



Indo-Pacific Security

A U.S. Perspective

*A. Wess Mitchell, Principal
The Marathon Initiative*

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A U.S. perspective on Indo-Pacific security

1. The centrality of simultaneity
2. The inevitability of tradeoffs
3. The imperative of reciprocity
4. The necessity of strategic diplomacy

I. The centrality of the simultaneity problem

Simultaneity = organizing challenge of U.S. strategy

- US not equipped to fight major wars in multiple theaters
- People's Republic of China = the pacing threat

Primary question facing U.S. policy for foreseeable future:

- How to achieve a concentration of effort against PRC
- While other challenges compete for attention (RU, IR, DPRK)

II. The Inevitability of Tradeoffs

U.S. munitions crunch:

- Depleted by Ukraine, Houthis, Iran
- Monthly 155mm production = Ukraine's monthly use
- 5 -18 years to replenish Javelin, Stinger, etc.

Upshot = US will have to:

- Accept greater risk in secondary/tertiary theaters
- Focus on expanding & resuscitating defense-industrial base
- Embrace deregulation, mobilize energy resources
- Rebalance trade relations to spur reindustrialization

III. The Imperative of Allied Reciprocity

Strategic solvency requires equitable division of labor

- 1950 bargain: Security + market for support + exports
- 2025 bargain: Reciprocity in security and trade
 - Increased burden-sharing
 - Rebalanced trade to support reindustrialization
- European allies showing the way
- NATO 5 percent goal = new global benchmark

Europe: A Cautionary Tale

- For years, US pleaded for increase defense spending
- If Europe had done so earlier:
 - Ukraine war counterfactual
 - Better options for de-escalating conflict
- Europe predicament in UA diplomacy = result of neglect
- Lesson: increasing spending = best insurance against tradeoffs
- After a war breaks out, it's too late

IV. The Necessity of Strategic Diplomacy

Simultaneity necessitates diplomacy with adversaries...

- Goal $\neq$ harmony or spreading democracy
- Goal = constrain opponents, buy time for US & allies

And with allies...

- Focus #1 = Boosting DIB for surge capacity
- Need combined DIB framework, tackle obstacles (ITAR)
- Goal = Enable defense of own neighborhoods
- While looking for mutual gains (tech, co-production, etc.)

Conclusion

Need greater sense of urgency:

- Adversaries using time wisely
- Russia = full war economy
- China = biggest military buildup in human history

...But grounds for sober optimism:

- Challenge is clear, everyone awake
- US repositioning for long-term competition
- Europe finally fully mobilizing
- Military balance will improve in secondary, tertiary theaters
- Allied Asia's turn to step up and do its part