AMERICA'S ASIA PIVOT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN AND WILL IT SUCCEED?

John F. COPPER

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Executive Summary

1. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton launched the idea of a U.S. “pivot to Asia” in an article in *Foreign Policy* magazine in November 2011. The article was titled “America’s Pacific Century”.

2. President Obama followed up with trips to Asia. He also decided to establish a marine base in Australia, give more emphasis to US Navy’s mission in Asia, burnish US alliances in Asia, and view Asia a more important place in America’s diplomatic, strategic and economic future.

3. The policy became controversial mainly because of uncertainty whether it was the right policy and if it could be duly implemented given the financial status of the United States. Critics soon enunciated other arguments against the pivot.

4. The success of the pivot depends mainly on two things: The US has to rally its Asian allies. America has to realize a gain from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But are these suppositions proving true?

5. The pivot is perceived to be an anti-China policy designed to stem or contain the rise of China. Beijing so interpreted it. This evokes a serious question: Does America want to make China an enemy or alienate Beijing with this policy? Or can Washington maintain America’s engagement with China?

6. The pivot is seen as a strategic shift in US policy, but it arguably needs to be more than that. The Trans-Pacific Partnership, which became a major tenet of US policy at this time, was said to be the economic arm of the pivot. But it is controversial and faces opposition.

7. Clearly the pivot is an important tenet of US foreign policy, but it has yet to prove itself.