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Ping-Pong and Power Plays: How the Redefinition of U.S. - China Relations from 1971-1972 Affects U.S. Foreign Policy Today

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**PING-PONG AND POWER PLAYS: HOW THE REDEFINITION
OF U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS FROM 1971-1972 AFFECTS U.S.
FOREIGN POLICY TODAY**

by

Michelle Allgood

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree**

of

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

in

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in the Department of Political Science**

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Abstract

In 1972, President Nixon visited the People's Republic of China in an attempt to redefine U.S.-China relations. Since that time, China has progressed in standing and prevalence and is becoming an increasingly powerful influence in the Asian-Pacific region. The U.S. influence and presence in the Asian-Pacific region has been diminished by China's growing power. This shift in roles will continue to influence U.S.-China relations along with U.S. relations in the Asian-Pacific area. Using the balance of power theory and balance of threat theory, I will analyze the circumstances surrounding the U.S.-China rapprochement from 1970-1972.

An understanding of the events of that time will provide a context to study the current relationship between the two countries. Analyzing the early attempts to redefine the relationship between the two countries would not be complete without including the role which the former Soviet Union played in the development of normalization in U.S.-China relations. Understanding the history of relations between the two countries, in the context of theory, will help provide guidelines for predicting how the U.S. will react to China's growing power. This understanding becomes even more important as China strives to become a powerful regional hegemon.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my excellent parents who had to put up with many, many hours of headache as I discussed, rewrote, and re-discussed my paper. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Margaret Obray in helping me discover my love for Chinese politics.

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Introduction

The reestablishment of United States-China relations in 1972 continues to impact how the United States and China interact with each other. During the Nixon administration, the United States made relations with China an important foreign policy issue. Why did the United States choose this time to attempt to reestablish relations after the problems faced during the Warsaw Dialogues? What did China and the United States stand to gain from forming an alliance with one another? How do the events from 1970-1972 continue to affect U.S.-China relations today? How does the Southeast Asian region affect the U.S.-China dynamic?

I will be examining and analyzing these questions through the lenses of balance of power and balance of threat theories. Specifically, I will be examining the motives of China and the United States as state actors in 1970-1972 through the balance of power theory. I will then apply the findings from this historical situation to the current interactions between China, the United States and Southeast Asian region.

It is my hypothesis that the United States and China began to normalize relations in order to counter the growing influence of the Soviet Union¹ in Asia. Both states identified the USSR as a threat, and through a series of actions, negotiated an informal alliance to balance the threat of the USSR.

Currently, the U.S. is facing a similar situation where China is emerging as a strong power, even a hegemonic power, in Asia. I apply the findings from the historical case study to the Southeast Asian region to determine which state would be acceptable balancing partner for the United States. By taking the factors that make of the balance of threat theory and applying them to potential balancing partners, I am able to prioritize potential balancing partners for the

¹ The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will be referred to as both the Soviet Union and USSR in this paper.

United States. There are four potential balancing allies in the Southeast Asian region: Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines.

I began my research by conducting a literature review of structural realism theory, balance of power theory, the balance of threat theory, the history leading to rapprochement, and the current interactions of the United States in Southeast Asia. I read journal articles and personal accounts of the U.S.-China meetings in 1971 by the U.S. officials involved, including Dr. Henry Kissinger. Following the literature review, I constructed a timetable of the U.S.-China relationship since the Qing dynasty, noting the important internal events of the relationship and the important external events which affected the relationship. I chose to start at the Qing dynasty with this timeline as it provided a clear view of why the relationship between U.S. and China had deteriorated by 1949 and needed to be reestablished.

After the timeline was created, I began applying parts of the balance of power theory and balance of threat theory to the case study portion of my research. I identified the USSR as the primary threat to the U.S. and China and applied the level of threat theory to determine if that identification was valid. I then asked myself why did the United States choose China? I answered this question by applying the balance of threat theory to the situation to identify why China was a viable balancing partner.

After finding these conclusions for the case study, I turned the present situation. The United States has indicated the importance of Asia in the field of foreign policy. I determined that finding a balancing ally would be the best option in pursuing stability against the threat of China in Southeast Asia due to the success which the United States has had in the past with similar actions. While one case study should not be considered as setting the gold standard for

how the United States conducts foreign policy, it is reasonable to attempt to follow similar patterns for success.

After identifying China as the current threat, I asked myself which Southeast Asian nation is the most probable candidate for an alliance? I chose to focus on the Southeast Asian region as the United States already has dependable allies in the other areas of the Asian-Pacific region and has a strong interest in Southeast Asian resources.

Indonesia is the most viable candidate for the United States to ally with in order to balance against China in Southeast Asia. Indonesia has aggregate power, geographic proximity, and a less than friendly history with China, which makes it an ideal partner. Indonesia's domestic troubles of poverty and democratization would allow the United States to remain the strong state in the relationship.

Literature Review

I began the literature review by examining the literature on realism theory and the subcategory of structural realism. After looking at this theory, I studied the actual events surrounding the 1970-1972 reestablishment of relations between the United States and China, as well as the current situation.

Realism is one of the three main theories of international relations. Walt (1998) explores the central theories of international relations: constructivism, liberalism, and realism. Walt explains that realism explains the conflict between states and a state's desire for power. Liberalism mainly focuses on how conflicts between states can be moderated or eliminated by a central authority. Constructivism is a theoretical tool that uses a myriad of reasoning, including culture, political theories, and other factors, to explain how states interact. By utilizing Walt's research, it is plain to see how a realist approach is best as it allows us to examine how the

pursuit of power or the pursuit of balancing affects the reasoning behind actions in the U.S.-China relationship.

However, realism isn't just a single theory. Elman (2008) explores the branches of realism. Since the end of World War II, multiple branches of realism have sprung up to explain why states pursue power. Classical realism emphasizes the natural instinct of competition and the need to have the most power. Neorealism examines the impact which a system has on the units of the system, as well as the interactions of those units. The anarchical nature of the system and the "principle of self-help" each contribute to the power plays made by the states. Structural realism argues that states are mainly looking for security and view other states as the main threat to that goal. Structural realism is further divided into two subcategories: defensive and offensive structural realism. Defensive structural realism contends that states only seek just enough power to maintain the status quo, while offensive structural realism disagrees stating that a state will never stop seeking power, as it cannot be sure of the motives of the other states.

Structural realism produces a theory that discusses the balance of power. Mearsheimer (2006) discusses the basics of structural realism. Structural realism is about the states competing for the upper hand in the balance of power. The main goal is to ensure that they have the upper hand in the balance, but states mostly work to ensure they do not lose power. According to Mearsheimer, states recognize the anarchic system and respond by promoting their self-interest over cooperation. Differences in a state's culture, political authority, and political actors, along with the human nature of individuals, do not affect structural realism theories.

In order to maintain the status quo, states must form alliances. Walt (1987) discusses the balance of power theory in perspective of alliances. There are two actions that may result in an alliance. Balancing is the act of a weak state allying with a stronger state to counter an external

threat. Bandwagoning is the act of states allying with a strong state that is successful in gaining power. Walt also discusses the components of threat that lead to balancing in the first place. Aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions all combine to determine if two or more states will create a balancing alliance. The beginning of a power struggle is the optimum time for balancing to occur.

Both Kissinger and I take a realist approach to the situation, using the balance of power theory as an overall justification for the rapprochement between the United States and China in order to balance the Soviet Union. However, while Kissinger focuses on the gains and strategy in the rapprochement process, I focus on a companion theory developed by Walt called the balance of threat theory. Before the balance of power theory is applied, a threat must be identified. Any research that focuses only on the balance of power is incomplete and fails to take in the major picture. My hypothesis takes Walt's theories and use the same factors that contribute to the level of a threat to identify which country would be an appropriate balancing partner for a "strong state" according to the balance of power theory.

While the theory is important, it was also crucial to understand the events leading up to the reestablishment of relations between China and the United States. Schaller (2002) presents a history of relations between the United States and China beginning in the Qing dynasty. The progression of U.S.-China relations is tracked, along with some commentary on how external forces influenced reactions by both states. Schaller spends several chapters marking the progression of China and U.S. relations from the Korean War to the Nixon visit in 1972, noting the importance the Warsaw talks and how they influenced the negotiations and high level talks of Henry Kissinger and Zhou Enlai in 1971.

To really understand the reestablishment of relations between China and the United States, an insider perspective is needed. Kissinger (2011) provides a unique look at Chinese history and the reestablishment of U.S.-China relations. Kissinger discusses the motivations of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong during the talks and recounts insider details to provide a complete picture.

Another perspective from the United States, Holdbridge (1997) offers an insider's account for what happened before and during the U.S.-China relationship in 1970-1972. Beginning in 1950, Holdbridge tracks the progression of the U.S.-China relationship over diplomatic channels, whether direct or indirect. Holdbridge suggests that after the decline of Soviet-Sino relations in the 1950s, the Chinese began looking for ways to protect themselves against the growing Soviet power, especially after the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia. Holdbridge also suggests that the only reason the Warsaw talks led to high level diplomatic negotiations is because the power situation changed between the USSR, Chinese, and United States.

In the field of Southeast Asian studies, most of the reliable information is based upon primary sources such as *Voice of America*, *The Asian Times*, *The Jakarta Post*, *The Philippine Star*, and various United States government sources.

Theory and Methods

The field of international relations examines the interactions between two state² actors. These interactions can be examined through three distinct theoretical lenses: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. The theory of realism explores how states interact with each other in order to protect their own self-interest. Realism has sprouted many subdivisions that take the basic

² Article 1 in the 1933 Montevideo Convention defines as state as "...a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states." ("Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States")

premise of self-interest and narrow the focus to explain various phenomena in international relations, such as alliances, military buildup, and international institutions.

Structural realism, a subset of neorealism, examines the reasoning behind why states pursue power. Dr. John J. Mearsheimer, a leading theorist in structural realism explains,

...it is the structure... of the international system that forces states to pursue power. In a system where there is no higher authority... and ... no guarantee that one will not attack another, it makes eminently good sense for each state to be powerful enough to protect itself in the event it is attacked.³

There are two branches of structural realism-defensive and offensive structural realism. Defensive structural realism contends that states view other states as the main threat to their security.⁴ States seek for the appropriate amount of power in order to balance the status quo and security of their state. Offensive structural realism believes that states cannot pursue an appropriate amount of power because there is no definition for appropriate amount. Due to the anarchic nature of the system and the lack of knowledge concerning the other state's intentions, a state will continue to build an offensive arsenal of security and military power.⁵

Balance of Power Theory

The balance of power theory, which stems from structural realism, asserts that a strong state will create an alliance with a weaker state to balance the power of another strong state. Alliances are "...a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states...[which] assumes some level of commitment and exchange of benefits..."⁶

Alliances lead to two types of behaviors: balancing and bandwagoning.

³ Mearsheimer. 2006, 72.

⁴ Elman. 2008, 20.

⁵ Elman. 2008, 22.

⁶ Walt. 1987, 1.

Balancing is the act of allying with other states against a threat. States balance to protect their own interests, curb the rise of potential hegemon, and (if the state is the strong state in the alliance) increase influence within an alliance.⁷ There are two reasons states choose to balance;

First, they place their survival at risk if they fail to curb a potential hegemon before it becomes too strong. To ally with the dominant power means placing one's trust in its continued benevolence....Second, joining the weaker side increases the new member's influence within the alliance because the weaker side has greater need for assistance. Allying with the stronger side, by contrast, gives the new member little influence...and leaves it vulnerable to the whims of its partners.⁸

Bandwagoning is the act of alignment with the source of the threat. A state will choose to bandwagon as a form of appeasement or in order to join in the “spoils of war.”⁹ There are three reasons why states choose bandwagoning over balancing. First,

...states are attracted to strength. The more powerful the state and the more clearly...power is demonstrated, the more likely others are to ally with it....[Bandwagoning] may be a form of appeasement. By aligning with an ascendant state or coalition, the bandwagoner may hope to avoid an attack by diverting it elsewhere....a state may align with the dominant side in wartime to order to share the spoils of victory.¹⁰

Balance of Threat Theory

Both of these behaviors are utilized as a response to a threat. The balance of threat theory, developed by Walt, is a companion theory to the balance of power theory. The power of threat theory describes the conditions and level under which a state can provide a threat to another state. There are four factors: aggregate power, aggressive intentions, geographic proximity, and offensive power. I use these factors as a way to prioritize potential allies in the Southeast Asian

⁷ Walt. 1987.

⁸ Walt. 1987, 18-19.

⁹ Walt. 1987.

¹⁰ Walt. 1987, 20-21.

region as well as justification for the United States' decision to balance against the Soviet Union with China.

Aggregate power is the theory that, with all else being equal, the greater a state's total resources (e.g. population, technology, financial backing), the higher the risk of threat.

The total power that states can wield is thus an important component of the threat that they pose to others. Although power can pose a threat, it can be prized. States with great power have the capacity to either punish enemies or reward friends... therefore, a state's aggregate power may provide a motive for balancing or bandwagoning.¹¹

Balancing and aggregate power are intertwined. The higher the level of aggregate power, the more a state will be viewed as a potential threat.

Aggressive intentions refer to the perception of how willing a state is to use aggression in order to get what it wants.

Perceptions of intent are likely to play an especially crucial role in alliance choices....When a state is believed to be unalterably aggressive, other states are unlikely to bandwagon. If an aggressor's intentions cannot be changed by alliance with it, a vulnerable state, even if allied, is likely to become a victim.¹²

States are unable to judge the motivations behind another state's actions, although conjecture is common. This guesswork can be deadly in the consequences or brilliant in the policy maneuverings.

Geographic proximity refers to fact that it is harder to initiate and maintain power struggles over long distances.

...the ability to project power declines with distance, states that are nearby pose a greater threat than those that are far away...When proximate threats trigger a balancing response, alliance networks that resemble checkerboards are the likely response...Alternatively, when a threat from a proximate power leads to bandwagoning...a sphere of influence is created.¹³

¹¹ Walt. 1987, 23.

¹² Walt. 1987, 25-26.

¹³ Walt. 1987, 23-24.

Because the United States has strong interests in the Asian-Pacific region, it has to rely on allies to help project its power.

Finally, offensive power refers to the fact that if a state has a high capability to provoke an offensive maneuver, states are more likely to ally against it. “Offensive power is also closely related but not identical to aggregate power. Specifically, offensive power is the ability to threaten the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state at an acceptable cost.”¹⁴ The USSR and now China both have strong offensive power in their relative regions.

I have chosen to use the international relations theory of realism and the subfields of the balance of threat theory and balance of power theory because they succinctly capture the relationship between the United States, China, and other third party players. The United States could be considered weaker in both 1970 and currently as an ocean lies between the country and the region where the events are taking place.

U.S.-China Relations Prior to 1972

Before we can examine this relationship, we must understand the background leading up to the events in 1970-1972. Perspective is a crucial element in foreign policy and history tends to provide a unique perspective. Following the end of World War II, China immersed itself in a civil war between the Kuomintang (Nationalist) party and the Chinese Communist Party. The United States attempted to intervene in the civil war and establish a dialogue between the warring factions. Favoring the republican government of the Kuomintang, the United States worked with the Communists to establish a coalition government. However, a stalemate in the negotiation process led both sides to pursue advantages in territory and followers.¹⁵

¹⁴ Walt. 1987, 24.

¹⁵ Schaller. 2001, 103.

Over the next four years, the Communists continued to defeat the Nationalists. Eventually, the Nationalists fled in exile to Taiwan. On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC)¹⁶ was established, naming Mao Zedong as the first Chinese Communist Party Chairman. Shortly after the establishment of the PRC, the United States began referring to the PRC as “red China”—an illegitimate government in the eyes of the United States and part of the Communist threat.

China and the United States did not have a relationship again until the Korean War. After World War II, Korea was divided along the 38th Parallel equal to the territory held by the Soviet and United States military. Encouraged by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, Kim Il-sung sought to unite divided Korea under the banner of Communism. After United Nations (UN) forces crossed the 38th Parallel in late 1950, Chinese forces began preparations to intervene in Korea. Finally, in October 1950, China entered the Korean War opposite to the United States. For the next three years, while the war waged on, the United States and China communicated over a negotiation table.

After the Korean War ended, the Taiwanese Strait crises drove another wedge between the two countries. In 1954, the Chinese began shelling the Quemoy and Matsu Islands off the coast of Taiwan, beginning the First Taiwanese Strait Crisis.¹⁷ The reasons behind the first Taiwanese Strait Crisis were many, but “[the] attack... [showed] Washington the danger of leaving problems in the region unresolved and, presumably... [forced] the Eisenhower administration to think twice about signing a formal defense pact with Taiwan.”¹⁸

¹⁶ The People's Republic of China will be referred to as China in this paper.

¹⁷ Schaller. 2001, 145.

¹⁸ Schaller. 2001, 148.

In 1958, the Second Taiwanese Strait Crisis occurred, again with the Chinese shelling the island of Quemoy. This crisis occurred after a rare visit by Mao to Moscow did not yield the desired results. Additionally, the Soviet Union and United States began making efforts to communicate effectively. “A show down, he [Mao] believed, would reveal where the Soviets stood and frustrate any effort by Moscow or Washington to promote a 'two-China policy.’”¹⁹

Recognizing the need to establish an open dialogue, the two countries began talking in 1955. The Warsaw talks involved ambassador-level individuals and resulted in the release of Americans held in China and Chinese scientists and students detained in the United States.²⁰ However, these talks faltered over the issue of Taiwan and only occurred sporadically over the next fifteen years.

One important world event that triggered the rapprochement of the United States and China occurred in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. A liberalization movement in January of 1968 began to decentralize the economy and democratize the country's institutions. After negotiations failed, the Soviets invaded in August of 1968 and remained until 1990²¹. Fearful the Soviet troops on the Chinese border would invade based on the growing differences between the two states, the Chinese began reaching out to the United States.

In July of 1969, President Nixon announced the Nixon Doctrine. A foreign policy approach that asked U.S. allies to take the lead in supplying state security, the Nixon Doctrine signaled a change in how the United States approached both the Soviet Union and China. In 1971, the United States ping-pong team competed in a tournament in Japan, alongside the Chinese delegation. After a series of communications, the United States ping-pong team was invited to visit the People's Republic of China and compete in a demonstration against the

¹⁹ Schaller. 2001, 150.

²⁰ Schaller. 2001, 149.

²¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 2012.

Chinese ping-pong team. The Chinese leadership used the visit of the ping-pong team to indicate to the United States that they were willing to open a dialogue. The United States reciprocated by quickly granting permission for the team to visit. As a result of the visit, the United States and China began to pursue more professional channels of communication. Starting with countries that maintained a close relationship with China, the United States worked through French, Romanian, and Pakistani channels. Ultimately, the Pakistani channel proved to be the most effective.²²

The United States began to make advances toward an open dialogue with China, relaxing trade restrictions on China in May 1971 and, in June 1971, ending the trade embargo.²³ In July 1971, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, on a visit to Pakistan, faked an illness and secretly flew to Beijing where he met with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai. In the two days of talks that followed, Kissinger, acting on Nixon's orders, consented to “...several concessions on Taiwan... [while Zhou extended] an invitation to President Nixon to visit China.”²⁴

Finally, in February of 1972, President Nixon visited China, marking the first state visit by the United States to the People's Republic of China. Visiting with Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and other high ranking officials, Nixon and Kissinger negotiated the Shanghai Communique. The Shanghai Communique, a joint statement by China and the United States, “[pledged] for both countries to work for 'normalization' of relations...the U.S. [also acknowledged]...that there is only one China and that Taiwan is part of China, and [agreed] to withdraw its military forces

²² Kissinger. 2011, 225.

²³ “Nixon's China Game: Timeline of U.S.-China Relations”. 1999.

²⁴ “Nixon's China Game: Timeline of U.S.-China Relations”. 1999.

from the island.”²⁵ This visit and communique marked the beginning of a new United States-China relationship.

The Soviet-Sino Relationship

During the 1950s, the Sino-Soviet relationship began to experience growing pains. The Communist parties in both states had never truly gotten along, as the Soviets had supported Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist party during the Chinese Civil War. After the Communists found victory in China, Mao sought out an alliance with the leading Communist country, the USSR. In 1950, Mao traveled to Moscow to meet with Soviet leaders. The Soviets wanted to control how the Sino-Soviet relationship played out, especially as the Soviets were just coming out of a relationship with the Nationalists where the Soviets were able to control Chiang's government. Stalin asked Mao to give the Soviets the same concessions the Nationalists gave the Soviets. “In effect, Stalin was arguing that Communism in China was best protected by a Russian agreement with the government Mao had just overthrown.”²⁶ After several weeks of talks, Mao was able to negotiate the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, but remained wary of Moscow's intentions toward China.²⁷

For several years after the treaty was established, a tense relationship existed between the Chinese and Soviets. After the death of Stalin in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev was promoted to the Chairman of the Communist Party in the USSR. Three years after his promotion, Khrushchev gave the so-called “Secret Speech” condemning the personality cult which Stalin had created and

²⁵ "Nixon's China Game: Timeline of U.S.-China Relations". 1999.

²⁶ Kissinger. 2011, 116.

²⁷ Kissinger. 2011, 117.

the violent purges for which Stalin was infamous.²⁸ Mao condemned the speech and became disgruntled at Khrushchev's lack of interest in consulting with China for policy decisions.²⁹

Not only did the Soviet-Sino relationship decline based on the difficult transition between Stalin and Khrushchev, but the Chinese approach to Communism was unique compared to the rest of the world. Most Communist countries relied on a form of Marxism known as Leninism. Leninism stresses “...imperialism is the highest form of capitalism (which shifts the struggle from developed to underdeveloped countries).”³⁰ Maoism (a form of Marxism) focuses on the continuous revolution and the place peasants and agrarian society plays in the march to a collective society.³¹

These Maoist values are shown through two major events in modern Chinese history. In 1958, Mao embarked on a radical economic policy change called “The Great Leap Forward”. The Great Leap Forward attempted to combine the 5-, 10-, and 15- year plan approach taken by the Soviet Union with the Chinese traditional emphasis on agriculture. Farms were collectivized, output goals were set, and within three years, a famine had begun in China and over 20 million Chinese people perished.³² Mao's attempt at creating an agrarian collectivized society had failed.

The Cultural Revolution was an attempt by Mao to reignite the spirit of continuous revolution in the Chinese. In 1966, Mao launched an attack on anything that fell into the categories of “Four Olds”: Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas. Mao's attempt

²⁸ Kissinger. 2011,166.

²⁹ Schaller. 2001, 144.

³⁰ "Marxism-Leninism". 2012

³¹ Kissinger. 2011, 94-95.

³² Kissinger. 2011, 184.

to radically transform Chinese society and to catapult it onto the path of Communism launched a ten year period of chaos and partisan warfare.³³

While China was trying to deal with the convoluted relationship the Soviet Union extended, it was also backing a Communist ally in Southeast Asia. As early as 1950, China began backing the independence movement in Vietnam led by Ho Chi Minh. While China supplied significant amounts of arms and grain, Mao supplied a limited amount of troops to the Vietnamese. The troops supplied to Vietnam were used to indicate to the United States that the Chinese were willing to enter into combat with the United States if the survival of North Vietnam or the territorial integrity of the Chinese-Vietnamese border was threatened.³⁴ Chinese support for Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese began to dwindle in the late 1960s when Mao became more concerned with domestic problems than the Vietnam War.³⁵

In 1969, the Soviet-Sino relationship took a turn for the worse. Sharing over 4,000 miles of border, the Soviets and Chinese carried animosity from the central government to the border.³⁶ Starting in March of 1969, a series of border clashes over Zhenbao Island left casualties on both the Soviet and Chinese sides. In August of 1969, clashes over the Sino-Soviet border continued, this time over the Xinjiang border.³⁷ Threats of a nuclear war between the Soviets and Chinese led the Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin to visit the Chinese premier Zhou Enlai on his return trip from Ho Chi Minh's funeral. The visit was held in the Beijing Airport and marked a significant low point in the Sino-Soviet relationship.³⁸

³³ Kissinger. 2011, 193.

³⁴ Schaller. 2001, 160-161.

³⁵ Kissinger. 2011, 204-205.

³⁶ Schaller. 2001, 166.

³⁷ "Nixon's China Game: Timeline of U.S.-China Relations". 1999.

³⁸ Kissinger. 2011, 220.

The Soviet-United States Relationship

While the Soviet-Sino relationship deteriorated to military clashes in 1969, the U.S.-Soviet relationship remained fairly “cold” after World War II. While neither side engaged in an all-out war with the other, multiple problems existed in the relationship, including the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, and a continuous arms buildup by both states.

Application to 1970-1972

In order to understand the reasons behind the strategic maneuverings of the United States in the 1970s, I will be applying the balance of power and balance of threat theories to the situation.

The United States and China both identified the USSR as a threat to their state security in the 1970s. Applying Walt's level of threat theory, we can identify why the United States and China viewed the USSR as a major threat. According to Walt's balance of threat theory, there are four factors that contribute to the level of a threat: aggregate power, aggressive intentions, geographic location, and offensive power.

In relation to aggregate power, the USSR had a higher nuclear capability and a higher military capability in terms of technological warfare when compared to the Chinese. China had already nearly started a nuclear conflict with the USSR in 1969, and the state was willing to sacrifice Chinese citizens for victory in an atomic incident.³⁹ While the USSR and the United States had similar nuclear and military capabilities, the Soviets had geographic proximity to important U.S. interests in Asia, as well as the precedence of being unpredictable. Incidents like the Cuban Missile Crisis kept the United States constantly worrying about the Communist threat.

³⁹ Mao stated, “As for China, if the imperialists unleash war on us, we may lose more than three hundred million people. So what? War is war. The years will pass, and we'll get to work producing more babies than ever before.” (Kissinger. 2011, 167)

In relation to aggressive intentions, China viewed the USSR as a potential aggressor due to the border clashes in 1969 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Chinese had split from the Soviets in the mid-1950s and were beginning realize the repercussions of this split. The Soviets did not want a strong split in the Communist ideology, but more importantly, the Soviets did not want to compete with another Communist country.

The United States viewed the USSR as a potential aggressor due to the many Cold War struggles that had occurred since the end of World War II. Incidents such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, the multiple invasions of Eastern Bloc countries, and the arms buildup led to distrust.

In relation to geographic proximity, the USSR bordered approximately 4,500 miles of northern China and had a good relationship with Vietnam⁴⁰ (located to the south of China). Several areas of the border had been under dispute since the Yalta agreements in 1945.⁴¹ The main areas of contention included the northern border by the Xinjiang province, the Zhenbao Island, and the province of Manchuria. These disputed borders led to a buildup of troops by both sides after the Sino-Soviet relationship crumbled in the 1950s.

By dominating Asia, the USSR could threaten the U.S. from both the East and the West. In a period when Senator McCarthy had finished his terrorizing Red Scare movement and when the Domino Theory⁴² was still accepted, the United States was engaged in a game of *wei qi*⁴³ with the USSR. At that time, the U.S. believed that if there were more democratic countries than Communist countries in the world, the United States would win the Cold War.

⁴⁰ While the Chinese and Vietnamese were on speaking terms, Ton Duc Thang, the leader of Vietnam, was closer to the Soviets than the Chinese. (Schaller. 2001, 166)

⁴¹ Schaller. 2001, 101.

⁴² The Domino Theory is "...the political theory that if one nation comes under communist control then neighboring nations will also come under communist control." ("Domino Theory". 2012)

⁴³ *Wei qi* is a Chinese strategy game where opponents "...[seek] for relative advantage...and strategic encirclement and flexibility." (Kissinger. 2011, 24-25)

In relation to offensive power, the USSR had large capabilities along the Chinese border (approximately 658,000 troops in 1969).⁴⁴ The USSR also possessed missiles and other conventional military weapons that the Chinese were attempting to develop. Because the USSR was more developed, and since the Chinese were ill prepared for a war with the Soviets, the Soviets had a high offensive power—the cost of violating the Chinese territory was acceptable to them demonstrated by the repeated border clashes between the Soviets and Chinese in 1969.

The USSR and the United States had relative offensive power. However, the location of the USSR, as well as allies of the USSR, endangered certain key U.S. interests in Asia, especially if China were to fall.⁴⁵ By gaining China, the USSR would be able to exercise control over a large portion of Asia, not to mention a larger population. This would jeopardize the United States' actions in Vietnam, as well as allies in Thailand, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.

While the USSR was a threat to both China and the United States, the United States had very specific reasons for why they chose China as an informal ally in 1970 over other available states in the region. It was the only country available to bring a major change to the balance of power situation.

The U.S. needed to ally with a weaker state geographically located in Asia, the counter growing power of the USSR. China's long border with the USSR made the geographic location ideal for the United States.

China was also in a weakened state after decades of ineffectual economic Maoist policies and internal revolution. Consequences from the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution (the program did not end until after Mao's death in 1976) had threatened the stability of the Chinese government. Internal Chinese conflicts would guarantee the United States the upper

⁴⁴ Wertz. 2012.

⁴⁵ Those interests included Vietnam, South Korea, and the Philippines.

hand in the alliance. While both countries were committed to balancing against the USSR threat, the Chinese had to also deal with gangs of marauding Red Guards executing martial law in the countryside, as well as a dying national economy.

The United States was looking for a state that possessed some form of aggregate power—China possessed the largest population in the world, along with a sizable chunk of natural resources. Along with the largest population in the world, China had a leader in Mao who was willing to sacrifice many Chinese citizens for a victory in war time. If the Cold War ever turned hot, the United States could rely on the primary material China could provide to create arms and supply the military with needed goods.

Finally, the U.S. needed to ally with a state opposed to the USSR. China had been at odds with the Soviets since the late 1950s, deciding to follow an agrarian path to socialism rather than the Soviet-promoted industrial path. Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech in 1956 drove another wedge between the two countries. By the mid-1960s, the approach each state took to Marxism and Communism very different. This tension created situations where confrontation was inevitable. In 1969, a series of Sino-Soviet border clashes led China to seek for a new ally.

China was the perfect ally for the United States. Fulfilling the requirements of geographic proximity, aggregate power, and an active opposition to the USSR, China became an informal partner balancing against the Soviet power during the remaining years of the Cold War.

The Current Situation

China is becoming more of a threat to United States interests in Asia, especially Southeast Asia. While the United States has established partners in other areas of the Asia-Pacific region,⁴⁶ the United States is lacking a stable partner in the Southeast Asian region. In accordance with Walt's balance of power theory and balance of threat theory, I hypothesize the

⁴⁶ Including Japan, South Korea, Australia, and India.

United States will seek a balancing partner in a Southeast Asian country, and that country will be Indonesia.

China as a Threat

The United States views China as a threat. This is indicated by the Obama administration's focus on the Asian region. This focus began in late 2011 when the United States announced the building of a new military base in Australia.⁴⁷ In early 2012, a Department of Defense report was released detailing the threat of China to the United States:

The maintenance of peace, stability, the free flow of commerce, and of U.S. influence in this dynamic region [Asia] will depend in part on an underlying balance of military capability and presence. Over the long term, China's emergence as a regional power will have the potential to affect the U.S. economy and our security in a variety of ways...[The U.S. has] a strong stake in peace and stability in East Asia ...However, the growth of China's military power must be accompanied by greater clarity of its strategic intentions in order to avoid causing friction in the region. The United States will continue to make the necessary investments to ensure that we maintain regional access and the ability to operate freely in keeping with our treaty obligations and with international law.⁴⁸

By utilizing Walt's balance of threat theory, we are able to ascertain why China is viewed as a threat to the United States and its interests in Asia. In relation to aggregate power, the Chinese have the largest population in the world⁴⁹. There are approximately 619 million Chinese citizens fit for military service⁵⁰ with a military that ranks 21st in the world for military spending as a percentage of GDP.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Calmes. 2011.

⁴⁸ Department of Defense. 2012.

⁴⁹ China's population is estimated to be 1,343,239,923 people as of July 2012. (CIA. "Country Comparison: Population." 2012)

⁵⁰ There are approximately 750 million Chinese available for military service as estimated in 2012. (CIA. "China." 2012.)

⁵¹ According to the most recent data (2005), China spends 4.3% of its annual GDP on military expenditures. (CIA. "Country Comparison: Military Expenditures." 2012.) However, "...because China's exchange rate is determined by fiat, rather than by market forces, the official exchange rate measure of GDP is not an accurate measure of China's output; GDP at the official exchange rate substantially understates the actual level of China's output vis-a-vis the rest of the world; in China's situation, GDP at purchasing power parity provides the best measure for comparing output across countries." (CIA. "China. 2012.) This makes China's military spending much higher.

China has vast wealth, with a 2011 GDP of 11.29 trillion dollars.⁵² China holds approximately 33% of the U.S. debt—estimated to be 9 billion dollars in October 2010.⁵³ China is also the “...world leader in gross value of industrial output...”, especially in electrical machinery, iron steel, and medical equipment, lending both an offensive power and aggregate power advantage to the Chinese.⁵⁴

The Chinese have a high level of offensive power as they currently claim the water surrounding the Natuna Islands, part of the northern most archipelago of Indonesia.⁵⁵ If China is willing to claim territory that the international community acknowledges belongs to another state, then China must believe there is an acceptable cost for violating neighboring states' sovereignty.

In relation to geographic proximity, China has the 4th largest land mass in the world⁵⁶ and has influence over several interests the United States have in Asia—particularly the South China Sea. “[The] South China Sea has become [an] important route for trade and commerce...”⁵⁷ The South China Sea is a vital asset to the United States and China, as it is the outlet for the Strait of Malacca, the main trade route for oil in the Middle East for both China and the US. Over half of the globe's

...annual merchant fleet tonnage passes through the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok, with the majority continuing on into the South China Sea...Nearly two-thirds of the tonnage passing through the Strait of Malacca, and half of the volume passing the Spratly Islands, is crude oil from the Persian Gulf.⁵⁸

⁵² CIA. “China.” 2012.

⁵³ Rodgers. 2011.

⁵⁴ CIA, 2012, “China”.

⁵⁵ Shen. 2011, 588.

⁵⁶ CIA. “Country Comparison: Area.” 2012.

⁵⁷ Shen. 2011, 589.

⁵⁸ GlobalSecurity.org, 2012.

Finally, in relation to aggressive intentions, China has continued to provoke questions about the military buildup it is currently undergoing. One of the best examples is the current dispute China has over the Spratly and Paracel Islands. Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Brunei all dispute the claims made by China, whose claims are based on a 1947 map of the region. These islands, ripe with natural resources, have the possibility of producing almost 213 billion barrels of oil. The islands have produced warfare in the past, when, in 1988, several Vietnamese troops were killed by Chinese soldiers in China's successful attempt to secure the Paracel islands. Current spats with Vietnam, China, and the Philippines over the islands have led the United States to diplomatically call for a "...binding code of conduct..." for China to follow. If China retains possession of the islands and is able to extract oil, the aggregate power of China would skyrocket and the aggressive intentions of China would be laid bare.⁵⁹

Another example of the aggressive intentions of China is the South China Sea dispute. "The tension in the South China Sea...among China and the ASEAN claiming states over sovereignty has drastically escalated since 2009, and has almost overturned the sound political and economic relations established between China and the concerned states in since 1997."⁶⁰

In accordance with the theory of offensive structural realism, the United States continues to be unable to determine for what purpose the military buildup is for. This leads to a strong suspicion on the part of the United States that China's intentions are not defensive in nature, but rather, hegemonic.

China, the United States, and Southeast Asia

The United States is lacking a strong ally in Southeast Asia, which is a critical region to the United States due to the high use of the South China Sea, as well as the oil reserves found in

⁵⁹ "Q&A: South China Sea dispute." 2011.

⁶⁰ Shen. 2011, 585.

many Southeast Asian island nations. Many countries in the Southeast Asian region are also looking for an ally to balance against China's growing power as China quickly becomes a threat. Once again, Walt's balance of threat theory allows us to examine the rationale behind this assumption. Examining the threat of China in particular reference to the Indonesia perspective, we find why China is viewed as a threat.

In relation to aggregate power, Indonesia has the third largest population in Asia,⁶¹ although significantly smaller than the Chinese. The Indonesian military is currently in a rebuilding process, while the Chinese military is at a state of constant readiness. In 2012, the Indonesian military purchased 100 Leopard tanks and were given 24 retrofitted F-16s.⁶² The Indonesian government is continuing to heavily invest in their military.⁶³

Buoyed by surging economic growth, the government will spend nearly \$16 billion over the next five years to modernize the 430,000-strong TNI, which despite its previous dominant position in political life still has antiquated equipment dating back to the Cold War era.

This year's \$7.5 billion defense budget, up 30% over 2011, comes with a shopping list that also includes eight AH-46 Apache attack helicopters, twelve 130 mm Russian multiple rocket launchers, 155 mm howitzers and additional French-made Mistral surface-to-air missiles.⁶⁴

In relation to geographic proximity, China is a little over 1,800 miles away from the Indonesian islands of Natuna. The farthest point of Indonesia is less than 3,000 miles away from China. While the separation between the two countries is the South China Sea, the Chinese military has recently begun a "blue water fleet" build up. "China has beefed up its military over

⁶¹ Indonesia's population is estimated to be 248,216,193 in July 2012. It is also the fourth largest population in the world. (CIA. "Country Comparison: Population." 2012.)

⁶² McBeth. 2012.

⁶³ Referred to as the TNI.

⁶⁴ McBeth. 2012.

the past decade, enhancing the capability to deter...ships and enforce territorial claims off its shores.”⁶⁵

In relation to aggressive intentions, the Indonesia and Chinese government have had problems in the past. Since the formal establishment of relationship between Indonesia and China occurred in 1950, the relationship has been “...characterized by a difficult beginning, followed by close friendship, then turbulence, and eventually mutual hostility and suspicion.”⁶⁶ The reasons behind the tumultuous relationship stem from the clashes between the Indonesian Communist Party and other democratic parties.

More strikingly, those relations were primarily subject to pressures stemming from Indonesia’s domestic political arena. From the outset, relations had been marred by Beijing’s policy of actively seeking political and financial support from the ethnic Chinese domiciled in Indonesia and of providing political and financial support to the Indonesian Communist Party...Because the position of both ethnic Chinese and the PKI in Indonesian domestic politics had been problematic, China’s meddling served as a source of repeated tensions and upheavals in Jakarta-Beijing relations.⁶⁷

Problems continue as Indonesia has become immersed in the South China Sea debate. “While Indonesia is not technically a claimant state [to the South China Sea], it has a clear interest in the issue especially as the “nine-dotted line” map, from which the Chinese claim is based upon, actually includes the water around the Natuna Islands.”⁶⁸ This is a direct violation of Indonesia's sovereignty and indicative of China's offensive power.

The United States and Indonesia

Using the factors that contribute to the balance of threat theory, we are able to identify which state would make the best balancing ally. Out of all the Southeast Asia states, the United States is most likely to choose Indonesia as an ally in balancing China. Indonesia is the most

⁶⁵ Kate. 2010.

⁶⁶ Sukma. 2009, 592.

⁶⁷ Sumka. 2009, 592-593.

⁶⁸ Shen. 2011, 588.

logical choice because it has greater aggregate power in relation to other Southeast Asian states, it has the geographic proximity that the United States needs, and Indonesia has a very complicated and not so friendly history with China.

Indonesia's location in the Southeast Asian region is an asset. In the terms of an alliance with the United States, it is about 2,000 miles away from China—only the South China Sea separates the two countries.

In terms of aggregate power, all three of the major shipping lanes (Straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok), along with the less traveled routes must traverse through some part of the Indonesian archipelago. Over half of the world's shipping comes through one of these three straits. Most of China's crude oil and liquefied natural gas comes through these straits, placing a dependency on the cooperation of Indonesia with China to allow China's enormous imports of natural resources through.⁶⁹ Other factors in Indonesia's aggregate power include its population and natural resources.

The third largest population in Asia and the fourth largest in the world, Indonesia has citizens spread over 1,904,569 square kilometers of land and ocean. Along with its population, Indonesia is in the top ten exporters of natural gas, the top fifty exporters of oil in the world, and top five exporters of oil in Asia.⁷⁰ It is well known that those who have the fuel often emerge as the victor.

Since the inception of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Indonesia-China relationship has been troubled at best. Formal relations were established in 1950, and in the early years of the relationship, a goal was made to “...forge a political alignment, expressed mainly in

⁶⁹ GlobalSecurity.org, 2012.

⁷⁰ CIA. “Indonesia.” 2012.

the form of a united front against the West...’’⁷¹ However, in 1965, a coup in Indonesia changed the relationship between the two countries forever. The communist party in Indonesia (PKI) was viewed as the main contributor and perpetrator in the coup. As a result, anti-communism and anti-Chinese sentiment rose in Indonesia.⁷² Indeed, this sentiment became so intense that formal relations were not reestablished until 1990. ‘‘For Indonesia, ‘vigilance’ remained the code word in dealing with China.’’⁷³ While relations have continued to normalize, especially after 1998,⁷⁴ the Indonesia-China relationship is tense, and, when it comes to regional relations, the Indonesian government does not wish China to gain any more power.

There are other factors that indicate the United States is beginning to lean toward Indonesia as a balancing partner against China. In 2005, ‘‘... [full-scale] military relations... [were] ...restored with Indonesia, including Foreign Military Financing for lethal equipment, in recognition of the country’s democratic practices and its importance for the US global war on radical Islamic extremism...’’⁷⁵ In 2010, the United States lifted the ban on weapon sales to the Indonesian military and resumed all military and counterterrorism cooperation⁷⁶. And in 2012, the United States gave the Indonesian military twenty-four retrofitted fighter jets.⁷⁷

Indonesia is also going through a democratization process, which appeals to the United States on multiple levels. Beginning in 1997, mass riots overtook the streets of Indonesia and led to the ousting of President Soeharto in 1998. Since that time, Indonesia has continued to

⁷¹ Sumka. 2009, 593.

⁷² Sumka. 2009, 594.

⁷³ Sumka. 2009, 600.

⁷⁴ In 1998, Indonesia was not only in the midst of the Asian Financial Crisis, but dealing with many natural disasters and mass riots. China offered humanitarian and monetary assistance, but allowed Indonesia to handle the domestic political turbulence internally by not interfering only condemning the many attacks on ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. (Sumka. 2009)

⁷⁵ Simon. 2006, 1.

⁷⁶ Khalik. 2010.

⁷⁷ McBeth. 2011.

participate in legitimate, peaceful elections, based off of the mandates in the 1945 Constitution. While Indonesia still hasn't fully confronted the participation of the military in the new found democracy,⁷⁸ it has been able to retain some form of legitimacy for over a decade—impressive considering the history of Indonesia.

Democratization appeals to the United States on two levels. First, the United States has always strongly supported countries with democracies. Second, because Indonesia is focused on the democratization process, it will be easier for the United States to assume the strong ally role in the alliance. This will be acceptable to Indonesia, as there is considerable aggregate power in the form of location and resources that allows Indonesia to wield some power in the alliance as well.

Other Southeast Asian States

While Indonesia will most likely become the next balancing partner of the United States, critics discuss the positions of the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore as potential allies to the United States. There are very specific reasons why each of these countries would fail to effectively counter the growing power of China as a balancing ally with the United States.

The Philippines

Another possible balancing ally in Southeast Asia for the United States is the Philippines. However, the Philippines will not be a good match for the United States, as it is currently experiencing domestic disunity, weak military structure, and, in the past, has been unreliable.

The 2010 WikiLeaks scandal shed light on the domestic situation in the Philippines. In a country where there is already domestic disunity, terrorism is beginning to work throughout the southern islands. One diplomatic cable discussed an “...ongoing downward slide in the

⁷⁸ Bjornlund. 2000.

Philippines, where the collapse of the peace process in the south threatened to make this area the new regional incubator of terrorist jihadis.”⁷⁹

Ranked 136 in the world for military expenditures,⁸⁰ the Philippines has a troubled military, one that is recognized as largely ineffective and weak. The Filipinos have acknowledged the problem. Filipino Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin stated in an April 3, 2011 news conference, “In our region, in terms of the capability of the armed forces, we are the weakest.”⁸¹

While the U.S. and the Philippines maintain a military balance, “... the Philippine government has been careful to balance these military gestures with the recognition that the country needs to maintain close and cordial economic ties with China.”⁸²

The Filipino reaction to the U.S. cable revealed the inability of the Philippines to commit. As the President of the Filipino Senate stated “... the Philippines will probably side with its giant Asian neighbor on the ‘distinct possibility’ that the country may be forced in the future to choose between China and the US....”

This is not the first time in recent years that the Philippines and United States have experienced disharmony. The Iraq War put a strain on relations. “The pullout of the Philippine humanitarian contingent in Iraq last July 2004, caused tension in US-Philippine relations.”⁸³ In 2005, “U.S. Relations with the Philippines were complicated by reports in the local media of classified U.S. assessments of Philippine politics that emphasized vulnerabilities...”⁸⁴

⁷⁹ AFP, 2010.

⁸⁰ CIA. “Country Comparison: Military Expenditures.” 2012.

⁸¹ Calica, Aurea et al. April 29, 2012

⁸² Whaley, 2011.

⁸³ Felix. 2005, iii.

⁸⁴ Simon. 2006, 1.

While the Philippines may be a current U.S. ally, there is no guarantee that the relationship will continue. As demonstrated in recent years, there is still tension in the relationship, and the United States should be wary about entering into an alliance with a country with a large risk of instability as well as a weak military.

Thailand

Thailand is the second option for a balancing partner in Southeast Asia. Thailand practices a form of diplomacy, called “bamboo diplomacy,” which allows the state to swing back and forth between two strong powers while never truly committing to one country's side.

While Thailand was the only Southeast Asian state to ally with the United States in the Vietnam War⁸⁵, Thailand is currently leaning towards China as a partner in the near future. In April 2012, Thailand and China set a goal to “...boost annual bilateral trade to \$100 billion by 2015...upgrading to a comprehensive, strategic-cooperative partnership also strengthens their bilateral relations.”⁸⁶ By creating a strong bond through trade, Thailand aims to protect its border with China. However, by strengthening the Thai-Sino relationship, Thailand is unlikely to become the balancing partner of the United States.

Singapore

Singapore is another Southeast Asian state that would be ineffective as a balancing ally for the United States. In fact, Singapore is actually a city-state, not a nation-state. Because of the nature of Singapore's existence, it would not be an effective security ally. While Singapore may have a military that is well-equipped, it is still not as strong a force as the Indonesia, Thai, or

⁸⁵“U.S. Alliances and Emerging Partnerships in Southeast Asia: Out of the Shadows A Report of the CSIS Southeast Asia Initiative”. 2009

⁸⁶ Corben. 2012.

Filipino armies. Singapore will most likely join in a balancing partnership with the United States and Indonesia against China with a role mostly limited to economic support.

Another factor to consider is Singapore's trade relationship with China. In 2010, Hong Kong (a hub for Chinese trade) and Singapore enjoyed a close relationship based on trade. As the 5th largest trading partner for Hong Kong, Singapore experienced an “...average annual growth rate in bilateral trade... [of] 8% from 2006 to 2010....bilateral trade...increased by 33% from HK\$216.9 billion in 2009 to HK\$288.4 billion in 2010...”⁸⁷ Because of this trade relationship, Singapore has established a firm relationship with China and is assured of being on the side of the victor in the power struggle—which ever country it turns out to be.

Conclusion

The United States is facing a growing threat in Asia as China begins an attempt at hegemony in the region. In 1970, the United States faced a similar situation and answered the threat by balancing with the Chinese against the mutually-identified threat of the USSR. The United States chose to ally with the Chinese due to the Chinese aggregate power, geographic location, and animosity towards the USSR. The balancing of these two countries in an informal alliance secured the safety of United States' interests and retained China's sovereignty.

Now, the United States' interests in Asia are threatened. While other allies exist in regions of Asia, the United States is seeking a balancing partner in Southeast Asia to help protect interests such as trade routes and natural resources in the South China Sea. Indonesia is the most likely balancing partner of the United States, as it has a storied history with China, geographic proximity, and viable aggregate power. Other Southeast Asian countries, such as the Philippines,

⁸⁷ "Hong Kong - Singapore Trade Relations". 2011.

Thailand, and Singapore, are not viable balancing partners and will either take a backseat to Indonesia in the balancing relationship or choose to ally with China.

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Author's Biography

Michelle Allgood was born in Opelika, Alabama. Graduating from Mountain Crest High School in 2009 with her Associate's Degree, Michelle began studying Political Science at Utah State University. Part of the Honors Program, Service-Learning Scholars Program, LDS Institute Choir, and Huntsman Scholars, Michelle loved to be involved at Utah State. One of her great loves was service and she won the 2012 Val R. Christensen Service Robins Award.

Michelle will graduate in May 2012 and, after serving a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, will be returning to school to pursue a Masters of Education in the hopes of one day teaching Chinese and Southeast Asian politics to the future generations.