Cooperative Competition
Japan-U.S. security cooperation with China
in the Indo-Pacific

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The views, opinions, and proposals provided in this presentation are solely the briefer’s own and thus do not represent official positions of either the Stimson Center, the Government of Japan, or the Japan Ministry of Defense.
Key definitions & assumptions

• Each nation pursues its national interest in strategic competition.
  ▪ Common national interest for Japan, United State, China: Nation’s survival
  ▪ Common national interest for Japan and United States: Realization of “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”
  ▪ Chinese national interest: Realization of “China Dream”

• For China, foreign aid and military diplomacy are major tools to pursue its national interest

• Neither Japan or the United State can defeat China in the foreseeable future in the competition.
Why should Japan and the United States cooperate with China?

• Risks
  ▪ Emerging risk: “Thucydides Trap”
  ▪ Existing risks: Unintended escalation
  ▪ Potential risks: China’s power projection capability

  Excessive patriotism

• Implications
  ▪ Economy: serious damage to regional economy
  ▪ Security: creation of new power vacuum
China’s growing influence: Foreign aid

• Estimated aims
  ▪ Economic motive: resources, new markets
  ▪ Political motive: strategic diplomacy
  ▪ Ideological motive: Chinese values, soft power

• Features
  ▪ Vagueness
  ▪ Flexible, quick, tied-aid
  ▪ Different regional focus
    Middle East, Central Asia: energy and resource oriented
    East and South Asia: infrastructure oriented

(Source: MERICS research)

China funded hospital in Angola (2015)
(Source: Xinhua)
China’s growing influence: Military diplomacy

• Estimated aims
  ▪ Strategic:
    Create a favorable security environment for China
  ▪ Operational:
    Collecting intelligence, learning new skills and TTPs (Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures)

• Features
  ▪ Strongly connected with policy
  ▪ Rapidly increasing in recent years
  ▪ Combat and combat support capability oriented
  ▪ Land and maritime-focused multinational exercises
  ▪ Asia-focused
China’s growing influence: Implication

• China tries to ensure its survival and to reshape the regional order.

• Foreign aid
  ▪ Japan and the United States can exploit China’s foreign aid.
  ▪ China’s infrastructure-oriented aid creates chances for cooperation in Southeast Asia.

• Military diplomacy
  ▪ Political leadership is critical.
  ▪ The PLA is likely to attend multinational exercises hosted by JSDF and the U.S. Forces in the Indo-Pacific.
  ▪ Ground or maritime-oriented multinational exercises will increase the probability of the PLA’s attendance.

(Source: US Army) Ex Khaan Quest 2015 (June 2015)
How can Japan and the United States compete with China? Concept

• Ends
  ▪ Prevent China’s military capability from threatening the survival of Japan and the United States
  ▪ Mitigate risk of military conflict with China

• Ways
  ▪ Enhance Japan-U.S. allied military capability
  ▪ Promote mutual security reliance between Japan-U.S. and China
  ▪ Enhance Japan-U.S. soft power in the Indo-Pacific

• Means
  ▪ Japan-U.S. security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific with China
Security cooperation with China: HA/DR

• Direct approach
  ▪ Multinational HA/DR military exercises
  ▪ Counter pandemics
  ▪ Academic interaction

• Indirect approach
  ▪ Supporting China’s aid recipients
Security cooperation with China: SAR and other areas

• Direct approach
  ▪ Multinational SAR exercises
  ▪ Multinational counter piracy exercises
  ▪ Multinational UN Peace Keeping exercises
  ▪ Academic interaction

• Indirect approach
  ▪ Supporting China’s aid recipients
  ▪ Supporting China’s NEO

(Source: USMC)

U.S.-China counter piracy Ex (Aug 2013)
(Source: Stars & Stripes)

Ex Khann Quest 2015 (June 2015)
(Source: USMC)

Ex Cobra Gold 2015 (Feb 2015)
(Source: AFP-JIJ)
Security cooperation with China: Challenges

• Addressing Chinese counteraction

• Coordinating national caveats

• Inspiring regional confidence in alliances and partnerships

• Political leadership is critical
• Be persistent
• Whole government approach
• Close coordination with allies and partners
Discussion