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**“US Strategy – Preserving Global Liberalism Even While Facing
Hegemonic Decline”**

The rise of China in recent years has sparked major changes in that country's relations with its Asian neighbors, and the US, which has contributed to the security of this region, cannot remain aloof from the changing relations between rising China and neighboring states. With the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan having been toned down a notch, the Obama administration's interest has turned towards Asia. In this report I will discuss how the global order constructed by the US following World War II is continuing to undergo change. Above all, I will discuss the near-term outlook for this global order with a focus on US strategy in Asia and the transformation of international relations in the region.

We often hear talk today of “the end of the existing order,” but we need to examine exactly what this order has been heretofore. The US formulated a liberal global order following World War II, an order that was systematized on a foundation of partnerships with other countries in accordance with open rules. The US put more effort into systematizing the global order than had any other country in history. International institutions such as the United Nations, the IMF, and the World Bank were the products of this effort. The US exerted its own power in formulating regimes and rules, and other countries accepted and supported these regimes and rules as generally fair and appropriate. This liberal global order generated wealth, ensured safety and promoted new forms of cooperation.

What will happen to the liberal global order constructed in the postwar period when US power suffers a relative decline? Will the world become less liberal when it becomes less American? What kind of open order can be established to replace this liberal order? In response to these questions, I would like to assert that not only is the liberal order alive and well but that the base of support for an order based on open rules will expand. I believe the emerging countries now on the rise will not challenge the principle of building a liberal order.

While the existing order and its regimes have taken firm root in the developed countries, it perhaps cannot be said that they are universally accepted. As the US sees its relative power wane and non-European countries gain strength, these emerging countries will likely push their own interests to the forefront. China at times acts as if it does not accept the existing system, but even China must not forget that its growth owes much to the blessings afforded it by the existing system. China should take particular note of the fact that it is seeking to increase its say within a global order systematized by the US.

It is easy to participate in the liberal global order but difficult to overturn it. Even the rapidly rising China would find it difficult to put together an order to replace the liberal order, as it would face opposition from a variety of countries in any bid to upset the existing liberal order. The US and numerous other large and small countries participate in this order, and China itself is just another participant. Given that the emerging countries on the rise have not yet formed a political bloc, it must be said that overturning the existing order would be quite difficult.

The US continues to transform its Asia strategy in light of China's rise. By developing alliance relationships with Asian countries, the US has traditionally established hub-and-spoke security ties with itself as the hub and adopted an exclusionary policy toward China. However, China's cooperation is essential in resolving the global-scale issues that have appeared in recent years, e.g., global economic stability, environmental issues, economic disparities, and communicable disease control. The US has broadened its dialogue with China to include these new issues in addition to the long-standing topics of Taiwan, North Korea and Tibet, and is seeking to deepen bilateral relations.

Prompted by the rise of China and India, Asia as a region is also moving away from the conventional US-centric hub-and-spoke relations and toward approaches in which countries operate in mutual and closer cooperation. A dual hierarchy is taking shape in Asia. Asian countries are developing close ties in an economic framework with China at the top and a security framework with the US at the top. It should be noted at the same time, though, that the countries of Asia are not choosing either the US or China. Whether or not this dual hierarchical structure is stable will likely become the focus of future analyses.

As Asia continues to form this dual hierarchy, the US would be well advised to adopt a strategy of remaining engaged with China and not over-reacting. A harsh containment policy directed against China will not only provoke China unnecessarily and inevitably lead

to unexpected outcomes, but will also not enjoy the support of other Asian countries. Nevertheless, the US must remain adequately committed to Asia's security. The US needs a China strategy featuring a balance of deterrence and engagement.

The US and China must in future agree that cooperation would be to their mutual benefit and must develop their relationship to this end. With both economic and security interdependence now growing on a global scale, a mechanism is needed that enables countries to work together for their mutual benefit and safety.