


Chapter 5

U.S. Strategies to Counterbalance China in the Indo–Pacific: US–China Great Competition

Alireza Samoudi

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5089-7798>

Research Institute for Security and Development Studies, Tehran, Iran

Mohammad Reza Majidi

University of Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, there have been various discussions about the past, present, and future of China-US relations. Since 2017, when the US National Security Strategy labeled China a strategic competitor, this term has consistently been used to describe Washington's relationship with Beijing. Examining US National Security Strategy documents over the past two decades reveals a shift in perspective from viewing China as a responsible actor to a serious and challenging competitor. Regarding the US approach to China's neighborhood policy, the main goal of the US Indo-Pacific Strategy is to provide strategic alternatives to weaken China's growing influence in its surrounding environment. The US believes that Beijing is striving to establish regional hegemony in the Indo-Pacific, control Taiwan, and dominate disputed areas in the East and South China Seas. Therefore, in recent years, the United States has expanded and strengthened its network of allies and strategic partnerships in the region to counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-0938-5.ch005

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between China and the United States has always been positioned along a spectrum of cooperation and competition due to its significance and complexity. As a result, trends of cooperation and competition are concurrently observable in the relations between these two countries. However, over time, and considering the failure of the United States to change China's behavior in a way that aligns with its own interests, the perception of a threat from China has increased in the U.S. This has led Washington to focus more on the concept of competition. This development has progressed to the extent that Americans have introduced the concepts of “Strategic Competition” and “Great Power Competition” in numerous documents, even declaring the upcoming decade as one based on strategic competition. From Washington's perspective, Beijing seeks regional hegemony in the short term and global dominance in the long term—an ambition that could potentially threaten the position of the United States.

The strategic competition between the United States and China has taken on a more serious form since the second decade of the 21st century, with U.S. officials prioritizing the response to China's rise and influence in this new era. During Obama's presidency, the U.S. initiated a “Pivot to Asia” which designated East Asian countries and the Pacific region as focal points for U.S. economic, political, and military development. In this context, the U.S. has shifted its focus from military costs in Afghanistan to the alliances it leads in the Asia-Pacific, known as the San Francisco system, which secures U.S. political and military hegemony in the region. Washington has reduced its security commitments abroad in Europe and the Middle East, reallocating resources to increase military budgets and strengthen military pacts and alliances in the Asia-Pacific.

In the past decade, strategic documents from U.S. security and defense institutions, along with American think tanks, have increasingly focused on China's emergence and the perceived threat it poses to America. By the end of Obama's presidency, China had become the focal point of U.S. foreign policy, leading to a strategic shift from West Asia to East Asia. During Trump's administration, following Obama's trajectory, the U.S. concentrated its strategic focus on the Indo-Pacific, transforming regional relationships, which were primarily economic and commercial, into security and military concerns. In fact, after Donald Trump took office in 2017 and identified China as the main threat to U.S. foreign policy in the National Security Strategy document, the Indo-Pacific region entered a new wave of competition, alliances, and coalitions. During Biden's administration, alongside the intensification of competition between the United States and China, U.S. policies toward China in the Indo-Pacific region also became more robust. U.S. concerns about China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region are a recurring theme in its policy

38 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/us-strategies-to-counterbalance-china-in-the-indo-pacific/381995

Related Content

From Policy to Practice: Environmental Governance Framework for Sustainable Future in India

Ramesh Chandra Sethi and Shashwata Sahu (2025). *Intersecting Environmental Governance With Technological Advancements* (pp. 1-30).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/from-policy-to-practice/363215

Using the Internet to Make Local Music More Available to the South Wales Community

Jonathan Bishop and Lisa Mannay (2014). *Transforming Politics and Policy in the Digital Age* (pp. 53-68).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/using-the-internet-to-make-local-music-more-available-to-the-south-wales-community/108384

Impact of Technology on Educational Patterns: Virtual vs. Traditional Pedagogy

Shayantani Banerjee, Ayushi Zina, Navinandan Kumar and Nilesh Kumar (2023). *Handbook of Research on Revisioning and Reconstructing Higher Education After Global Crises* (pp. 161-170).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/impact-of-technology-on-educational-patterns/313891

An Enhanced Healthcare Delivery System Model for the US: Adaptation of Principles From the "Best"

Raj Selladurai and Roshini Isabell Selladurai (2020). *Evaluating Challenges and Opportunities for Healthcare Reform* (pp. 1-20).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-enhanced-healthcare-delivery-system-model-for-the-us/250077

Sense of Community: Perceptions of Individual and Group Members of Online Communities

Piet Kommers (2014). *Transforming Politics and Policy in the Digital Age* (pp. 1-5).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/sense-of-community/108379