do not hold your ground in the Pacific you cannot be a world leader.” [p. 8]</td>
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<th>I</th>
<th>Means of Ascent</th>
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<tr>
<td>I-1. The “Vasco da Gama Epoch”</td>
<td><em>By the turn of the twentieth century, the situation in Asia was characterized by a degree of Western dominance that seemed beyond any possibility of challenge. . . . While the nations of Western Europe and North America leapt ahead, Asia fell further and further behind. Japan is the exception that proves the rule. Because they preserved their sovereignty, the Japanese were able to organize an effective response to the Western powers.</em> [p. 16]</td>
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<td>I-2. Expansion and Domination</td>
<td><em>The move to market-driven growth, and Asia’s transformation from backwater to economic dynamo, came in a series of five overlapping waves, starting with Japan’s postwar recovery and extending, most recently to the liberalization of India’s economy in the early 1990s.</em> [p. 23]</td>
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<td>I-3. Asian Renaissance</td>
<td><em>China’s part in the story of Asia’s postwar renaissance is delineated by two dates. On October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong, chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, proclaimed the establishment of a “People’s Republic.”</em> [p. 27]</td>
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<td>I-4. Achieving Growth</td>
<td><em>The second crucial date in China’s reemergence as a great power is December 28, 1978, the opening day of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Communist Party Central Committee. Coming just two years after Mao’s death, this meeting marked “the decisive break with the past and the beginning of China’s reform era.”</em> [p. 30]</td>
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<td>I-5. China’s Rise</td>
<td><em>Will China Continue to Rise?</em></td>
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<td>II-1. “Prediction Is Difficult, Especially about the Future?”</td>
<td><em>As suggested by Japan’s experience in the 1990s, if not managed properly, bubbles of the sort that seem now to be inflating rapidly in China can burst and lead to bank failures, stubbornly low growth rate, and sustained high levels of unemployment.</em> [pp. 33-34]</td>
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<td>II-2. The Narrowing Power Gap</td>
<td><em>China’s unusual demographic profile also means that a relatively small group of younger workers will soon have to bear the burden of supporting a much larger cohort of retirees. Increasing spending on pensions and medical care will be necessary to maintain a decent society, but it will also divert some resources from investment in more productive activities.</em> [p. 34]</td>
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<td><em>A lasting expansion in the state sector at the expense of privately owned enterprises could hurt long-term prospects for growth.</em> [p. 34]</td>
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<td><em>Chinese society is marked by deepening divisions between “haves” and “have-nots,” and between a small number of ostentatiously wealthy, well-connected plutocrats and the modestly well-to-do middle class. And this is to say nothing of a pervasive culture of official corruption and a system of governance that commands neither wide respect nor deep loyalty.</em> [pp. 34-35]</td>
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*Tokyo-Cambridge Gazette:* Politico-Economic Commentaries No. 9 (December 15, 2011)
China’s current rulers do not see themselves as they once did, as the leaders of a global revolutionary movement. But they do believe that they are engaged in an ideological struggle of sorts, albeit one in which, until very recently, they have been almost entirely on the defensive. [p. 44]

The two countries are tied together as never before by flows of goods, services, capital, people, and ideas. Indeed, the connections between their respective economies have grown so numerous and so deep in recent years that some analysts have suggested that the two have effectively fused into a single organism known as “Chimerica.” [p. 46]

Unfortunately, there is little reason in theory or historical experience to believe that economic links alone are sufficient to create lasting stability, still less perpetual peace. [p. 46]

Even if interdependence helps suppress mutual hostility, it will not necessarily constrain nations from engaging in various forms of competitive behavior, including arms races and the construction of opposing alliances. Such geopolitical maneuvering can lead to escalatory spirals of mistrust, a breakdown in political and economic relations, and even open conflict. [p. 46]

History suggests that when the chips are down, politics trumps trade. Before the start of the First World War, Britain and Germany were major economic partners. But this did not stop Britain’s leaders from seeing Germany’s growing power as a threat to their colonial empire and, eventually, to the stability of Europe. [p. 47]

Nor did it prevent the Kaiser and his advisors from concluding that Britain was intent on retaining its preponderant position and blocking Germany’s rise. Strong economic ties could not slow the deterioration in Anglo-German relations that led eventually to war. To the contrary, by the turn of the twentieth century the growth in volume and quality of imported German manufactured goods was yet another factor fueling British fears of unfavorable long-term shifts in the balance of power. [20: These anxieties are discussed in Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 37-38.] As this example suggests, economic interdependence is not always a cause of friendship and can, at times, become a major source of insecurity and friction. [p. 47]

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China now has a sizable, fast-growing middle class. At some point, perhaps its members too will begin to play their historic role and demand political rights. [p. 50]

Even if China begins to narrow the gap by moving toward greater openness and expanded political competition, the very process of change could itself increase the risk of confrontation and conflict. Political scientists Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder suggest that it is precisely when nations are in the midst of a transition from authoritarianism to democracy that they are most likely to pick fights with their neighbors. [p. 51]

Strident patriotism is usually accompanied by the glorification of military power and by “the scapegoating of enemies of the nation, at home and abroad.” These tendencies, in turn, can lead to heightened international tensions, and often to war. [p. 51]

The course of events is determined as well by the perceptions (and misperceptions) of leaders, the struggles of domestic interest groups, and the strategies (however imperfectly conceived and implemented) of governments. [p. 58]

The rise and fall of great power and the ebb and flow of relations among nations are not solely predictable end product of such impersonal forces. The course of events is determined as well by the perceptions (and misperceptions) of leaders, the struggles of domestic interest groups, and the strategies (however imperfectly conceived and implemented) of governments. [p. 58]

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From Containment to Alignment

III-1. Power and Principle
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III-2. Containment: 1949-69


III-4. Alignment Phase II (1979-89)

III-5. Convergence?

III-6. “Chimerica?”

III-7. Common Threat?

III-8. Nuclear Weapons?

III-9. A Fragile Balance

*Today’s Sino-American rivalry is rooted in deep ideological differences and in the stubborn realities of power politics.* [p. 57]

**“Congagement”**

IV-1. The End of Alignment

*Congagement grew and evolved in the 1990s and early 2000s, and in certain respects it continues to do so. Albeit with some comparatively minor shifts in emphasis, this mixed policy has now survived three presidential transitions. [p. 90]

IV-2. The Case for Continued Engagement

IV-3. Recognizing the Challenge: The Taiwan Crisis and the Return of “Congagement”

*The evident growth in China’s capabilities and the apparent expansiveness of its intentions raised the question of whether it might one day emerge as what defense planners referred to as a “peer competitor” of the United States. [p. 98]

IV-4. Preserving the Balance

*By continuing to open its markets and invest its capital, the United States was contributing substantially to the rapid expansion of China’s GDP. This fueled Beijing’s sustained military buildup, which in turn stimulated Washington to strengthen its Asian alliances and bolster its own forces in the region. Continued engagement thus helped to create the need for more balancing. [p. 109]

*The area where the contradictions between engagement and balancing continued regularly to reemerge was the one in which the connections between trade and military power were most obvious and direct. Investing in factories, buying Chinese-made consumer goods, and thereby contributing to the overall growth of China’s economy was one thing; transferring technology that might find its way directly into advanced weapons, or speed the day when China could develop them on its own, was much harder to justify. Yet it was precisely in the high-technology sectors that U.S. industry had the greatest advantages and Chinese firms were most eager to do business. [p. 109]

IV-5. The Obama Administration Embraces Congagement

IV-6. The Resilience of Congagement . . . And Its Risks

*Can congagement be sustained? Critics of a mixed strategy have generally focused on the danger that attempts at balancing could undermine engagement.* [p. 117]

*Regardless of what either initially intended, the United States and China will end up in a new Cold War, if not an actual shooting war. There is
certainly a possibility that this could happen, but the strength of the domestic interests arrayed in favor of continued engagement and against “excessive” balancing make it a far less likely scenario than it might otherwise be.  [p. 118]

*The assertion that “If we treat Chian like an enemy it will become one” has become a piece of elite conventional wisdom that few pause to examine. (78: Joseph Nye, quoted in Jim Mann, “U.S. Starting to View China as a Potential Enemy,” Los Angeles Times, April 16, 1995.)  [p. 118]

*Building up American military strength to keep pace with China will also be costly and hence unpopular with advocates of smaller federal budgets and lower taxes, as well as those who favor increased spending on health care and other social welfare programs.  [p. 118]

“The Propensity of Things”[“shì 力”]

V.1. “Seek Truth from Facts”

*Analysts of contemporary Chinese strategy are confronted at once by a confusing blend of cacophony and silence. . . . Today an assortment of Chinese officials and government agencies makes meaningful policy statements and prepares comparatively professional reports on a wide variety of topics. There is, of course, no shortage of sloganeering and blather, but there is also a good deal of wheat amid the chaff.  [p. 121]

*To the extent that they deal at all with future plans, defense budget statements and “white papers” are opaque and incomplete. Speeches and reports on foreign policy still repeat key phrases with mind-numbing regularity and China’s aims are discussed in only the most cursory and anodyne ways.  [p. 122]

V.2. Chinese Strategists Assess “the Propensity of Things”


V.3. “Peace and Development”

V.4. Waiting for Multipolarity

*In the early 1990s, Chinese analysts anticipated that the collapse of the Soviet Union would be followed in short order by the dissolution of America’s alliances, the accelerated growth and increasing independence of its former allies, and a sustained deterioration in its own national economic performance. These predictions echoed those of prominent Western “declinists.” The end result, in the view of Chinese strategists, would be a world with five or possibly six major players, including Japan, a reunited Germany (or perhaps a united Europe), a recovering Russia, a diminished America, possibly India, and, although they seldom referred directly to their own country, a rising China.  [p. 128]

V.5. The American Threat

* A review of their internal personal files concludes that China’s fourth generation leaders see the United States as “the main obstacle to global stability and international law,” “the source of hegemonism and power politics” in the world, and a “looming threat” to the sovereignty of their country and the survival of their regime.  [p. 133]

V.6. Conclusion

*The United States has “never abandoned its efforts to ‘Westernize’ China,” and the very success of “the development model of socialism with Chinese characteristics” in recent years has rekindled a sense of ideological rivalry.  [p. 141]

“Hide Out Capabilities and Bide Our Time”

VI.1. The 24 Characters and the 3 Axioms

*China is like a vessel being carried forward by strong currents into fast-flowing rapids.  [p. 142]

*Complex military and diplomatic concepts are often reduced in Chinese writings to pithy slogans or “tifa” [ti2fa3/tífǎ] (“peace and development,” “three no changes and three new changes,” and so on). No such official summary statement of China’s grand strategy or, somewhat more narrowly, of its strategy for dealing with the United States is known to exist.  [p. 143]

*The closest thing to such a formulation is probably Deng Xiaoping’s often-quoted admonition that China should “hide its capabilities and bide its time” [Tàogǔng yǎngwǔ/韬光养晦].  [p. 143]

*These words were part of a slightly longer “24-character strategy” circulated to top party officials in the summer of 1991 “(1) Observe calmly (Lǎngjīng guānchá/冷静观察); (2) Secure our position (Zhǎnhuì jiùgōng/站稳脚跟); (3) Cope with affairs calmly (Chénzhuó yìngfu*/冷静应付); (4) Hide our capacities and Bide our time (Tàogǔng yǎngwǔ/韬光养晦); (5) Be good at maintaining a low profile (Shānnǐ shǒuzhuōshù/善于守拙); and (6) Never claim leadership (Jiǔbì dàngtou/绝不担当). (Later, the phrase was added to make a “28-character strategy”) (7) Make some contributions (Yǒuxù zàoérshí/有所作为); (8) Coldly observe (Chénzhuó yìngfu*/冷静应付), (9) Stand firmly, be content to stand,韬光养晦, be content to stand, be content to stand; (10) There is a possibility that this could happen, but the strength of the domestic interests arrayed in favor of continued engagement and against “excessive” balancing make it a far less likely scenario than it might otherwise be.  [p. 118]

*Extrapolating only slightly from Deng’s formulation, I would suggest that China’s post-Cold War strategy for dealing with the United States, and with the wider world more generally, can be summed up in the following three axioms:

“Avoid confrontation”“Build comprehensive national power”“Advance incrementally”  [p. 144]

VI.2. “Avoid Confrontation”

VI.3. “Build Comprehensive National Power”

VI.4. “Advance Incrementally”

“To Win without Fighting”

VII.1. What Does “China Want?”

*China is not just any rising power, and its unique history provides an additional reason for believing that it will seek some form of regional preponderance.  [p. 158]

*To sum up: China’s current rulers do not seek preponderance solely because they are the leaders of a rising great power or simply because they are Chinese. Their desire for dominance and control is in large measure a by-product of the type of political system over which they preside.  [pp. 162-163]

VII.2. Making the World Safe for Authoritarianism

*It was the party, after all, that rescued China from foreign invaders, delivered it from a century of oppression and humiliation, and lifted it back into station.  [pp. 162-163]

VII.3. Establishing a “Favorable Peripheral Environment”

*The disposition of its “peripheral environment” is thus a matter of the utmost significance, and America’s continued presence there remains a serious threat to Chinese security. . . . If China is to secure its life zone, it must reduce America’s presence and influence there, and ensure that no other hostile power takes its place.  [p. 164]

*The key issue that will have to be addressed at some point is the question of America’s continuing role in East Asia.  [p. 165]

VII.4. “To Win Without Fighting Is the Highest Form of Excellence”

*China seeks to displace the United States as the dominant player in East Asia, and perhaps to extrude it from the region altogether, while at the same time avoiding a potentially disastrous direct confrontation.  [p. 166]
**The Balance of Influence**

VIII-1. Who Is Winning the “Contest for Supremacy”?  
*China and America are locked in a multifaceted competition to determine which will be the preponderant power in East Asia.*  
[p. 182]  
VIII-2. Who Is “Shaping” Whom?  
*At its core, the Sino-American competition is a mind game. Each contestant seeks via various channels to influence the other’s perceptions and calculations, and through them its strategies and goals.*  
[p. 183]  
VIII-3. Is America “Taming” China?  
*China’s leaders were ultimately able to have their cake and eat it too.*  
[p. 191]  
VIII-4. Is China “Lulling” America?  
*China’s rulers have been in the business of “perception management” for millennia. Over the centuries, these efforts were generally aimed at convincing other governments of China’s awesome power and importance.*  
[p. 194]  
VIII-5. Balancing or “Bandwagoning”?  
*Thus in Europe the balancing of power with power was long thought to be “natural and desirable,” internationally as well as domestically.*  
{48}  
[p. 203]  
VIII-6. The Diplomatic Balance Sheet  
*To sum up: China’s efforts to weaken U.S. alliances have thus far met with only limited success.*  
[p. 213]  
*Looking to the future, the willingness of America’s friends and allies in Asia to continue working with it will depend, in some measure, on their reading of its capabilities and intentions.*  
[p. 213]

**The Balance of Power**

IX-1. The “Hard Power” Rivalry  
*The enormous advantages that the United States now enjoys are the product of its long-standing lead in the development and deployment of new technologies, and the unmatched ability of its huge and dynamic economy to carry the costs of military primacy. Whether it will continue to enjoy these advantages in a long-term strategic rivalry with China is by no means obvious.*  
[p. 215]  
*America’s strategic position in Asia is built on a foundation of military power.*  
[p. 216]  
IX-3. The Nuclear Balance: Extended Deterrence versus Counter Deterrence  
*Given China’s limited ability to project power, virtually the only place where a clash with the United States would have been physically possible at this time was in the immediate vicinity of Taiwan.*  
[p. 217]  
IX-4. Command of the Seas  
*The ability of the United States to sustain its forces in East Asia is heavily dependent on a relative handful of regional bases, most of them on the territory of its allies.*  
[p. 219]  
IX-5. The Shrinking Technology Gap  
*To sum up: despite their vast cost, past success, and impressive appearance, America’s power projection forces in East Asia are in danger of becoming “wasting assets.”*  
{18}  
[p. 224]  
IX-6. Resources for the “Long Haul”  
*Unless it is willing to make substantial investments of its own, the United States may soon find that it promises to use conventional force to defend its regional friends lack credibility and its threats have lost their persuasiveness.*  
[p. 224]
**Alternative Strategies**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>X-1. “Alternative Chinas”</th>
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<td><em>Prudent planners hope for the best but prepares for the worst.</em> [p. 245]</td>
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<td>X-1-(a) Weak, unstable China</td>
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<td><em>Since its founding, the PRC has launched surprise attacks on the United States (1950), India (1962), Russia (1969), and Vietnam (1979).</em> [8] As RAND analysts Mark Burles and Abram Shulsky point out, Beijing has been willing to strike first even when the overall balance of military power seemed to be heavily weighted in favor of its opponent. [p. 248]</td>
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<td>X-1-(b) Strong, democratic China</td>
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<td><em>Eager to sustain the forward momentum of engagement, and hopeful of undercutting Chinese “hard-liners” in imagined internal debates, American Beijing will unleash a full-blown influence campaign in which public statements are accompanied by private warnings to both the United States and its local partners.</em> [p. 248]</td>
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<th>X-2. Alternative Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td>X-2-(a) Confrontation and appeasement</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>A small handful of “realists” do believe that regardless of its domestic politics, a rising China will someday come to blows with the United States.</em> [p. 252]</td>
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<td>X-2-(b) Enhanced engagement</td>
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<td><em>Eliminating the extremes at either end of the continuum of potential strategies leaves less radical variations on the theme of engagement. Logically speaking there are two broad alternatives, with many possible permutations of each: either the United States can intensify engagement, while holding steady or cutting back on anything that appears direction, maintaining or partially constricting engagement while stepping up balancing.</em> [p. 255]</td>
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**Can America Keep Its Balance?**

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<th>XI-1. Getting Engagement Right</th>
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<td><em>For much of the past century the United States has had the luxury of being able to divide the world nearly into two clear-cut camps. Its most important friends and military allies have tended to be democracies with whom it did the great bulk of its business, while its strategic rivals were authoritarian regimes with whom it talked little and traded less. China has shattered this mold and rearranged the pieces into an unfamiliar and disconcerting pattern: it is neither a friend nor, at this point, an avowed enemy, and despite the repressive character of its government, it is among America’s most important commercial partners.</em> [p. 264]</td>
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<td>XI-2. Preserving a Favorable Balance of Power</td>
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<td><em>In the long run, the only way to maintain a technological edge is not by holding others back but by continuing to move forward. . . . The foundations are formed by a first-class educational system, a society open and attractive to talented and ambitious immigrants, and generous public and private support for basic scientific research. Vibrant civilian industries, with ready access to capital, and a tax and legal code that reward innovation provide the scaffolding. A flexible, diverse, and competitive array of defense manufacturers, serving a well-funded and forward-looking defense establishment, complete the structure.</em> [pp. 273-274]</td>
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<td><em>Even as it continues to engage China, the United States must work with its friends and allies to maintain a margin of military advantage sufficient to deter attempts at coercion or aggression. Assuming that China’s power continues to grow, this will require even greater exertion and closer cooperation in the future than it has in the past.</em> [p. 274]</td>
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**Tokyo-Cambridge Gazette:** Politico-Economic Commentaries No. 9 (December 15, 2011)
1-2. The Gist of Friedberg’s Argument and Its Implications for Japan’s Global Strategies

This section discusses briefly the following issues dealt in Friedberg’s book—(1) pan-Asian “quad,” (2) Asia’s historical orientation toward bandwagoning, and (3) “enhanced engagement” versus “better balancing.”

First, Friedberg suggests America’s “better balancing” start with close communication and cooperation among a pan-Asian “quad,” i.e., the United States, Japan, India, and Australia. This grouping seems to be rational from an American perspective, but Japan’s policy makers and strategists are concerned about the absence of ASEAN as well as China’s possible reaction to such grouping. Second, in executing “better balancing,” the United States needs its key partners. Thus Japan can play an important role in “better balancing,” because Japan has long kept an arm’s-length distance from the centuries-long Sinocentric suzerainty relationship in Asia since its founding. However, Japan is now faced with a series of historic crises in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake. Third, to be sure, “enhanced engagement” has been less successful in the sense that it did not induce China’s politico-economic liberalization. In other words, “enhanced engagement” might bring about the same results as America adopts an appeasement policy. Yet, “better balancing” requires judicious and well thought-out strategies. To implement such strategies, the United States has to sophisticate its management of its hub-and-spokes and pan-Asian networks simultaneously. But, an ailing America is unable to allocate sufficient resources to better manage such complex foreign policy.

Source: Quoted by the author from *A Contest for Supremacy*. 

Tokyo-Cambridge Gazette: Politico-Economic Commentaries No. 9 (December 15, 2011)
2. Japan amidst Intensifying Sino-American Geopolitical Rivalry

After reviewing the argument developed in the book titled *A Contest for Supremacy*, the author tries to briefly touch upon several politico-economic factors that could be examined through the prism of Sino-American rivalry.

2.1. China’s Geographic Condition and Aggressive Activities of the PLA Navy (PLAN)

Seen from Beijing’s viewpoint, China’s geographical condition restricts the nautical activities of the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLA Navy or PLAN). PLAN’s vessels have to cross straits between Taiwan and Kyushu (such as the Ishigaki and Miyako Straits), between Taiwan and Luzon Island of the Philippines (such as the Bashi Channel and the Luzon Strait), and between Hokkaido and Honshu (the Tsugaru Strait) (see Figure 1).  

Figure 1. PLA Navy (PLAN): Growing Presence in the West Pacific

A rising China requires the safety of its sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) (hǎishāng jiāotōngxiàn/海上交通线). But, today’s Sino-American rivalry has made China unable to expect continued U.S. benevolent safeguarding of Pacific and Indian shipping. Therefore PLAN has to play a larger role in protecting China’s SLOCs as well as seabed

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5 See, for example, Ye Hailin/Yè Hǎilín (叶海林), “Yìndūyàng yíchéng Zhōngguó ‘Mìngyùn zhì Hái’ [The Indian Ocean Has Already Become China’s Sea
resources within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (zhūānshū jīngjìqū/专属经济区) even by building aircraft carrier squadrons.6

2.2. Strategic Approach to the Senkaku (尖閣)/Diàoyútái (钓鱼台) Dispute

Although the Senkaku problem has long been discussed since the end of World War II, the dispute has been defused rather peacefully until recently.7 However, China, having overcome the 2008 global financial crisis, and replaced Japan to become the second largest economy in 2010, now bolsters its self-confidence. Under such circumstances, China’s popular nationalism is expected to force the government to take its more assertive attitude toward the Senkaku dispute. Therefore, Japan has to broaden its strategic scope in handling the dispute; instead of focusing narrowly on this bilateral dispute, Japan should try to handle the dispute from a broader perspective. China has territorial disputes with not only Japan but also other countries including Brunei, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Thus, Japan should look to China’s peripheral diplomacy (zhōubiānwài jiāo/周边外交) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. China’s Disputed Territories

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Global strategists raise a question that China’s anti-access strategies infringe to some extent upon freedom of navigation because of differences in the interpretation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Again, Japan can forge global alliances to overcome this kind of difficulties (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. China’s Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD; 反介入/区域封锁) Strategies

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2.3. Japan-China Relationship: Security Concerns versus Economic Benefits

Located in the geographical vicinity of China, Japan has no luxury, unlike the United States, to keep a safety distance from a militarily stronger China. For this very reason, Japan has to ponder seriously security strategies in the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, the same geographical vicinity enables Japan to get easier access to the most buoyant economy in the world, i.e., China’s huge labor and consumer markets. Accordingly, Japan has to devise judiciously its strategies to minimize its security concerns and maximize its economic benefits, though it is no easy task to find the optimum solution between these two contradictory but inextricably linked elements. Japan’s economy is currently plagued by (1) electricity shortage, (2) a higher yen, (3) a supply chain disruption caused by historic floods in Thailand, (4) as-yet-unsettled global economic institutional arrangements, and (5) feeble demand. Therefore, the Chinese market is the *sine qua non* to sustain Japan’s economy, which might make Japan extremely susceptible to the lure of China’s economy, though such observations have long been pointed out (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Japan’s External Transactions by Major Regions (Trillion Yen)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current Balance</strong></td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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Note: Figures for Asia include those of China and ASEAN, and figures for China include those of Hong Kong. Source: Ministry of Finance (MOF) (財務省).

Under these circumstances, there should be a sophisticated public discussion in Japan among experts who liberate themselves from tunnel vision or “déformation professionnelle” as well as well-informed citizens with good sense, in order to reduce the risk of, as Walter Lippmann warned, “a hullabaloo of sophistry, propaganda, special pleading, lobbying, and salesmanship.”


11 Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (later, the title was changed to *The Public Philosophy*), Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1955.
3. Conclusion

This material has examined Friedberg’s argument in his book titled *A Contest for Supremacy*, and discussed its relevance to Japan’s global strategies. This concluding part will discuss briefly two additional issues that have not yet been dealt with—(1) Japan’s political leadership and (2) Japanese who can communicate with their foreign counterparts at the time of candid discussion over sensitive international issues.

First, the problem of Japan’s political leadership. In the final paragraph of his book, Friedberg acknowledges that the United States is an Asian power and states that “For America, continued openness is not only an expression of self-confidence, it is an enduring source of national strength. The surest way for the United States to keep its balance in Asia and in the world is to remain true in its finest traditions.” U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gives his judgment with a nod, albeit a slight difference in perspective, in her article in the latest issue of *Foreign Policy* by saying that “One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore be to lock in a substantially increased investment . . . in the Asia-Pacific region.”

When the United States plays a more active role in securing peace and prosperity in the region and forges a new Asiatic “Quadruple Alliance,” it would naturally ask Japan to shoulder more responsibility. The question is whether Japan can be a responsible stakeholder. Japan’s domestic politics is in the state of shamble; in 5 consecutive years since 2006, Japan has chosen a new prime minister. The ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), like its predecessor, i.e., the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), provides neither strong political leadership nor adequate solutions timely to Japan’s most pressing problems including the nuclear power plant accidents and deplorable fiscal deficit. In this connection, Steven Vogel, a prominent Japanologist of the University of California at Berkeley, provides intriguing observations and judgments. He says that the current alignment of political parties does not represent unequivocal and rational policy cleavages, and therefore Japan requires a party realignment, for example, by “putting one party for market-oriented reforms against another emphasizing the distribution of wealth.” He also states that the United States and the world have to “wait for two or more Lower House elections before this competitive dynamic fully kicks in.”

Second, the author tries to touch on the deficiency of Japanese who can closely and candidly communicate with their foreign counterparts. In his book, Friedberg emphasizes the importance of “candid discussion among like-minded governments.” In addition to discussion among like-minded governments including Japan and the United States, the author tries to stress the importance of candid discussion with China. A new Asiatic “Quadruple Alliance” should

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14 As for the DPJ’s incompetence at leading adroitly the bureaucracy and demonstrating political leadership, the author identified the DPJ’s characteristics as being (1) left-leaning, (2) domestically oriented, and (3) inexperienced, immediately after the DPJ’s landslide victory in 2009 when the LDP completely lost the helm of state. See Jun Kurihara (栗原潤), “Japan’s General Election: A Political ‘Zugzwang’?” Cambridge Gazette: Politico-Economic Commentaries, No. 1, Tokyo: Canon Institute for Global Studies (CIGS), August 31, 2009.
communicate closely with, and also seek every possibility to cooperate with China. Without an accurate understanding of China, judgment made by leaders and strategists of the “Quadruple Alliance” might be trapped within ignorance and misperceptions regarding China’s thought and action. For this reason, the author looks now to an indispensable role of confidence building measures (CBMs) especially on a military-to-military base.18

When it comes to communication among global leaders, U.S. top-tier institutions of higher learning can play an important role by attracting the best cream of the world including China.19 In other words, the United States provides, in the form of public goods, opportunities to discuss candidly (and sometimes publicly) with smart Chinese who might be tomorrow’s leaders of the country. Harvard University, for example, accepts a growing number of excellent Chinese and provides various channels to discuss candidly sensitive international issues (see Table 3). Accordingly, collective leadership formed principally by U.S.-educated people can change the future of the Asia-Pacific region as we have learned from history—During the Russo-Japanese War, America’s successful intermediation toward the Portsmouth Peace Treaty was elaborately accomplished by a Harvard old-school tile between Kentaro Kaneko (金子堅太郎) and President Theodore Roosevelt (TR).20 During World War II, China, in order to fight against a militarist Japan, could mobilize U.S. popular support thanks to its relationship with the Harvard-Wellesley community (Madame Chiang Kai-shek (宋美齡) and his brother, T.V. Soong (宋子文), were graduates of Wellesley and Harvard respectively.).21

| Table 3. Number of Foreign Students Studying at Harvard by Major Countries (Persons) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Japan | 179  | 179  | 173  | 148  | 151  | 158  | 162  | 134  | 127  | 137  | 135  | 130  | 127  | 107  | 101  | 100  | 94   |
| China | 220  | 178  | 165  | 176  | 227  | 270  | 318  | 337  | 354  | 361  | 378  | 403  | 400  | 421  | 463  | 541  | 582  |
| Canada | 348  | 375  | 361  | 401  | 419  | 434  | 464  | 492  | 444  | 467  | 481  | 471  | 489  | 531  | 538  | 541  | 547  |
| South Korea | 137 | 159  | 174  | 180  | 183  | 213  | 212  | 207  | 191  | 218  | 244  | 269  | 297  | 305  | 314  | 304  | 289  |
| India | 98   | 104  | 97   | 89   | 96   | 104  | 120  | 112  | 133  | 167  | 189  | 193  | 216  | 225  | 235  | 231  | 225  |
| UK | 149  | 127  | 118  | 109  | 133  | 158  | 156  | 174  | 180  | 191  | 177  | 194  | 201  | 209  | 227  | 242  | 211  |
| Germany | 105  | 107  | 112  | 103  | 123  | 120  | 118  | 124  | 132  | 137  | 159  | 149  | 158  | 159  | 159  | 159  | 176  |
| Singapore | 34   | 43   | 51   | 58   | 58   | 56   | 61   | 66   | 59   | 67   | 75   | 71   | 66   | 89   | 114  | 133  | 127  |
| Australia | 52    | 57   | 54   | 50   | 53   | 61   | 73   | 66   | 70   | 67   | 82   | 68   | 67   | 78   | 88   | 98   | 94   |

Source: Harvard International Office (HIO).

Table 3 shows that only Japan has experienced a continued decline in the number of students studying at Harvard while the opposite pattern has been prevalent in other countries including the two other countries (India and Australia) of the “Quadruple Alliance.” In this sense, the author is concerned about the deficiency of Japanese leaders in the global politico-economic arena, though the number of leaders itself does not necessarily matters.


**APPENDIX 1: Selected Academic Bibliography regarding Sino-American Rivalry** (Published in the Year 2011 and after)

### International Relations


Mulvenon, James, “Xi Jinping and the Central Military Commission: Bridesmaid or Bride?”* China Leadership Monitor*, No. 34 (February 2011).


Energy, Resources, and Environment


Technology Policy


**Tokyo-Cambridge Gazette:** Politico-Economic Commentaries No. 9 (December 15, 2011)


**Economics**


Jean, Jérôme, “Urbanization”

**Finance**


GLOBAL

知的格闘技のすすめ
栗原 潤
ハーバード大学ケネディ行政大学院シニア・フェロー

×

21世紀のナショナリズム再考

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国家体制や価値観の違いである国際取引は大きく制限される。この難しい分野において最も相手の国とパートナーをどう理解し、代理でどう取引するかは、具体的な経済活動やナショナリズムの関係を理解するための鍵となる。関係を理解した上で署名した合意において、国際経済活動とナショナリズムの関係について経験を持ち、アドバイザリーや顧問としての役割を果たすことが必要になるだろう。