

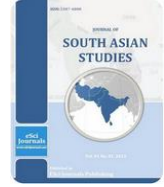


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## U.S. PIVOT POLICY TOWARDS ASIA-PACIFIC: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGION AND BANGLADESH

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### ABSTRACT

Over the past few years, the most stunning U.S. foreign policy initiative is the launching of Pacific Pivot or "Rebalancing" towards Asia-Pacific. The primary goal of this policy is to strengthen America's political, economic, and military presence in the region owing to China is the rising superpower in Asia. Consequently, the Pivot policy seems to be contradictory for Chinese interests. Although President Barack Obama refused the attempt of resisting Chinese interests by this policy, China and most of the foreign policy experts are skeptical about the President's statement. Thus, the policy speaks a new era of U.S.-China rivalry in international politics. This rivalry will expand upon the inclusion of other Asian powers such as Japan, South Korea, and India. In addition, the policy carries large significance for weak power such as Bangladesh. This essay analyzes the Pacific Pivot including the reasons for adopting it, and how it is different from the policy of previous administration. Also, it analyzes the possible implication of the policy on Asia-Pacific region. This article argues that the policy will establish strong domination of the U.S. in Asia-Pacific that will contain Chinese influence over the region. Consequently, conflict will escalate into Asia, and weak economies of the region may lose their sovereignty over American influence.

**Keywords:** ASEAN, Asia-Pacific, Cold War, Diplomatic Dilemma, Militarization, Neo-Colonialism, Pivot.

### INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2011 and early 2012, the Obama Administration has undertaken a policy of rebalancing towards Asia (Asia defines East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, including Australia and New Zealand) (Manyin et al., 2012) called "Pivot" and detailed this in military, commerce and trade, human rights, and diplomatic initiatives (International Institution for Strategic Studies [IISS], 2012). As one of the integral parts of American foreign policy, President Barack Obama has affirmed that in the years to come, the United States will play strong role in Asia. Although the policy of escorting Asia is not completely new to the U.S. foreign policy, the Pivot is more distinctive than previous policies in terms of its viability and likely impact (Bush III, 2012).

The objectives of the Pivot policy challenge the Chinese interests in Asia, as it is the leading power in the region.

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So a clash between the U.S. and China is inevitable that will escalate between China and its neighbors over maritime dispute. Among other key implication, militarization of most part of Asia; challenging powerful regional organizations such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations); increase tension in South Asia particularly between India and Pakistan; and escalation of conflict with "rogue" states etc. are mentionable. However, weak economies in the region will enjoy economic benefits through the implementation of the policy.

Similarly, as one of the target-states of the Pacific Pivot, Bangladesh will be significantly influenced by the policy. It can experience more American dominance in its internal politics; American military base in its coast; and consequently, large-scale national political disagreement on the question of accepting America's domination within the country. Nevertheless, like other weak economies in the region, Bangladesh will be economically benefited by the policy. This essay examines the U.S. Pivot policy and its possible

implication for Asia. Also, it will study Bangladesh as an influenced country of the policy. The article concludes by uttering that the United States and China should come into meaningful negotiation to preserve their interests peacefully. Moreover, it suggest to disputants of China for not relying on the U.S. to solve their bilateral disputes. Finally, the paper recommends small economies to strengthen their diplomatic power and national unity.

**METHODOLOGY**

This paper attempts to provide an overall description of the United States’ Pivot policy towards Asia-Pacific region, and investigate the possible implications of the policy on this area. In doing so, it has followed interpretive approach, and taken the qualitative research method. The data used in this paper are collected from secondary sources those comprises published books, journals, newspapers, and internet.

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE PIVOT POLICY**

**Brief Introduction of the U.S. Pivot Policy:** The Obama Administration has planned to “rebalance” American attention towards Asia-Pacific region as a result of American troops withdrew from Iraq in 2011 and future pull out from Afghanistan in 2014. Under the plan, the United States intends to establish its control in political, economic, and military spheres through building strategic partnerships in the region. The plan revealed in the statement of President Barack Obama in Australian

Parliament in November 2011 that his goal is to ensure that “the United States will play a larger and long term role in shaping this region (the Asia-Pacific) and its future, by upholding core principles and in close partnerships with our (United States) allies and friends” (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2011). So the core objective of the policy is to enhance America’s interests in the Asia-Pacific region. As tool of achieving the goal, the Washington is determined to follow its own principles such as respecting international law, free trade, and peaceful settlement of disputes etc. After few days of Obama’s declaration of the Pivot policy, Tom Donilon, for instance, a National Security Adviser ensures that under the policy, “international law and norms be respected, that commerce and freedom of navigation are not impeded, that emerging powers build trust with their neighbors, and that disagreements are resolved peacefully without threats or coercion” (Donilon, 2011).

As part of the policy, some key changes in United States foreign policy have occurred. First, the U.S. has declared to deploy more troops in Australia, deploy new naval force in Singapore, and establish military cooperation in new areas with the Philippines (Manyin et al., 2012). Also, the country has adopted the policy of strengthening a “more broadly distributed, more flexible, and more politically sustainable” military base in East Asia though it expects that the policy will reduce American defense budget.

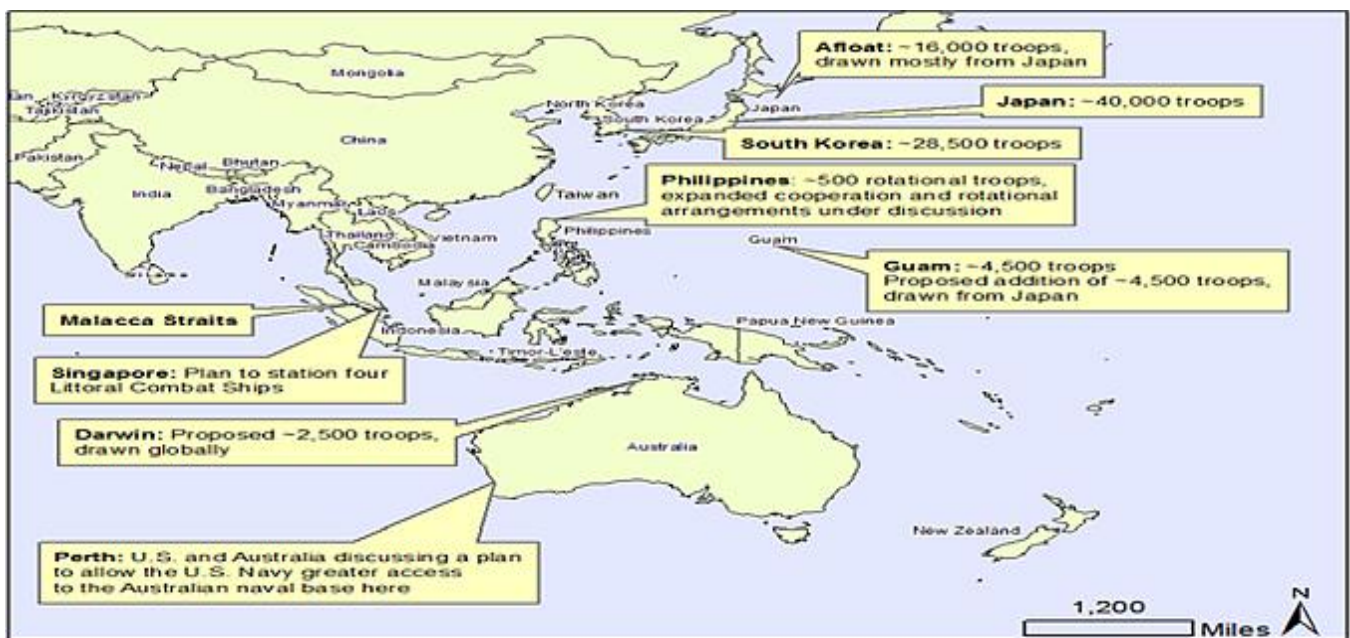


Figure 1. Map of the Asian Pacific (Including U.S. Troops Deployments and Plans)  
 Source: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4f3febac-1761-11e1-b00e-00144feabdc0.html>

In addition, to confirm and offer a rationale for the rebalancing to the region, the United States released a new defense planning document that retains an emphasis on the Middle East (Donilon, 2011). Aside from these military initiatives, the U.S. has joined in the East Asia Summit (EAS) which is one of the region’s influential multinational organizations. Finally, the country has achieved significant advancement in negotiation with East Asian countries to form a nine-nation Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP) and Free Trade Agreement (FTA) (Manyin et. al., 2012).

**Reasons of Adopting the Pivot Policy:** ‘The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action,’ As per President Barrack Obama (Clinton, 2011). The rapid growing importance of Asia in comparison to other regions such as Africa, and Latin America in economic, political, and military spheres has largely influenced the U.S. to adopt the Pivot policy. According to the U.S., some Asian countries particularly China will strongly influence in future world politics. As a result, America’s role in shaping world order will reduce that will ultimately hamper its national interests in abroad.

Table 1. Major Rising Powers in Asia

Name of Countries	Major Areas of Advancement
China	Political, Economic, and Military
India	Political, Economic, and Military
Indonesia	Economic
North Korea	Military
Iran	Military
Pakistan	Military, and strategic

Likewise, according to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), four major reasons in Asia-Pacific have increased the emphasis of Obama Administration towards the region. These include:

- The rising economic importance of the Asia-Pacific region, and particularly China, to the United States’ economic future (IISS, 2012);
- China’s growing military capabilities and its increasing assertiveness of claims to disputed maritime territory, with implications for freedom of navigation and the United States’ ability to project power in the region;
- The winding down of U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan; and
- Efforts to cut the U.S. federal government’s budget, particularly the defense budget, which threaten to

create a perception in Asia that the U.S. commitment to the region will wane (Manyin et. al., 2012).

Thus, the U.S. policy-makers become aware of protecting American domination and interests in Asia-Pacific region. This concern led to the policy of Pivot towards Asia-Pacific, aiming at achieves political, economic, and military objectives in the region in future.

**MAJOR CHANGES UNDER THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES**

The Administration of George W. Bush did not largely emphasize the East Asian regional issues particularly emergence of China as a global power. Unlike George W. Bush, Barack Obama came into state-power in his first term as “the first Pacific President”, who convinced the American people that the U.S. should restore and then promote its traditional level of engagement in Asian regional affairs (Lieberthal, 2011). So the Pivot policy can be addressed as an expansion rather than transformation of American foreign policy (Manyin et. al., 2012).

The major changes under the policy can be divided into four significant spheres:

**Multilateral Organizations:** In the last decade, China’s extensive efforts in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), ASEAN+3 (ASEAN, plus China, Japan, and South Korea), and ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum), enormously increased its influence in Asia in terms of both economic and trade, and security concerns. Importantly, the U.S. played very limited role in these multilateral organizations. In this circumstance, Obama Administration has adopted two key threads for Asia-Pacific diplomacy to strengthen American alliance and to build deeper relationships with emerging partners in the region. These are: deepening involvement with Asia-Pacific multilateral institutions; and successfully managing the U.S.-China relationship (Manyin et. al., 2012). To achieve these strands, President Obama set his strategies to support two different multilateral organizations. As regard the first, the establishment of TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) trade agreement which includes major economies in the region such as Japan, South Korea, and Malaysia etc. by December 2012. President Obama expects that TPP will emerge as a high-quality trade and investment platform in the region. The agreement also set on the basis of American principles in terms of transparency, protection of intellectual property, labor rights, environmental protection, and so forth. Although TPP still not come into force,

negotiations are now conducting among nations (Gupta, 2013), and it aimed at complete within 2013 (Barfield, 2013).

In addition to the economic agreement, the U.S. joined formally in the EAS (East Asia Summit) to achieve security objectives. In this case, maritime security of the region particularly access to South China Sea has focused in the U.S. policy (Lieberthal, 2011).

**Economic and Trade:** As one of the leading trading partners, Asia's total trade accounts for one-third of the world's total. Major export-oriented economies in the region particularly China, Japan, South Korea, and India

etc. are playing significant role in maintaining international trade. So the Pivot policy focuses on greater economic interests of the U.S. in Asia. But like Bush Administration, the first two and a-half years of Obama Administration had disappointing record on trade with Asia. In early November 2011, the Administration has achieved ratification of the free trade agreement with South Korea and that encouraged it to propose TPP as mentioned above. Obama asserts that there is no region as vital as Asia to America's future economic prosperity. So implementation of TPP is very significant for American economic interests (Manyin, 2012).

Table 2. U.S. Merchandise Trade Balance with Large Economies in Asia from 2005-2010 (In Million of Current USD, Census Basis).

Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Japan	-83,323	-89,722	-84,304	-74,120	-44,669	-59,802
China	-202,278	-234,101	-258,506	-268,040	-226,877	-273,066
Hong Kong	7,459	9,795	12,876	15,015	17,480	22,265
Singapore	5,356	6,057	7,225	11,969	6,527	11,671
South Korea	-16,210	-13,584	-13,161	-13,400	-10,604	-10,016
Taiwan	-13,211	-15,502	-12,449	-11,400	-9,877	-9,880

Source: CRS Report for Congress, October 19, 2012 (Williams & Donnelly, 2012).

**Security:** The rapid military advancement of China and North Korea, and their threats to American bases concerns the American security thinkers to strengthen the U.S. military presence in Asia. For instance, in March 2013, the threat of North Korea to conduct mid-range missile attack in South Korea continued tensions at high on the Korean Peninsula. As part of the threat, on 5<sup>th</sup> April, North Korea deployed two of this intermediate range missile on mobile launchers and hid them on the east coast of the country (Foxnews, 2013). In such circumstance, the goal of the U.S. is to protect the security of its allies in the region. Moreover, the United

States is concern to protect America's Asian security investment from any future cutbacks in overall American military spending. The Pivot policy clearly implies that the United States' military and broader security focus now shifting from Iraq and Afghanistan to Asia particularly East Asia. This posture will remain at the top of America's security priorities which will be protected from any future defense cuts (Lieberthal, 2011). The war in Afghanistan and Iraq resulted enormous economic and military casualties for the U.S. The following table illustrates the U.S. war funding in both Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001 to 2012.

Table 3. Estimated War Finding in Afghanistan and Iraq War: FY2001-FY2012 Request (in USD Billion).

Sources of Fund	FY01 & 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10	FY 11	FY12 (Req.)
Afghanistan War	20.8	14.7	14.5	20.0	19.0	39.2	43.5	59.5	93.8	118.6	113.7
Iraq War	0.0	53.0	75.9	85.5	101.6	131.2	42.1	95.5	71.3	49.3	17.7
Total	20.8	67.7	90.4	105.5	120.6	170.4	185.6	155	165.1	167.9	131.4

Source: CRS Report of Congress, March 29, 2011.

As part of the security concern in Asia-Pacific, the United States' Department of Defense (DOD) introduced several new features in the Pivot policy. To begin with, a broader distribution of forces particularly in the southern part of Western Pacific to serve the American defense position in Asia. In addition, deployment of more "flexible" approach

in which it will be smaller, more agile, expeditionary, self-sustaining, and self-contained. In oppose to the reliance on large permanent bases in Japan and South Korea, American force in the South will conduct operations mainly through rotational deployments of military units of various kinds to different parts of the region. Finally, to

enhance the independent security capacity of key partner states such as South Korea and Japan. It will be facilitated through more flexible security assistance mechanisms and through cooperative counter-terrorism, counter-drug, and counter-insurgency operations (Manyin et. al., 2012).

**Democracy:** Establishing democracy and promoting human rights in all over the world (particularly in autocratic countries) are the important objectives of American foreign policy. As part of the objective, former President George W. Bush conducted two limited wars in Afghanistan and Iraq respectively. Exceptionally, promoting global democracy was not important goal of Obama Administration. The Arab Spring of 2011 has significantly changed the Obama's possession of global democracy agenda. In the Pivot policy, the President emphasized on promoting democracy and human rights in Asian countries, particularly autocratic countries like North Korea, Iran, and Myanmar etc. As a result, the U.S. provided economic, military, and moral assistance to Libya, and later in Syria. Addressing in Australia, Obama defend his stand when he states,

"Other models have been tried and they have failed fascism and communism, rule by one man and rule by committee. And they failed for the same simple reason: They ignore the ultimate source of power and legitimacy, the will of the people" (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2011).

As part of the policy, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Myanmar in December 2011; the first U.S. Secretary of State in 50 years to do so (Samuels, 2011). As a result, the long-term hostile relations between the U.S. and Myanmar become mitigated and Myanmar has achieved enormous progress in establishing democracy in the country.

#### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PIVOT POLICY**

**Emergence of U.S.-China Rivalry:** The U.S. Pivot is widely regarded as an attempt to consolidate American predominance in the region in face of a rising China. This strategic shift in U.S. foreign policy is characterized by a more confrontational stance with China. According to Michael Swaine, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "the United States is now signaling an intention to move back towards the pre-9/11 strategic focus on a rising China. That focus places a premium on explicitly balancing against and constraining Chinese power and influence across the region" (Linfei & Wei, 2011). Although Obama Administration has denied that the pivot is a

containment strategy aimed at China, but Beijing reacted to enduring uncertainties over the U.S. strategy. It views that the pivot is an act of aggravation, and other countries in the region including Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines have stepped up their territorial claims in the Western Pacific, indirectly testing America's resolve to uphold its strategic commitments (Heydarian, 2012). Thus the Pivot policy is an attempt to contain China from its expansion of influence in other Asian countries.

This containment of China will enforce the U.S. and China to engage in a confrontation that can lead to a new form of Cold War. Unlike U.S.-Soviet Union Cold War (ideological confrontation), it will be based on preserving both traditional and non-traditional security interests in the region. The U.S. military existence in the region may introduce military confrontation between the two powers like Korean War-1952, Cuban Missile Crisis-1962, and Vietnam War etc. Moreover, the U.S. policy of ensuring democracy and human rights in Asian countries will not be possible in the case of China, because the U.S. cannot impose pressure on China to establish these principles in the country. This weakness will help China to compete more rigorously with the U.S. Therefore, Asian security will be under threat of major powers rivalry.

**Heighten Asian Disputes:** China has maritime disputes over rights to islands and seabed in the South China and East China Seas with Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The disputed areas are abundant with oil, gas, fishing, and mineral resources. But harsh conflict is continuing since Japan's decade of Imperial conquest, and fears are growing as China is rising as a superpower in the region (The New York Times, 2012). The Philippines and Vietnam have an acerbic maritime dispute with China over a whole host of feature in the Spratly and Paracel chains of islands in the South China Sea. On the other way, Japan is also competing with China's claim to the Senkaku (for Japan) or Diaoyu (for China) chain of islands in the East China Sea. In the meantime, Japan and South Korea, America's allies in Northeast Asia, are locked in a separate territorial clash over the Takeshima or Dokdo islands in the Sea of Japan (*Newstoday*, 2012). As part of these disputes, in the summer and fall of 2012, tensions ran highest between China and Japan over a group of uninhabited islands in the East Asian Sea that both countries claim (The New York Times, 2012). In addition, in 22 January 2013, President of the Philippines, Benigno Aquino filed a case for binding arbitration before a



United Nations tribunal over its territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea (Santolan, 2013). So American allies in the region particularly Japan, and the Philippines are demanding America's assurance and

bilateral mutual defense treaties under Pivot treaties, particularly in the case of military confrontation with China over disputed maritime features in the Western Pacific.

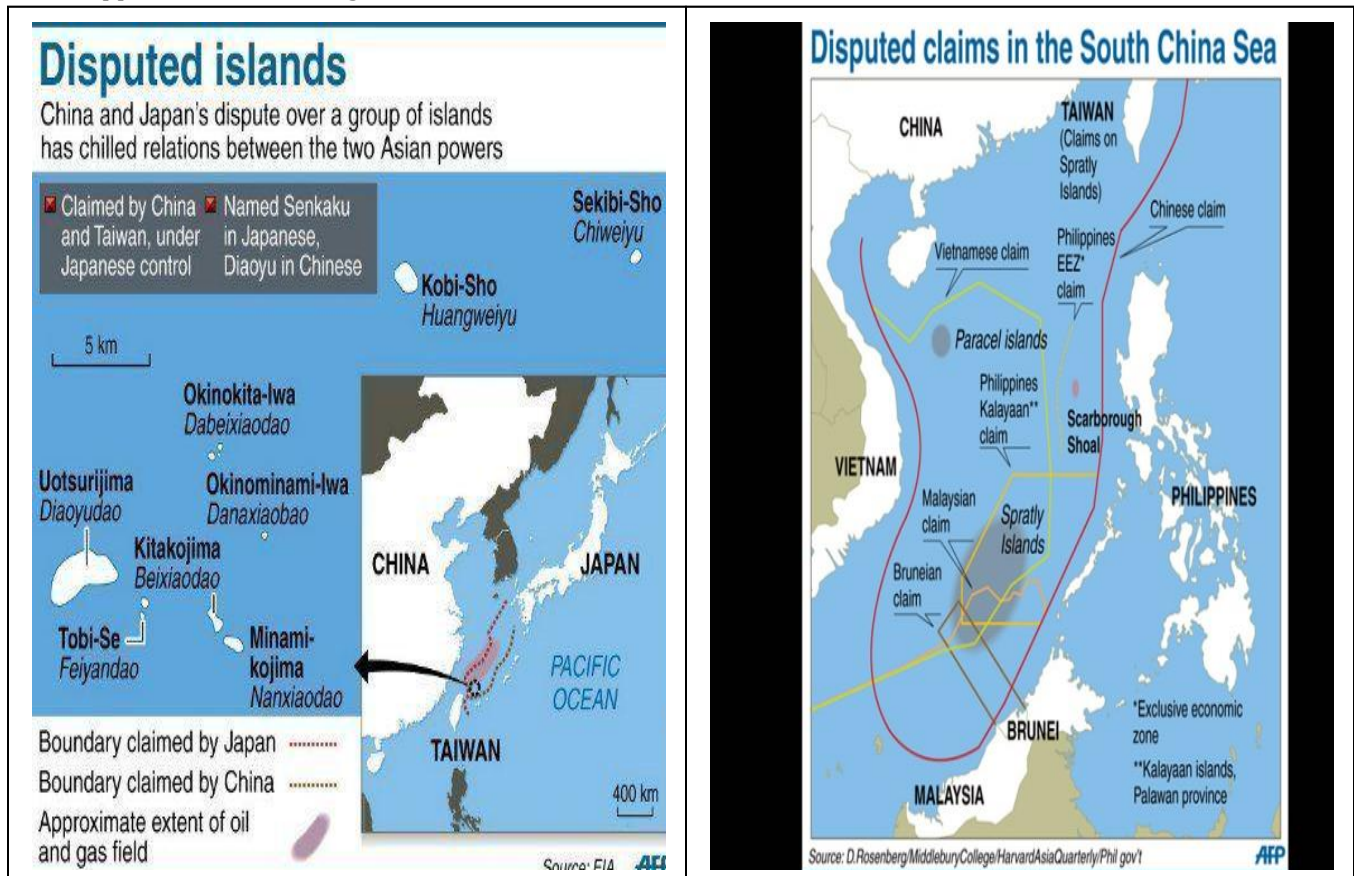


Figure 2: Maritime disputes between China and its neighbors Source: japantoday.com, globalnation.inquirer.net

In this circumstance, the negative view of China about the Pivot policy will strengthen uncertainty, turbulence, belligerence, and maritime dispute between China and its U.S.-backed neighbors. For instance, few months ago, Barry Desker, the dean of the Singapore-based S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), called for 'mutual restraint' by all disputing littoral states to 'diffuse' tensions, while contending that all parties are "guilty of occupying uninhabited islands and land features" (Newstoday, 2012).

In addition, the Report of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group-2012 states that "with tensions on the rise, Manila is eager to pursue closer military cooperation with the United States, and Hanoi (as a strategic partner) is keen to carefully bring in and balance United States' influence in the region." It also warned "if these countries frame any United States'

assistance as being directed against China, it will be harder for the former to persuade the latter that it will not get involved in territorial disputes" (International Crisis Group-ICS, 2012). Thus the Pivot Policy heightens dispute in Asia that can lead to a military confrontation between China and any other disputant country. **Militarization in Asia:** The United States is focusing on establishing more military bases in Asia-Pacific to pursue its military goals of the Pivot policy. To achieve these goals, some areas of the region particularly, South Korea, Guam, Singapore, Australia etc. will be strong military bases of the country. As part of the policy it has set to commit several more thousand troops and increase its naval strength in the region by another 10 percent by 2020. The country has already around 320,000 troops and strong naval presence in the region (Rozoff, 2012).



Figure 3: Current U.S. Military Bases in the West Pacific

Source: *blog.thomsonreuters.com*

In response, China’s military leaders have said that they are unhappy with recent moves by the Obama Administration to enhance the U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region (*The Guardian*, 2012). So it is emphasizing on improving its military capabilities through increasing huge spending in the sector. For instance, in 2012, China spent USD 106.4 billion (11.2% increase over actual spending of 2011) in military sector, the second largest military spending country after the U.S. The National People’s Congress Spokesman Li Zhaoxing said at a news conference, “You see, China has 1.2bn people, a large territory and long coastline, but our defense spending is relatively low compared with other major countries” (*The Guardian*, 2012).

Thus arms race between the U.S. and China has introduced and consequently that will militarized most of the parts in the region. It will hamper regional integration in East Asia, and will create likelihood of military conflict in Asia.

**CHALLENGE TO ASEAN**

Although China is in front and centre of the Pivot policy, it is also significant for other member countries of

ASEAN. For instance, according to Donald K. Emmerson, “In its vaguest sense, the pivot is a turn toward Asia writ large. But it is particularly in Southeast Asia that the pivot’s three themes- security, economy and democracy, are most evident” (Emmerson, 2013).

Since the United States is one of the participants in ARF, it will largely help the country in achieving objectives of the Pivot policy. As it is the most powerful partner in the Forum, it will be difficult for ASEAN countries to take independent decisions without considering American interests. For instance, on 12 January 2010, Hillary Clinton illustrated at Honolulu, “We will continue to support ASEAN and we will continue emphasize capacity-building activities under the enhanced U.S.-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership and the economic-focused U.S.-ASEAN Trade and Investment Framework Agreement” (U.S. Department of State, 2010).

So these Partnership and Framework Agreement will work as the powerful tools to establish American economic and political control on ASEAN countries.

Also these involvements of United States will weaken the

regional integrity among the ASEAN countries. It resulted in the division among the ASEAN members. For instance, among 10 member-states of the organization, only Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam were present among the 11 governments have negotiated the U.S.-backed TPP in Auckland in December 2012 (Emmerson, 2013). Thus the Pivot policy is challenging ASEAN; one of the powerful and successful regional organizations in Asia.

**Creation of New Terrorist Targets in Asia:** The presence of America in Asia will increase activities of anti-American groups like Al-Qaeda (global-based), Abu Sayyaf, (in the Philippines), Hezbollah (in Lebanon), Islamic Jihad, and Jaish-e Mohammad (in Pakistan) etc. As attack to American resources is the target of these groups, through the Pivot policy they will find more offices that are American bases, and personnel in the region. Thus, extremist activities may speed up in America-influenced countries of Asia particularly in South Korea, Japan, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia etc. This extreme military activity will threaten stability of the region that will open possibility for the United States to ensure its more strong military presence in terrorist attack-prone areas. This larger American military presence will escalate terrorist attacks rather than prevention of attack. Thus Asia will go under extreme threat of terrorist attack. Consequently, dependence on America in economic and political spheres in the Continent will be stronger. It will serve the U.S. to achieve American purpose of dominating Asia for many years.

**Acceleration of Conflict with Rogue States:** On 29 January 2002, at State of the Union Address, then United States President George W. Bush declared to continue pursuit of two major American goals against global terrorism. First, the United States will shut down terrorist camps, disrupts terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. Second, the country must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world (Millercenter, 2002). As part these goals, the President addressed three countries as "Axis of Evil"; North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. Regarding North Korea, he accused that it is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens. Similarly, Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for

freedom, he argued (Millercenter, 2002).

As part of war on terror, the United States successfully invaded Iraq in 2003. But still it is in warm dispute with rest of two countries. As the Pivot Policy is the extension of Bush policy in the sphere of global terrorism, it will strengthen the above two goals of Bush Administration. Consequently, tension will increase more between the U.S. and these two "Axis of Evil" in Asia. As preventing Weapon of Mass Destruction, establishment of democracy and human rights will be very difficult to achieve in these countries without military intervention like Iraq and Afghanistan, the Pivot Policy creates a likelihood of few limited wars in the region.

**Strengthen Neo-Colonialism of the U.S. in Asia:** The Pivot Policy will serve America to more spread its customs and values (i.e. its concepts of democracy, human rights, accountability etc.) rapidly in all over Asia. As a result, American culture and intellectual thoughts will threaten the Asian culture. As much America will establish its cultural dominance in the region, it will be more effortless to dominate it in economic and political spheres.

Additionally, the policy will make more dependency on American aid to some weak economies in Asia such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Fiji etc. This aid dependence will weaken political sovereignty of these countries over U.S. and consequently America will easily interfere in the domestic and foreign policy of these countries. Thus through spread of culture and making aid dependent the United States will ultimately strengthen its neo-colonialist approach in the region.

**Escalation of Tension in South Asia:** As China is skeptical about the America's Pivot policy, India will usually support the policy to counter Chinese economic and military influence in South Asia. It reflects in the speech of Indian Ambassador in the United States (Nirupama Rao) on February 8, 2013 in which he welcomed United States' growing engagement in the Asia-Pacific. He said,

"We believe that India and the United States are stakeholders in the creation of an inclusive, participatory network of interdependence, cooperative trade, economic development, security and stability in the Asia of the Indo-Pacific. These converging interests have opened up new opportunities for enhanced cooperation between our two countries" (*The Economic Times*, 2013).

As a result of this Indian stance, tension between the two



rapidly growing economies in Asia; China and India will be escalated. In this tension, the United States may provide support to India that will make South Asia unstable.

In response to the United States and Indian initiatives, China will try to increase its economic and military assistance to Pakistan. The country also needs military and financial assistance from China to counter India. After the NATO troop's withdrawal from Afghanistan by 2014, Pakistan may not receive huge amount of military and financial aids from the United States. So in post-NATO Afghanistan, Pakistan will certainly move to China for its survival. In particular, "close and effective defense ties" already established between the two states in the last decade that will allow Islamabad to "fill the gap" arising from the prospect of reduced military aid from the United States (Bokhari, 2011). Thus the two nuclear powers of South Asia will be influenced by two different

global powers and ultimately the stability of the region will be gone under threat.

**Economic Prospects for Weak Economies:** Unlike the above propositions, the Pivot will largely be beneficial for the weak economies in Asia such as Fiji, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan etc. Since 2005, American financial assistance to South and Central Asia has been increasing while in East Asia, it is decreasing. In Asia, Pakistan and Afghanistan are the most American aid receiving countries. The Pivot policy will prioritize equally in all countries of Asia that will make balance in the two areas of United States financial assistance. As a result, weak economies of the region will be modernized with new technologies, infrastructure, thoughts, and culture. Although these spread will reduce states' political sovereignty, it will take a better economic progress for the small economies in Asia.

Table 4. U.S. Financial Assistance in Asia 2005-2010 (In USD Million)

Area	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
South and Central Asia	3268	3107	1795	2139	1889	1772
East Asia/Pacific	158	272	301	534	489	474

Source: [www.vaughns-1-pagers.com/politics/us-foreign-aid.htm](http://www.vaughns-1-pagers.com/politics/us-foreign-aid.htm)

**IMPLICATIONS OF THE PIVOT POLICY FOR BANGLADESH**

**Increase the U.S. Domination in Bangladesh Politics:**

Since the emergence of Bangladesh, the United States is playing significant role in the internal and external politics of the country. Bruce Vaughn in the CRS April 01, 2010, identified five major interests of United States with Bangladesh. These include promoting development, trade and energy; democracy support; countering militant Islamists; working together in peace operation; and to increase its role in South Asia through Bangladesh as the country plays in the larger geopolitical dynamics in the region (Vaughn, 2010). To achieve these goals, since the last decade, the U.S. involves in the domestic and foreign affairs of Bangladesh increasingly.

As part of the U.S. influence, the Pivot policy has placed greater emphasize on Bangladesh that reflected in the first ever U.S.-Bangladesh Partnership Dialogue of September 2012 in Washington D.C. The dialogue focuses on cooperation in the areas of trade, development, governance and security. The Department of States opined that "Bangladesh, which lies at the crossroads of global powerhouses in South and East Asia, can play a key role in linking these critical regions"

(*The Daily Star*, 2012). Thus the U.S. is attempting to establish more control in the internal and external affairs of Bangladesh.

**Establishment of American Military Base in Bangladesh:**

Under the military assistance of the policy, the U.S. will endeavor to establish its military base in Bangladesh. *The Times of India* on June 1, 2012 claimed that the U.S. is on the process of stationing its naval base within the Bay of Bengal and the American Seventh Fleet is scheduled to be moving towards Bangladesh maritime area within next couple of weeks. It also claimed that during the tour of the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on 5-6 May 2012, Washington formally placed the proposal of using Bangladesh territory for its naval base. According to the Indian news media, "Worried by increasing presence of Chinese naval bases in the South China Sea, America now eyes a counter strategy, as it wants an overall presence in Asia, right from Japan to its Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean." It also includes "this by parking its seventh fleet in a base in Chittagong giving in both an eye on taking on China and a strategic post in Asia as it pulls out of Afghanistan." Finally *The Times of India* warned that "this move by America could put India on the back foot if the American fleet moves

to Bangladesh, all of India's security installations will come under the American scanner" (BLITZ, 2012). The warning implies a future hostile relation between Bangladesh and India, if Bangladesh allow American naval base in its coast. In response to the question of American naval base in Bangladesh, former Foreign Minister of the country Dipu Moni denied its possibility. She reacted, "we don't even keep it in our thought process". She addressed the Bangladesh-U.S. security dialogue as a routine matter (Pakistan Defence, 2012). But the question arises; will the government of Bangladesh hold the similar position against American military base in the country? Even if they hold similar position, will it possible to continue? In response, it can argue that American initiatives under its Pivot policy will enforce Bangladesh governments to change their position of American military base in the Bay of Bengal.

**Creation of National Dissention among Political Parties:** America's excessive influence in national politics and the likelihood of the military base in Bangladesh will divide the nation into two major groups i.e. pro-American, and anti-American. This disagreement between the two groups will produce national dissention that will lead massive political instability in the country. For instance, an Article of the leader of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Begum Khaleda Zia, titled "Saving Democracy in Bangladesh," published in *The Washington Times* last year. In the Article, the leader requested the U.S. to interfere in the current political instability of the country. As a result, large scale political chaos created in the country particularly between the two major political parties. Moreover, current Awami League government has warned that it will not allow any American pressure in the country's internal and external politics (*The Daily Amar Desh*, 2013). The former Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Minister and an influential Awami League leader Syed Asraf says, "The Sheikh Hasina-led government will not allow America or any other country, no matter how powerful or dreaded they are, to call the shots on Bangladesh." In this circumstance, the implementation of the U.S. Pivot policy in Bangladesh will weaken national integrity in the country, and it will lead internal instability.

**Likelihood of Diplomatic Dilemma for Bangladesh:** The Pivot policy will enforce Bangladesh into a dilemma on the question of maintaining diplomatic relations with the U.S. and other global power like China and Russia. At present, Bangladesh maintains closer economic and military ties with both China and Russia. As regard the first, Bangladesh

is the third largest trade partner of China in South Asia though bilateral trade between the two countries is highly tilted in favor of China. On October 2012, China signed two aid deals worth nearly USD \$260 with Bangladesh (Kabir, 2012). Also they signed three deals to boost cooperation in economic, power, and financial sectors (Bdnews24.com, 2012). Aside from the economic partner, China is a reliable and affordable source of weapons and equipments for Bangladesh. As part of military cooperation, a "Defense Cooperation Agreement" has signed between two states in 2002 (Pakistan Defence, 2012). And, in July 2012, Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh stated in a press release, "the upcoming years will witness a growing number of high level exchange visits, training programmes, defence procurement and security cooperation such as counter-terrorism, anti-piracy and disaster relief" (Pakistan Defence, 2012).

Similarly in recent time, Russia emerged as a powerful partner of Bangladesh, particularly in energy and military sectors. For instance, on 15 January 2013, both nations signed three agreements and six memorandums of understanding on cooperation in different fields, including setting up 1000-Mega Watt nuclear power plant in Bangladesh (*Energybangla.com*, 2013), and US \$1 billion arms contact that is the biggest arms deal since the country's independence (*Defensenews.com*, 2013). In this circumstance, American dominance under the Pivot policy will may create very tough diplomatic choices for Bangladesh; either with the U.S. or with China and Russia. As both sides are important for the country's interests, it will be difficult to specify the exact choice. Like the question of American political and military presence in Bangladesh, this dilemma may produce disagreement among political parties in the country.

**Economic Prospects for Bangladesh:** Like other weak economies in Asia, the Pivot policy will benefit for the economic prosperity of Bangladesh. As of 2011, the United States government has provided over USD \$5.7 billion in development assistance (ODA) to Bangladesh. As part of the policy, on January 2012 the United States offered Bangladesh \$1 billion aid over next five years to alleviate poverty and malnutrition, as well as family planning and the fight against contagious diseases (*Reuters*, 2012). The aid will help to improve people's standard of living, experiencing modern technologies, and building infrastructure. Ultimately, it will make Bangladesh more dependent on U.S. aid that will make

easy to interfere in its national politics as well as establish military base in the country.  
 Table 5. The U.S. Assistance to Bangladesh from 2009-2011 Requests (in USD Thousand)

Sectors of Assistance	FY2009 Actual	FY2010 Estimate	FY2011 Request
Development Assistance	40,000	66,271	81,902
Economic Support Fund	50,000	0	0
Foreign Military Financing	590	1,500	1,500
Food for Peace	30,029	42,000	42,000
Global Health and Child Survival	41,550	53,200	77,300
International Military Education and Training	787	1,000	1,000
International Narcotic Control and Law Enforcement	200	350	850
Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and related Programs	3,600	4,200	2,575
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,756</b>	<b>168,521</b>	<b>207,127</b>

Source: Congressional Research Service, 1 April 2010 (Vaughn, 2010).

The table shows that the United States' assistance to Bangladesh has increased dramatically from 2010 to 2011, particularly in the sectors of development assistance and health and child survival. Under the Pivot policy, in October 2012, the Department of State asserts that the United States' assistance to Bangladesh seeks to foster robust engagement with the Government of the country and complement support from other donors to address the underlying social, demographic, and economic factors that threaten democratic governance, stifle economic growth, and increase vulnerability to extremism in the country. It also mentions that the United States aims to build on previous gains to further reduce poverty and food insecurity, improve health and education, mitigate the impact of frequent natural disasters, and achieve more effective governance in order to foster equitable and sustainable growth (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Thus the Pivot policy will benefit Bangladesh to achieve economic advancement of the country.

**CONCLUSION**

The United States' Pivot policy towards Asia-Pacific region can be identified as the most significant policy of Obama administration. The policy will introduce a new era of U.S.-China rivalry on the issue of dominating area. It can divide the Asia-Pacific region into two major blocks as the world experienced during Cold War between United States and Soviet Union in the last century. So a new form of Cold War is likely inevitable between the U.S. and China.

This war will escalate tension in the whole region on the issues of political, economic, military, and land and maritime boundary demarcation. Both the United States and China already started their initiatives to control the

agenda of Asia-Pacific region. This attempt will make small powers significantly dependent on either the U.S. or China in the spheres of economic, political, and military affairs. Thus, although these small powers will gain economic and military benefits from the two global powers, it will diminish their political sovereignty to these disputants. Moreover, the new form of Cold War will exacerbate the conflict between China and its neighbors particularly Japan, India, and the Philippines. Also, South Asia may become more vulnerable to struggle between the two major regional powers, India and Pakistan, as both countries seems to join in two different sides.

To avoid the large-scale conflict in the region, both the United States and China must reach in agreement for negotiation to compromise their interests with each other. Other disputant countries with China like Japan, the Philippines, and India should not exploit their strong ties with America to achieve their claims over China. They also should go through bilateral peaceful way to solve their own disputes. Additionally, small economies like Bangladesh should strengthen their diplomatic capabilities to deal with the United States, and China and Russia by which they can preserve maximum political autonomy. Also, national unity to establish good governance in these countries must strengthen for economic advancement and to resist foreign interference in their national politics.

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