

Same Bed, Different Dreams: US-Chinese Power Competition Over the East Asian Seas*

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| 목 차 |

I. Introduction	Assessment
II. Security Dilemma and Power Competition	IV. US-Chinese Naval Strategy and the Use of Force
III. US-Chinese Power Competition and Threat	V. Conclusion

| 논문요약 |

이 글은 동아시아 해양을 배경으로 미국과 중국이 우세적인 해군력을 확보하기 위해 벌이는 해군 안보경쟁에 주목하고, 동아시아 해양에서의 미국과 중국의 해군 안보경쟁의 원인을 국제정치학적 이론을 통해 새롭게 조명하고 있다. 특히 경제적, 군사적으로 급격히 부상하는 중국이 냉전 이후 지금까지 실질적인 강대국의 역할을 맡고 있는 미국의 지위에 어떻게 도전하는가에 대한 해석을 제시한다. 미국은 세계적 수준에서 국가의 영향력을 유지하고자 한다. 최근 미국이 추진하고 있는 아시아 중시 전략은 미국이 얼마만큼 동아시아 해양에서의 영향력 확보를 피하고자 하는지를 잘 설명해준다. 한편 중국은 지속적으로 원해 작전 능력을 향상시킴으로써 동아시아 해양에서 미국의 영향력을 축소시키는 동시에 해양강국으로서의 지위를 획득하고자 분주한 움직임을 보이고 있다. 미·중의 관계는 동아시아 해양이라는 같은 공간에서 각기 다른 목표를 지향하는 이른바 ‘동상이몽’의 전형을 보여

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준다. 이 글에서는 기존의 안보 딜레마 이론을 발전시켜 미국과 중국의 관계를 방어적인 특성을 보이는 ‘안보 딜레마(security dilemma)’ 수준에서 상호 공격적인 양상을 나타내는 ‘힘의 경쟁(power competition)’으로 악화되고 있다는 점을 강조한다.

- 주제어: 해군(미국·중국), 동아시아 해양, 해군 전략, 안보 딜레마, 힘의 경쟁

I . Introduction

As soon as the Cold War ended, a range of debates was instigated among scholars and policy makers regarding which international structures could replace the US-Soviet Union bipolarity. Approaches for the future international system were divided into two. First, a period of the US-led unipolarity in international politics that would last for at least a few decades.(Nye 1990; Krauthammer 1990/1991, 23-33; Fukuyama 1992; Ikenberry 1998/1999, 43-78; Mastanduno 1997, 49-88; Wohlforth 1999, 5-41). Second, the decline of the US' relative power as a new great nation would rise up to balance the US power(Mearsheimer 1990, 5-56; Mearsheimer 2001; Layne 1993, 5-51; Waltz 1994, 44-79; Kupchan 1998, 43-78; Ross 2004, 267-304; Levy 2004, 29-51).

As of the end of 2010, China surpassed Japan in GDP and became the world's second largest economy after the US(The Wall Street Journal, 2011/02/14). There is no opposition to the argument that China can be regarded as a new balancer to the US from an economic perspective. In a sense, the second group's explanation seems to be the most relevant to the current changes of the new international structure of unipolarity. With the economic prosperity of

China, considerable progress has been noted as the nation has built up their military power beyond the necessities of its territorial protection. Fortunately, China has an ample budget in order to maintain a capable military branch. Without a doubt, if this phenomenon of strengthening military power lasts, China is going to be a fierce security challenger to the US within the foreseeable future. On the other hand the US naval strategy and force structuring have shown an affirmative stance against China in the East Asian Sea and it makes the security environment worse than ever. Specifically there are lots of concerns that the US' rebalancing toward Asia strategy could bring about severe competition with China in the region.

Under these circumstances, the relationship between the current global superpower, the US, and the challenging regional superpower in Asia, China, is the centerpiece of debate in the world of international relations. To be more concrete, a competition for security between the US and China is and will be a critical issue in international security studies. Whether the two great powers are destined to fight it out or not is a controversial point among many scholars(Aaron & Friedberg 2011).¹⁾ The key question is whether these two great powers will work towards cooperation and collaboration, or towards competition and confrontation. The discussion of the relationship between the US and China will be of utmost importance in the international security society for the foreseeable future.

1) In a broad sense of the probability of clashing between the two great powers (Brzezinski & Mearsheimer 2005, 45-50; Ross 2005). <http://www.taiwansecurity.org/IS/2006/Stanley-Ross.pdf>. (accessed on October 12, 2013)

II. Security Dilemma and Power Competition

1. Defensive Realism and Security Dilemma

Edward Hallett(E. H.) Carr(1946, 100-102) brought up the pessimistic aspects of international politics in his book 'Twenty Years' Crisis'. Carr argued that power and politics are inseparable because of the nature of power itself. According to him, as politics intends to acquire power, politics among nations also aim to obtain power between nations. According to Hans J. Morgenthau(1954), realism in international politics explains a nations' power pursuing struggle on the basis of human nature. However, his arguments are too subjective and too general to apply to real international politics. Morgenthau seems to overlook that human nature on the individual and state level can differ. Therefore explaining the power struggle among nations based on human nature is a logical leap. Nonetheless, his discerning explanations made a very constructive contribution to the development of international political theories.

Kenneth N. Waltz(1959) developed Morgenthau's theory to systematically explain the behaviors of states in international relations. Waltz theoretically analyzes the causes of war and the behaviors of states. Waltz(1979) emphasizes the anarchical character of the international system and various forms of international structures, such as unipolarity, bipolarity, and multipolarity. Waltz(1979, 3) states that, rational countries living in the state of anarchy and the security dilemma would be suspicious of and hostile to each other because of their tense relations, although that was not their original idea. This explains how nations strive to obtain national security within the

international system. Defensive realists argue that states need to maximize their own security. According to Waltz(1979, 180), the state ultimately seeks to secure its survival rather than expand its power. Therefore, he argues that nations balance towards a hegemonic nation for its survival. For the past several decades, the balance of power theory has been a dominant concept in the theory of international relations to explain international structure and states' behaviors. Even today, this theory plays an important role in the attempt to explain the reasoning behind contemporary international politics.

One common denominator that Carr, Morgenthau, and Waltz emphasize is the rational behavior of a nation within the anarchical international system. A nation will eventually act in a selfish manner for its security, making the state a rational actor. The self-help behavior of nations and their competition to achieve their desired status of security is inevitable. In the eyes of the theorists, the most fundamental goal of a nation is to get enough power to guarantee its survival in the international system. The balance of power theory explains a state's motivation to pursue power, thus being able to counter-balance another state from becoming too strong in the international structure. Can this be applicable in real world politics?

Robert Jervis logically proves the security competition among power seekers. He coins this as the security dilemma. The idea of security dilemma is based on a realist's assumption of an anarchic international system. Jervis(1976, 63; 1978, 167-214) defines the security dilemma as a paradox where most means of self-protection simultaneously menace others. To be concrete, if a state works to protect its national interest and its survival through mechanisms such as building up their military power, other states view this development as a threat to their own security, thus instigating the perceiving country to try and raise the level of its own military power. This is the dilemma.

Jervis uses offense-defense balance and offense-defense distinction as the two factors in categorizing the degree of security dilemma. Jervis(1976, 211) examines whether the offense or the defense has the advantage, and whether offensive postures can be distinguished from defensive ones, making four possible scenarios. Before explaining the four scenarios, this study deals with the meaning of the offense-defense balance and the advantage of being offense and defense dominant. The offense-defense balance is defined as the amount of resources that a state must invest in offense to offset an adversary's investment in defense by Sean Lynn-Jones(1995, 665). States can have a different approach to military strategy according to whether states believe they are in an offense advantage status or in a defense advantage status. There are many factors that influence the balance of the offense-defense. According to Van Evera(1998, 543), the factors that cause offense and defense dominance are military technology and doctrine, geography, national social structure, and diplomatic arrangements. Jervis also urged that technology and geography are the two main factors that determine whether the offense or defense has the advantage.

2. Offensive Realism and Power Competition

Offensive realism, a derivative theory of classical realism, is more aggressive than defensive realism. While Waltz emphasizes that defensive realism focuses on a state's survival as the ultimate goal, offensive realism stresses power seeking as the states' ultimate goal in order to secure its survival. Mearsheimer(2001), one of the leading scholars of offensive realism, argues that being a hegemon in the region is the best route for survival. The offensive realist argues that states simply seek to gain as much power as possible over their

rivals to guarantee their survival in the international system(Mearshimer 2001, 54). According to him, offensive realism predicts that states will be acutely sensitive to the balance of power and will look for opportunities to increase their own power or weaken rivals(Mearshimer 2001, 329). All in all, offensive realism is a theory that seeks to account for power competition in international politics(Schmidt 2004, 432).

Why does offensive realism view world politics as a tragedy? First of all, this paper admits that the current political order and framework works under the assumption that the current international world order is based on an anarchic system as realists insist. Especially, Mearsheimer(2001, 29) argues that great powers are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals. His argument is based on several assumptions about the international system. In order to support his idea, Mearsheimer addresses five assumptions about the international system as follows. First, the international system is anarchic in which comprises independent states that have no central authority to govern the system. Second, great powers in the system possess some offensive military power which makes them capable of attacking others and pose as a potential threat. Third, states' intentions are never to be certain toward others so that states can never be sure about others. Fourth, the primary goal of great powers is to secure their own survival. Fifth, great powers in the international system are all rational actors for survival. When the five assumptions are married, he believes that they create powerful incentives for great powers to think and act offensively with regard to each other(Mearshimer 2001, 32).

Security goals in national security strategy and the use of force supporting military strategy reveal the power maximization process of a state. A main difference between offensive realism and defensive

realism depends on the perspective adopted and actions taken to deal with a security issue. While defensive realists believe that states would rather seek to maximize their security than seek to gain relative power, offensive realists argue that states attempt to maximize their power in order to guarantee their security relevant to their international anarchic circumstance. For offensive realists, the best defense is a good offense. Thus, it is very important to find out what impacts states' offensive security behaviors under offensive realism. Ultimately, national goals and operations of military forces can affect states' power maximization behaviors.²⁾

States that want to be a hegemon are likely to possess military strength which could be offensive military means(Mearsheimer 2001, 32). But the problem is that those force deployments could be interpreted as a threatening measure by the other side(Friedberg 2005, 23). Whether states have the intention or not, the opposite state has many reasons to believe that the other's strategic movements pose a threat to its own security. This kind of phenomenon may be explained by using the traditional security dilemma theory. Mearsheimer argues that a great power pursues to gain relative power over another great power. Great powers make moves to maximize their power to become a regional hegemon. If the actions of a state are meant to strategically prepare for containment and pose as a threat to the opposite side, the situation is no longer a security dilemma, but it is a fierce security competition toward power seeking. In other words, in order to become a hegemon, it is inevitable to undergo an intentional competition which is very aggressive in nature. This is perceived as an offensive move, adding the possibility of conflicts to rise as well. This is different from what defensive realists argue about security

2) See Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, defense, and the Causes of War"(Art & Waltz 2004, 44-69).

dilemma, which takes a more passive behavioral characteristic.

3. Security Dilemma? or Power Competition?

Having a stricter assessment of the concept of defensive and offensive realism, this paper understands that East Asia is in a more fierce security competition situation than a security dilemma. This is clear when the relations between the US and China are discussed. This paper explains how nations have responded to the maritime security environment in East Asia from the perspective of defensive and offensive realism. In particular, the US and Chinese naval competition to gain naval mastery over the East Asian Seas can be a perfect example of their security competition. In peacetime, being a maritime great power can be equally considered as being a great power in terms of US-Chinese security competition in the East Asian Seas. All in all, this study ultimately tries to argue that both the US and China intentionally compete for security. This phenomenon shows that the US and China starts seeking for power in the region. Therefore, the US and China have been in a more fierce security competition rather than a security dilemma. Defensive realists still believe that the US and Chinese rivalry can be a manageable security dilemma without spiraling into conflict(White 2012). In particular, White(2012) strongly argues that the US should share power with China, India, Japan as part of a concert of Asia. Today's tension, however, between two great powers has been exacerbating as times goes by. As of 2014, the security dilemma is changing into a power competition and the competition is expected to intensify for the time being.

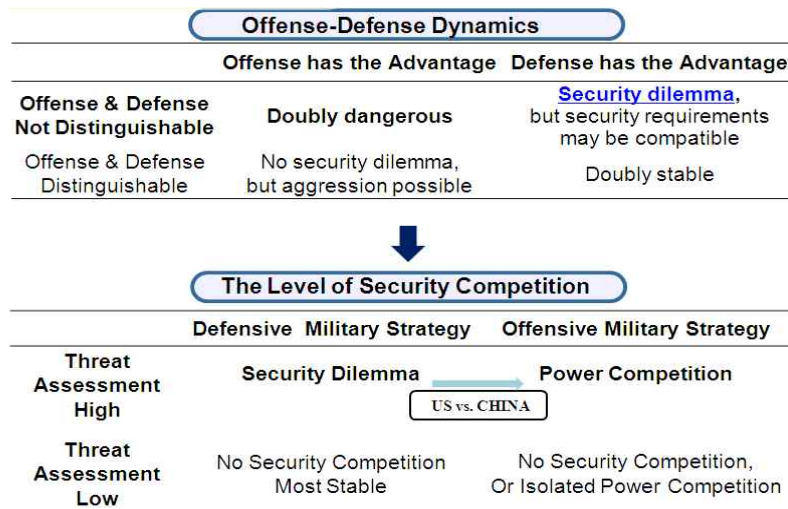
Based on the above current security environments in the East Asian Seas, the following two hypotheses can be stated. First, during

peacetime, security competition is more likely when national interests of great powers conflict. The character of security competition differs among nations according to their international status and security environment. As a global power and status quo power in East Asia, the US would rather contain China's naval expansion from being a potential security challenger in the region. As a regional power and revisionist nation, China would rather seek military expansion with anti-access strategy that would prevent US intervention in the region. Second, the level of security depends on threat assessment and states' military strategy in terms of the use of force. Under the high threat assessment of opponents, security dilemma is more likely when coupled with defensive military strategy. On the other hand, power competition is more likely when coupled with offensive military strategy. When low threat assessment is coupled with defensive military strategy, security competition does not operate, and is most stable. When low threat assessment is combined with offensive military strategy, no security competition occurs or, isolated power competition is likely to form.

With this background, in this paper, revised conditions are used to explain the level of security competition between the US and China. According to the level of security dynamics, <Table 1>, the two variables whether threat assessment is high or low, and whether there is a defensive or offensive military strategy can be combined to yield four possible security stages. In <Table 1>, threat assessment means recognizing a variety of challenges to a state's national security. It includes an opponent's willingness to achieve hegemony, to protect or achieve national interests relatively more than their rivals, and to sabotage the efforts for maintaining a stable and peaceful security environment. Military strategy covers military capability, strategic operation of the use of force, and a leader's intention and willingness

to use military power against a current or potential threat. Defensive military strategy means a state is more likely to use its military force in a passive or inactive manner. On the contrary, offensive military strategy means that a state is more likely to use its military force in a proactive or assertive manner.

<Table 1> The Level of Security Competition



III. US-Chinese Power Competition and Threat Assessment

1. Power Competition for What?

According to Robert Gilpin(1981, 186), different growth and the development among states put the rising state into competition with the dominant states. If that is the case, it is very reasonable to expect

that China could challenge for its security to the dominant state, the US. There are roughly two issues of naval competition for power between the US and China. The first one is facing off on wielding strong influence to managing global commons on the East Asian Seas. Maritime security competition between the US and China refers to gaining the naval mastery on the East Asian Seas. Even though the global commons have been open to all nations with the desire, historically the greatest power has been managing most of them especially in terms of maritime issues. Paul Kennedy mentioned that the command of the commons is to gain the naval mastery.³⁾ Barry Posen defined naval mastery as being extremely strong in naval forces that neighboring rivals would not consider challenging the country. He explained US superior status in the early 21st century as ruling the global common. This also implies that the US has naval power over the whole world(Posen 2003, 5-46). So it is very reasonable that both the US and China perhaps confront to gain and manage the rights of the global commons over the East Asian Seas.⁴⁾

3) Naval mastery is defined as a situation in which a country has so developed its maritime strength that it is superior to any rival power, and that its predominance is or could be exerted far outside its home waters, with the result that it is extremely difficult for other, lesser states to undertake maritime operations or trade without at least its tacit consent. It does not necessarily imply a superiority over all other navies combined, nor does it mean that this country could not temporarily lose local command of the sea; but it does assume the possession of an overall maritime power such that small-scale defeats overseas would soon be reversed by the dispatch of naval forces sufficient to eradicate the enemy's challenge. See Paul M. Kennedy(1983, 9).

4) Global commons are from cyberspace attacks abroad and network intrusions here at home, to increased piracy, to anti-satellite weapons tests and the growth in the number of space-faring nations, to the investments some nations are making in systems designed to threaten our primary means of projecting power: our bases, our sea and air assets, and the networks that support them. US Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (2001, 8-9).

The second issue is about the contest between global access and access denial. This is about the two countries directly exercising its naval forces in the region. Considering today's peaceful maritime security environment, global access also can be explained as a command of the sea. The representative examples of global access are the following two issues. One is the Taiwan issue which is one of the most important problems that distinguish US-Chinese relations. This issue is the most significant security problem that the US and China are mutually experiencing. The intention of China's use of force against Taiwan and the intention of the US military support for Taiwan are the confronting issues. For China, this is the very reason why it is denying the US' access of Taiwan. On the other hand, the US is trying to make the issue as a break through to get access in Taiwan and East Asian Seas. Next issue is the US' security commitment towards its allies and security partners in the region and China's attempt to deny such access. For instance, the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan and the conflicts over the Senkaku Islands have become the issues that directly and indirectly led to US-Chinese competition. It is reasonable for the US to support its allies and security partners under the name of security commitment and it is natural for China to view such access as the US' means to pressure China and prevent its rise in the region.

2. The US' Threat Assessment of China

From the US perspective, there are plenty of reasons to worry about Chinese naval expansion, especially modernization of its surface ships and attack submarines and the launch of its first aircraft carrier recently. Although characterized as strategically defensive, PLA Navy doctrine can be operationally and tactically offensive in Western terms

in light of the nature of offshore defense. The admission that China is going to develop an aircraft carrier capability makes the next step clear. Definitely China is definitely shaping a Navy for global power routes it is going to patrol(The New York Post, 2011/04/09). China can design naval vessels at a low price, and maintain its naval forces relatively cheaper than the US. China has spent a lot of money on building its influence with nations like Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Venuatu in order to establish an economic hegemonic status in East Asia. Great powers such as the US strengthen their Navy in order to assure global access, despite whatever countermeasures other countries may take(Friedman 2002, 487). Therefore, the US has to prepare for all kinds of possible scenarios facing China's naval expansion.

China has been assessed as an increasingly threat to US interests in East Asia, and America's most likely future peer competitor or rival, especially in terms of security issues since the end of the Cold War(Layne 2004, 54). China's buildup of sea and air military power funded by a strong economy appears to be aimed at the US, Michael Mullen, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff said(Reuters, 09/05/05). Mullen also changed his expression from curious to concerned over China's military buildup. He acknowledged that every country in the world has a right to develop their military as they see fit to provide for their own security. Mullen said that China's naval buildup propelled by fast economic growth required the US and allies or partners like South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand to work together to figure out a way to work with China to avoid miscalculations.⁵⁾ Furthermore, according to an interview with Yoichi Kato, national security correspondent of Asahi, the US Pacific Command Robert Willard said that China aspires to become a global

5) Reuters(2009).

military power by extending its influence beyond its regional waters(Reuters, 2009/05/05).

Additionally, it is possible to tell from an analysis of primary reports and the statements of high-ranking officials of how much the US considers China to be a threat since the end of the Cold War. President Obama emphasized the importance of putting an all-in effort in Asia in order to sustain global leadership for the US(Sheen & Lim 2012, 153-186). According to a variety of security reports, the China was in a cooperative relationship with the US until the early 2000s.⁶⁾ However entering the mid-2000s, the US began to be concerned about China's non-transparency military expansion and even articulated China as its "greatest potential military competitor" in QDR 2006(US DoD 2006). The recently published QDR 2014 issue stated that the US fears that China will continue to seek to counter US strengths(US DoD 2014, 6). All in all, the US clearly has described China from being a cooperative partner to a peer competitor.

3. China's Threat Assessment of the US

China sees the US as the primary threat to its strategic interests. The US is the world's most powerful naval power and is the dominant of the US as the guarantor of Taiwan's independence. PLA Navy would likely need SSNs and surface warship battle groups, perhaps including aircraft carriers, to achieve its objectives. China would also have to be able to rapidly locate and destroy very quiet submarines in the open ocean, something it cannot currently do. China says the US is increasing its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, which is becoming more volatile. It also says there has been a

6) These are presented in NSSs(National Security Strategy) issued by the President in 1995, 2002 and QDRs(Quadrennial Defense Review) by DoD in 1997, 2001.

rise in operations directed against China. The views were made in China's national defense white paper, issued by the government. The paper outlines the country's current views on security issues and gives an overview of its military forces(BBC News, 2011/03/31).

Based on the assumption that the rise of China inevitably accompanies the decline of the US, China has been checking and balancing against the US' strategy towards China. In this regard, many Chinese continue to hold negative attitudes towards the US in terms of international politics. China has seen that being the sole superpower in the world, the US is well in the position of practicing hegemonism, and because China is now on the rise, the US deems it necessary to contain China in order to preserve its own status in the world order(Chen 2003, 285-297). In particular, regarding the sovereignty rights of the islands within the South China Sea, China has kept its eyes on the US intervention on the territorial dispute matters in the region. For instance, many Chinese military officers and scholars have challenged US intention of intervention regarding issues of the Sea.

A high-rank Chinese military officer argued that freedom of navigation was never a problem in the region. The Chinese Foreign Ministry said China opposes any military acts in its EEZ without permission days before a joint military exercise between the US and ROK on the West Sea(Xinhua News Agency, 10/11/26). At the same time, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hong Lei said that we hold a consistent and clear-cut stance on the issue. We oppose any party to take any military acts in our exclusive economic zone without permission(Xinhua News Agency, 2010/11/26).

On one hand, China fears that the US is reinforcing its access, gradually closing in, towards mainland China. China considers the United States' Pivot to Asia or rebalancing to Asia as a threat. This

is because the US enhancing security cooperation, such as executing many naval training exercises with allied forces which are mainly targeted at China in the East Asian Seas ultimately means that the US is containing China. Such fears have led China to proclaim ADIZ(Air Defense Identification Zone) and strengthen their military operations in the outer boundaries of the East Asian Seas including acquiring more aircraft carriers and a large fleet of battleships(Herschelman & Hardy, 2013/10/30). These efforts are China's way of enforcing sea denial in the far perimeter of the East Asian Seas from US forces as part of A2/AD(Anti Access/Access Denial). All in all, China clearly has described the US as a dominant super power and China is challenging the US dominance in the East Asian Seas.

IV. US-Chinese Naval Strategy and the Use of Force

1. US' Global Access Strategy: Encircling China

The US has more focused on placing naval bases and deploying naval forces forward in the East Asian Seas. As of 2007, the US had placed 151 out of 279 vessels in the Pacific Ocean, 54.1 percent of combatant ships, and the number passed over the number of ships in Atlantic Ocean for the first time since the Cold War period(O'Rourke 2008, 60). In the same year, there were 128 vessels, 46.8 percent, for their mission in the Atlantic Ocean. Recently the US has cancelled and delayed some projects related to constructing aircraft carriers and destroyers. But the advancement of US vessels has constantly increased. In order to prepare countermeasures against such threats of

PLA Navy's attack submarines and SLBM, the US has tried to procure Zumwalt class destroyers and a total of 63 DDG-51 Arleigh Burke Aegis combatant ships(Kreisher 2008). For submarines, the US has been procuring additionally the 8000 ton Virginia class SSN. Until year 2013, the US will procure 18 submarines. As of 2010, the US has completed the procurement of five submarines(Saunders 2009, 908-914). In addition to this, the US will have six more amphibious ships until the year 2015 as planned. With the emphasis on Asia-Pacific security matters, the US Navy will be in charge of committing its roles as a global power. The information related to new ships' deployment has not been released but there is a high possibility that ships will be placed in the East Asian Seas and the US is recognizing its role in the East Asian Seas.

The US operates its East Asia security strategy through PACOM in Hawaii and the 7th Fleet in Japan. In case of war, the US will have the US army in Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and Thailand to work together. The US is also planning to cooperate more with ASEAN countries to build a naval base in Southeast Asia. The US is trying to build confidence as it works and stands as the forefront of combating global issues and bringing peace to the world. It is natural for the US to come into the region to contain China but at the surface, the reasons for its entrance will be for ASEAN security and piracy combat, environmental crisis, and settlement for territorial disputes.

Under this circumstance, the US has been using containment strategy by mostly using naval forces against China's naval expansion in the East Asian Seas. This is not a new option. In fact, containment strategy is one of the functions of Navies. Given China's potential to pose a political-military challenge to the US in East Asia, this option can lead to opportunities for the US to not only keep its interests in

the region, but also to deter China's naval power expansion. Containment strategy is based on the concept of the use of the sea. Thus, a military role in using the sea to form the trinity for the essence of Navies is the basis(Booth 1977, 15-25). Containment strategy by using naval force represents a middle-ground position between the Navy's diplomatic role and military role. Containment strategy supports the idea that warships can be an important influence on a country's foreign policy simply because they are there(Booth 1977, 85).

Naval forces, by their nature, are continuously engaged globally. As permanent overseas US presence declines and as the interconnectedness of the world increases, the demand for naval forces to remain active in the full spectrum of military activities will grow. Assuring geographic access is also a critical task for naval forces. Technology is strengthening the hand of those smaller nations and actors who wish to deny access to regions vital to the economic and security interests of the Nation. There is an ever present requirement to guarantee access to SLOC and, should conflict arise, to defeat the opponent's area denial systems. In that sense, naval forces of the US are designed to assure global access.

Forward presence with naval forces is a critical pillar for the US security strategy in East Asia. Kurt M. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, supported the idea with testimonies before the subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the testimony, he said the Asia-Pacific region is of vital and permanent importance to the US and it is clear that countries in the region want the United States to maintain a strong and active presence, therefore we [the US] need to ensure that the United States is a resident power and not just a visitor.⁷⁾ Campbell and Celeste Ward have stated that The US foreign

military presence remains a compelling symbol and bellwether of US attitudes and approaches to foreign and defense policy(Campbell & Ward 2003, 100). QDR 2010 also support the strategy of a robust forward presence and power projection operations which would add capabilities and capacity for working with a wide range of partner Navies(US DoD 2010, x; Saunder 2010, 10).

One key element in the creation of US naval strategy will be the balancing of a current or potential threat, China. The US also has tried to prevent China from its naval expansion by besieging the South and East China Seas. In doing so, the US has taken two measures: one is strengthening cooperation with states in the region; the other is stationing a more aggressive forward naval presence in the East Asian Seas. The recently released NMS 2010 well explains the intention of the US forces' operation in East Asia. The US-led military alliance and maritime security cooperation among small and weak states in the region is also a critical factor to contain China's maritime sphere of influence. US PACOM has promoted cooperative engagement among states in the region in three principal ways: forward presence, strong alliances and friendships, and a visible demonstrated capacity for crisis response.⁸⁾ In order to fulfill those principals the US Navy regularly-scheduled joint or combined exercise with allies and partners, especially with geographically smaller states in Asia.

2. Chinese Anti-Access Strategy: Prosecuting Sea Denial

7) Kurt M. Campbell. "Principles of U.S. Engagement in the Asia-Pacific." testimony before the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs Senate Foreign Relations Committee. <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2010/01/134168.htm>. (accessed on October 2, 2013).

8) <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/cobra-gold.htm>. (accessed on November 5, 2013).

China adopted the national defense strategy in terms of keeping the society safe. China's defense white paper, published in 2008, claimed that China disproves of the policy of extending military force but strengthening national security cooperation with other nations. Since 2000, China has shown their will to keep the national society peacefully based on their protective inclinations. The background of such action is their national project concluded from the 16th Communist Party Conference, which is to push for economic development of the next 20 years peacefully. In this period, it has played a significant role that China has put greater emphasis on keeping society safe than to make an offensive national defense society.

However, situation is completely different when it comes to maritime conflicts where the two countries show a high possibility of direct conflicts and tensions. Even though China has tried to emphasize the importance of cooperative activities with other nations, it can never give away its core interests for any other reasons. Where Chinese security is at stake, nationalism, maritime territorial extension, protection of SLOC, obtaining energy resources are directly related to its economic security.

China is more likely to maintain its security for core interests by preventing mostly the US from intervention in regional security issues. The DoD's annual report has observed China's defense strategy as anti-access and area-denial, meaning to maintain the capabilities that could be employed to deter or counter adversary forces from deploying to, or operating within, a defines space(US DoD 2011, 2). In a similar way, a report from the Rand corporation has defined anti-access measure as any action by an opponent that has the effect of slowing the deployment of friendly forces into a theater, preventing them from

operating from certain locations within that theater, or causing them to operate from distances farther from the locus of conflict than they would normally prefer(Cliff et al. 2007, 11-12).

From the US perspective, an anti-access strategy will inflict substantial losses on US forces, lengthen US operational timelines and highlight the US' inability to defend its allies(Tol et al. 2010, 20-21). However, From the China's perspective, an anti-access strategy means that China would not allow the US to maintain its forward deployed forces and operate a large scale of military activities in the region of East Asia. Without a doubt, China has shown the fact that the US has wanted to encircle China to contain its naval force's development and expansion. In addition, China's anti-access strategy is clearly showing its willingness to adopt an active defense strategy, and to guarantee for safeguarding the core interests of China.

In fact, China is pursuing a variety of air, sea, undersea, space, counterspace, information warfare systems and operational concepts to achieve this capability, moving toward an array of overlapping, multilayered offensive capabilities extending from China's coast into the Western Pacific(US DoD 2011, 28). Swaine(2011, 161) indicates from these efforts that China has certainly given clear signs that it intends to employ its growing offshore military capabilities to support or defend its position vis--vis disputed maritime territories in the East Asian Seas and more generally to expand its military presence in the region. Furthermore, as Erickson has stated that China needs to acquire far sea defense capabilities emphasizing multidimensional precision attacks beyond the first island chain and operations outside China's EEZ, to defend its interests(Erickson 2008, 35-71). A Chinese analyst has expressed the numbers of Aegis-equipped ships operating in the Asia-Pacific region by titling his book as Aegis Ships Encircle China in 2007. This is a particular example of China's threat

assessment about US naval force deployment in the region. China wants to prevent the US naval force from being deployed close to China's waters. In sum, China is likely to defend its core interests in the far sea from its territorial border. This can be explained by China's open water defense rather than offshore defense. By doing so, PLA naval forces are mainly required for such anti-access strategy.

China has expanded its sea-denial weapons, projecting increasingly credible, layered offensive combat naval power across its territorial water and into the East Asian Seas(Office of the Secretary of Defense 2009, vii). Since the new century began, China is more likely to prepare for protecting not just the mainland security and the Strait of Taiwan but also to strengthen its power for achieving capability of doing sea-denial strategy(Friedberg 2011, 218; Stokes 1999). China's efforts for the strategy include achieving and encompassing anti-air missiles, anti-ship warfare, and anti-submarine warfare weapons. China's progress in acquiring over the horizon radars, satellites, and unmanned aerial vehicles are also considered important for the buildup of an early warning system(US DoD 2011, 3).

Zhang Wenmu(2006, 23-24) has observed that a traditional Western notion of sea power is the ability to control the sea, while China's concept of sea power is a marriage of the notion of equal sea rights and sea power. In accordance with this meaning, the PLA Navy's wanted to have the right to control its offshore rights by accomplishing an active defense strategy. To some extent, however, active defense can be an offensive-oriented strategy according to the security environment at times(Xu 1988, 417-444). With regard to this matter, China often wants the PLA Navy to get the capability for both offensive and defensive uses with the three-dimensional methods. Those include anti-air; anti-surface; and anti-undersea defense and offense use of force.

V. Conclusion

Looking into the power competition between the US and China in the contemporary world is very significant to understand the world's great powers' military operations and its effect on the regional and global security environment. Threat assessment and the military strategy of the US and China has played a critical role in deciding the level of security. As shown on <Table 1>, when the threat assessment is high, security dilemma or power competition appeared as the result of the strategic military postures. Currently, the US and China are assessing each other as practical threats in the East Asian Seas. Meanwhile, the US and China are practicing different force employment strategies. The US strategy is focused on containment and China on anti-access. These tendencies are expected to continue without many changes. Consequently, fierce US-Chinese conflicts in the East Asian Seas are unlikely to be settled in the near future.

Specifically, this study answers the causes of the power competition between the US and China in the East Asian Seas as the ultimate objective of the two great powers to achieve naval mastery in the region. On the one hand, the US will continue to secure its global access and its influence in the region. On the other hand, China will try to deny the access of the US to decrease the regional influence and conversely, increase China's influence. This is a typical one bed, different dreams phenomenon. Both the US and China are trying to increase their influences in the East Asian Seas. In other words, both states intend to deny each other's access in the region. Whether China stands against the US in terms of naval mastery in the East Asian Seas today is open for debate. At times, it looks like that will not

happen in the near future, but it is a matter that is happening in the present. The evident facts are showing that China has been challenging the US maritime hegemonic status in the East Asian Seas while the US has been preserving its strategic interests by trying to contain China in the region.

From realist pessimists' perspectives, China's economic rise enhances the potential for US-Chinese power competition because, should China become especially wealthy, it could readily become a military superpower. As demands for securing SLOC and reaching advantageous points in maritime territorial disputes rise due to China's economic development, China has pursued naval expansion while the US has prepared naval deterrence against China. In terms of maritime influence, China's challenge to overtake the US will appear in some foreseeable future. This can lead two great powers to compete for achieving the only global maritime power in the international politics fiercely. The most plausible part of the security competition will be naval competition to get naval mastery in the East Asian Seas. The US and China are prepared to compete with each other since they have considered each other as a practical threat. It is notable that the level of US-Chinese power competition over the East Asian Seas has been changing. Security dilemma is changing into power competition and the competition is expected to intensify. Thus, the East Asian Seas will be a contested zone for a while between the US and China with naval forces playing significant roles.

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ABSTRACT

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Same Bed, Different Dreams: US-Chinese Power Competition Over the East Asian Seas

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This paper answers the causes of the security competition between the US and China in the East Asian Seas as the ultimate objective of the two great powers to achieve naval mastery in the region. This paper argues that economically and militarily, the incumbent global power, the US, and the challenging power regarding to economic and military power, China, are more likely to compete for their own national interests and security and so forth. It is notable that the level of US-Chinese security competition over the East Asian Seas has been changing. Security dilemma is changing into power competition and the competition is expected to intensify more and more. Thus, the East Asian Seas will be a contested zone for a while between the US and China with naval forces playing significant roles. All in all, the US has been attempting to contain China while China has been attempting to expand its maritime activities to avoid such containment. This is a typical one bed, different dreams phenomenon.

- Key words: Navy(US, PLA), East Asian Seas, Naval Strategy, Security Dilemma, Power Competition