

RELEASE IN
PART B6

From: Campbell, Kurt M <CampbellKM@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 1, 2010 7:42 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: WP (Zakaria): President Obama, Asia is calling

This is a great piece and serious recognition for your work

From: Campbell, Kurt M
To: 'Evan_S_Medelros' <Evan_S_Medeiros>; Sullivan, Jacob J; Patel, Nirav S; Shear, David B; Loi, James L
Cc: Kritenbrink, Daniel J
Sent: Mon Nov 01 19:05:30 2010
Subject: Re: WP (Zakaria): President Obama, Asia is calling

Thanks for this Evan. Kurt

From: Medeiros, Evan S.
To: Campbell, Kurt M; Sullivan, Jacob J; Patel, Nirav S; Shear, David B; Loi, James L
Cc: Kritenbrink, Daniel J
Sent: Mon Nov 01 15:15:21 2010
Subject: WP (Zakaria): President Obama, Asia is calling

Note the positive comments about HRC: "Last week, China abruptly canceled its scheduled talks with Japan at the East Asian Summit, which took place in Hanoi. Meanwhile, the star of the summit was Hillary Clinton, representing the United States."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/01/AR2010110103432_pf.html

President Obama, Asia is calling

By Fareed Zakaria
Monday, November 1, 2010;

After the midterm elections, Barack Obama will get a chance to follow a long line of American presidents who have had setbacks at home. He will go abroad. His long-delayed Asian trip this week - India, Indonesia, South Korea and Japan - is by chance perfectly timed. Asian powers are showing a striking - and growing - interest in American power.

Just a few years ago, if you traveled to Asia, the talk was all about the irrelevance of the United States and the dawn of Chinese power. In 2006, analyst Joshua Kurlantzick declared that Chinese "soft power" in Southeast Asia had become so potent that, "for the first time in post-World War II history, the United States may be facing a situation in which another country's appeal outstrips its own in an important region." Two years later, Kishore Mahbubani, the sophisticated Singaporean diplomat-turned scholar, wrote about China's "smart power," its series of diplomatic successes - such as excluding the United States from the newly formed East Asian Summit - attributing it to "Beijing's geopolitical competence outweighing Washington's tendency toward incompetence. . . . The Western media fails to appreciate the nature and depth of Chinese geopolitical acumen."

There is truth to all these observations. China has massively expanded its aid to Southeast Asia, which now dwarfs that from Washington. China uses trade as a tool to bestow presents on cooperative neighbors. Asian countries wanting to grow their economies have to build ties with the biggest market on the continent.

But over the last year China's behavior has caused anxiety in many Asian capitals. The signal event was a scuffle on Sept. 8 in the waters around the Senkaku islands, claimed by both Japan and China. Japanese patrol boats arrested the captain of a Chinese trawler that was fishing in the waters. Beijing reacted angrily, in official denunciations, and also in either organizing or permitting a series of anti-Japanese demonstrations in various Chinese cities. Chinese companies that provide crucial "rare earth" minerals to Japan

mysteriously halted all shipments. Even after the Japanese government released the captain, the Chinese government upped the ante, demanding a formal apology.

Listen to other Asians. A senior Indian scholar, D.S. Rajan, has written a paper titled "China-Japan Row: A Wake Up Call for India?" He urged India to look carefully at what he describes as aggressive Chinese behavior. In South Korea, where I was visiting two weeks ago, senior politicians said to me that their country's most urgent strategy now was to keep America engaged in the region.

The sharpest rethinking appears to be taking place in Tokyo. Japan had long believed that it could play a quiet and nonconfrontational role, positioned between China and the United States. That notion is in tatters. "Japan and China now stand at ground zero, and the landscape is a bleak, vast nothingness," wrote Japan's most important foreign affairs commentator, Yoichi Funabashi, in a letter sent to dozens of high-ranking friends in China. If China continued to undermine its own "peaceful rise" doctrine then "Japan would discard its naivete, lower its expectations, acquire needed insurance and, in some cases, cut its losses," he wrote. Japan's foreign minister has described Chinese behavior as "hysterical."

In a perceptive article, none other than Kishore Mahbubani wrote that "China's decision to browbeat the Japanese into submission over the fishing trawler suggests that China may be throwing Deng's (Xiaoping) geopolitical caution out the window." He warned that the consequence could be an anti-Chinese coalition: "If Japan needs allies to balance the rise of China, it could easily turn not only to the U.S., but also to Russia and India. In short, the geopolitical cards could turn out in Japan's favor if China overplays its hand."

The veteran leader of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, another friend of China's, recently gave an interview to the Asahi Shimbun in which he said bluntly, "There should be a balance in the Pacific. Without America, you can take Japan, you can put North and South Korea together . . . you can even get India together. You can't balance China. India is too far away and they can't project the forces into the Pacific. But the Americans can."

Last week, China abruptly canceled its scheduled talks with Japan at the East Asian Summit, which took place in Hanoi. Meanwhile, the star of the summit was Hillary Clinton, representing the United States.

It was easy to welcome the rise of China when it was an abstraction. Now that it is a reality, the geopolitics of Asia will get interesting.

comments@fareedzakaria.com