U.S.-East Asian Options: some thoughts

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personal assessment rather than U.S. Government or NDU policy
discussion

- Current context in Indo-Asia-Pacific
- Challenges facing the United States
- Options for addressing these challenges
- Indo-Asia-Pacific within U.S. strategic priorities

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Strategic context

- Arisen China: the role of ‘respect’
  - 40 year transformation unparalleled in world history
  - CCP increasingly re-consolidated power
  - CCP terrified of its own citizens for lots of domestic reasons=>coronovirus

- Declining Japan? or is Abe reversing it?

- The Korean peninsula—DPRK wowza and ROK-Japan dramatic deterioration

- ASEAN?

- India

- Danger of Muslim extremism regrowing across region—Uighur ‘re-education’

- What do they think we are doing?

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Challenges for U.S. strategy in Asia

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- The Korean peninsula: can Mr. Kim really be our buddy?
- An expanding centrality of China
  - Trade dominance which is indisputable and now Sino-U.S. trade war or not?
  - Maritime disputes
  - Hegemony or merely a member state?
  - What instruments do we have versus them?
  - Increasingly active globally—a really new twist
- U.S. alliances-dead, on lifelines, or vibrant? China says ‘encirclement’
- Expanding Asia to include India good or futile aspiration?

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Instruments and options

- Trade war with Beijing which reverses 70 years of expanding free trade
- TPP gone so will 20+ bilateral trade agreements be possible for Washington?
- Any lasting effects from the Obama 'rebalance to Asia'?
- What is the role for diplomacy in Asia—does it matter?
- How vibrant are the alliances or are they strictly military?
- Instruments for the United States beyond Indo-Pacom’s role?
- What are the effects of domestic trends
  - Budget deficits
  - 'Model' concerns for democracy
  - Indo-PACOM’s capabilities versus responsibilities

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Indo-Asia-Pacific within national priorities

- North Korea
- China China China: obvious priority for budget and approach to region
- Will India be important for us within Indo-Pacom or as adjunct to Pakistan issues?
- Global center of economic gravity moving to Asia but what about Europe?
- Should we increase military spending or worry about our huge budget deficit?
- BOTTOM LINE: do we see this region as our top priority or are we merely accustomed to seeing any competitor’s action as threatening?

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