

**ГЕОСТРАТЕГИЈСКИ
И ГЕОПОЛИТИЧКИ ИНТЕРЕСИ
САД у АЗИЈСКО-ПАЦИФИЧКОМ
РЕГИОНУ**

**GEOSTRATEGIC
AND GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS
OF THE USA IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC
REGION**



Хатиџа А. Бериша, доцент

Војна академија
Павла Јуришића Штурма 33,
11000 Београд
berisa.hatidza@gmail.com

Hatidža A. Beriša, Assistant Professor

Military Academy
Pavla Jurišića Šturma 33,
11000 Beograd
berisa.hatidza@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Key words:

interest, the Pacific,
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China, a global
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performance

This paper will examine the geostrategic and geopolitical interests of the United States of America in the Asia-Pacific region, taking into account the specifics of the US as still the only global power and aspiration to retain the current unipolar order at the global level. Also it will be discussed conversion of the soft and hard power which United States projected into the concept of smart power. The Asia-Pacific region (APR) as a priority of US foreign policy, through consideration of the characteristics and importance of the region, transferred the center of gravity of US foreign policy from the Middle East.

The aim of the study is to examine the application of the concept of smart power in geostrategic and geopolitical interests of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. Further considerations and the work as a whole, does not prejudice the reasonableness of the United States on a global scale, but points the comprehensiveness of approach to the application of available power resources in achieving national interests in certain parts of the world, and in the specific case of the Asia-Pacific region.

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САЖЕТАК

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интерес, Пацифик,
САД, Кина, глобална
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У овом тексту предмет разматрања су геостратегијски и геополитички интереси Сједињених Америчких Држава у Азијско-пацифичком региону узимањем, при томе, у обзир специфичности САД као и даље једине глобалне силе и тежњу да се задржи садашњи униполарни ред на општем нивоу.

Биће, такође, размотрено преобличавање тзв. меке и тврде силе коју САД подразумевају под појмом паметне силе. Азијско-пацифички регион, као приоритет спољне политике САД, кроз разматрање карактеристика и важности региона, померио је средиште њене пажње са Блиског истока на себе.

Циљ овога рада је да испита примену паметне силе у геостратегијским и геополитичким интересима САД у Азијско-пацифичком региону. Разматрања која следе, као и рад у целисти, не доводе у питање рационалност САД на глобалном нивоу већ указују на свеобухватност приступа примени расположивих извора моћи у остваривању националних интереса у одређеним деловима света односно у Азијско-пацифичком региону.

INTRODUCTION

The United States, still the only global power after the Cold War period, which owns the entire range of power resources, gain this position thanks to decades of strategic development of military, economic and cultural resources, supported by constant development of trade and economy, the constant influx of academically educated people from around the world who have made an outstanding contribution to the technological development of the United States, as well as the favorable geographical position. The rule of law and the inviolability of private property, as well as planning and aggressive propaganda of the “American” way of life with the design benefits of achieving the “American dream”, available to any member of any nation, race or religion, with economic and military power on the rise as the elements that manifest a particular strength nation, were advantages that United States gain, after the victory in World War II, and also one of the most desirable countries to live in and develop the professional level. In this way, the United States have created the image of justice, “the American way” to a number of countries, which was on the foreign policy often manifested in significant diplomatic activities and the use of

military power, performing a military action or formal military presence and intimidation in order to protect national interests.

In pursuit of the realization of the proclaimed national interests and strengthening the force of the attractiveness of American values, the official US administration have used for decades the levers of power that has its basis in economic, military and cultural resources. The influence of power in international relations and the tendency of leaders of the great powers to reach the maximum power in all domains, to change the behavior of other entities in order to achieve their own interests, to link the states and empires that have throughout history of human civilization achieved the most significant impact on the geopolitical environment, both at regional and at the global level.

Cold War era was characterized by the projection of soft and hard components of US power in order to realize the national interest in all meridians, depending on the current balance of power the United States and the Soviet Union in a particular region and globally, as well as the strategic plans of the current administration of both sides.

Post-Cold War foreign policy of US performance has been characterized by unilateral military action in all regions where the vital interests of the United States were threatened. The soft component of power, as an instrument of foreign policy in achieving geopolitical and geostrategic interests, was used for aggressive performance in the glorification of American values in the form of popular culture and universal values of the American model. However, in the second decade of 21st century, which is characterized by the rise of new powers and understanding that only hard power in the realization of the vital interests of the nation is ineffective, forced the United States, as the only force of global reach, to accede to the creation of a new concept of integrated power. The rise of emerging powers in the Asia-Pacific region, led by the People's Republic of China, resulted in the need for creation of new strategies projection of US power in this economically and militarily the most dynamic area of the world - a strategy that will require leadership skills of efficient combination resource of soft and hard power.

As in previous times, each geographical entity - region, thanks to its characteristics, required a special strategy for the projection of power by the United States in order to achieve the national interest. The specificity of the Asia-Pacific region, which is reflected in the level of development of resources hard power of PR China and the DPR Korea, energy dependence and intricacy of military-economic interests of the US and China, Japan and R. Korea, relations of the countries in the region and their historical heritage, and the current redistribution of the power at the global level among the emerging powers, suggests a new qualitative approach in dealing with potential security threats. With the expectation that the economic, cultural and military power of countries of the Asia-Pacific region in the near future will reach a very high level of development, it is inevitable that their sum is reflected in the political power and international credibility, which the countries of the region assumed the position and gaining recognized actors in global framework.

Bearing in mind that in terms of scattered power on several international entities and non-state actors, not any unilateral military engagement at the global level can successfully solve perceived problem, the US implementation of the concept of "smart power" in the future guidelines of foreign policy engagement, proclaimed a new approach in solving international issues of interest to the United States, with special emphasis on the application of this concept in the realization of the interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

Smart power, as well as the ability to combine the resources of soft and hard power in a successful strategy, is closely related to the context in which it will be projected. With this hand, the appreciation of the historical heritage, political system, religious, ethnic and cultural characteristics, as well as past and current geopolitical and geostrategic aspirations of countries in the Asia-Pacific region, will represent only the basis for the initial hypotheses about the possible reactions of regional actors in the projection of a new integrated power of the USA. The exceptional dynamics of development of the countries in this region in the fields of defense, economy and energy, as well as the complex interrelationships bring additional problems and limitations to American diplomacy and suggest constant review of every diplomatic and military step in the region.

Also, the premise for the application of the concept of smart power by current and future US administration will be the status of resource availability of soft and hard power of the American nation, which will be with appropriate strategies converted into smart power, while the great importance will also be a clear definition of real geostrategic goals and US interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

THE CONVERSION OF SOFT AND HARD POWER TO THE CONCEPT OF "SMART POWER"

Throughout the history of human civilization, states and empires have gained and lost power through conflicts with the new emerging powers. Very rarely the power was peacefully

passed from one to the other actor such was the transition of power from Pax Britannica to Pax Americana. In the new millennium, the United States continues to figure as the only remaining force, but at the same time we are witnessing the dispersion of power among multiple global actors and the transfer of power from state to non-state actors - corporations, non-governmental organizations and cartels. In this complex environment intertwined interdependence, where communications with one entity implies the involvement and causal-consequential relationship of a number of other state and non-state actors, the United States, due to the strengthening the powers of other international actors, cannot follow the principles of application of hard power exclusively in furtherance of the national interest. New discourses imply equal participation of a number of relevant international entities, state and non-state. We should take into account Henry Kissinger statements that in the post-Cold War era “power become too diffuse, while the problems that could be resolved only with war forces are greatly reduced” [1].

For a better understanding of the concept of smart power and prospects of its implementation in the framework of the US geostrategy in the the Asia-Pacific region, it is necessary to observe the terms such are hard, soft and smart power.

Considering the power, its influence and leaders aspirations for reaching its maximum in all areas, there is a need to define the concept that essentially cannot be explained by only one generally accepted definition. The power cannot be defined as an impact, although the two terms are often put in an equivalent position, but for the purposes of further discussion in this paper, attention is directed to the interpretation of Joseph Nye, who sees the power as “the ability to change the behavior of others in order to achieve the desired outcome” [2]. Also, Nye observes power also as a resource, but primarily as a result of changes in behavior. While on the one hand, John Mearsheimer states that the power is “currency policies of the great powers and countries competing for”,

adding that “what is money in the economy, that is power in international relations”, [3] Joseph Nye in his work “The future of the power” examines power through resources and the outcome of behavioral change, thus the power is transferred from a zone specific and measurable amounts of money, which in all conditions and in unchanged form can produce certain results, subjecting its effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes context between the international actors and an appropriate strategy for its use [2]. It is not necessary to consider the power as the potential contained in the resource, but as the ability to carry out adequate strategies for resource conversion power in the desired behavior of the target group, that might be the state, federation, organization or other non-state actors, taking into account the current circumstances on the international scene.

Since there is an awareness of power as the ability to force others to act in accordance with the requirements of the entity that exercises power, there are two different approaches to the use of power to achieve the ultimate goal. The first approach involves a softer approach and through history is remembered as a non-violent approach to the other side. Conceptually defined as “soft power”, according to the “Oxford” dictionary is defined as “approach through persuasion in international relations, which typically involves the use of economic and cultural impact”, [4] while Joseph Nye defined it as “the ability to affected on other by resources shaping the agenda, persuading and encouraging positive attractiveness in order to achieve the desired outcome” [2]. Also, in the question: “What is soft power?”, Nye states that soft power is “the ability to obtain what you want by making gestures to gain, rather than to coercion or bribery. Soft power rests on the ability to shape the desires of others” [5].

This approach of the power suggests another element, which Nye defined as “hard power”. Thus, the hard power, as an element of the total power, according to the “Oxford” dictionary, is defined as “approach through coercion in international political relations, especially

one that involves the use of military force”, [4] while Joseph Nye defines it as “the ability to use the stick and carrots in the economic and military power force others to work according to your wishes” [6]. In addition, Colin Gray defines hard power as “the ability to carry out deliberate punishment or to reward someone in the way of interest, and for this reason it is likely identify with the military and economic policy instruments” [7].

Analyzing the above definitions of the hard power it can be noted that it is primarily based on military and economic element. However, military power, as a basic element of hard power, is no longer a definite measure of national power. In modern times military power cannot be reduced to a quantitative comparison of forces and resources among the opponents. In accordance with this “way of deployment is essential. The strategy of combining skills of resources in order to achieve the objectives is a key of the smart military power” [2]. Also, it is important to point out that any element of hard power, military or economic, can also be a element of soft power. The key determining factor is the context in which the specific element of power projects and strategies that are use on that occasion, as well as feedback from side to which the power projects. During the Cold War, the United States have largely designed hard power in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, which, with brutal colonial past in the region, has left a significant impact and significantly affect on the perception of the region by the presence of the US and their pursuit of the realization of national interests in the military and economically most dynamic region of the world.

In the context of an entirely new international and historical context, it is crucial that the US approaches exercising their basic geopolitical and geostrategic interests in the light of respect for the complexity and interdependence of the security environment of Asia-Pacific region, economically and militarily the most dynamic regions of the world. Citing the basic geopolitical objectives of the United States, Robert Kaplan reference in his article

“The Tragedy of US foreign policy,” that “the United States as the dominant power in the Western Hemisphere, still need to prevent any other State to become as dominant in the eastern hemisphere. They must also seek to protect and factual and informal allies, particularly their access to energy. Moreover, as the liberal naval forces, the United States must protect harder the marine lines of communication that enable world trade” [8].

Whether it is the announcement of the new approach to foreign policy engagement exclusive treatment on the basis of lessons learned from the last great campaign in the Middle East and on the African continent, or as the consequences of the economic crisis which had significant implications on the budget in the area of USA defense, in the approach of achieving geostrategic interests in Asia-Pacific region, the US will hardly implementation of the concept of smart power, taking into account the complexity of the region comprising, as the country’s allies and partners, as well as emerging powers and opponents of the US status as a global leader. Thereby, there is a challenge USA geostrategic interests needs to face in achieving further accentuated by territorial disputes within the APR, the sensitivity of national economies in the security of maritime routes within the region, as well as the aspirations of an emerging force, primarily the People’s Republic of China, to further design their own power in region, as a result of increasing economic and military capacity.

Also, the economic interdependence USA and APR countries is a component that is important limiting factor in the taking any unilateral actions of either party. The key to the success of the USA in the Asia-Pacific region lies in the system of alliances power, while the emergence of regional leader in Asia could threaten the advantageous position which the USA has built since the end of World War II.

The contemporary global security environment, which is among other things, the result of active engagement of the United States foreign policy, corresponds to several but not all countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The rise of

new forces in the region, such as the People's Republic of China and its activities in the region and globally, are not in the interest of neither the United States nor the individual regional actors, so it can be assumed that the USA would continue to play the role of power balancer in this economically and militarily the most dynamic region of the world. From the point of geostrategic interests, control of the strait, the world's maritime trade and military routes and preventing regional hegemon in the Asia-Pacific region, will represent the direction that will be directed projections of soft and hard power of the United States. It remains to, with adequate resources strategies, to convert soft and hard power into smart power.

ASIA-PACIFIC REGION AS A PRIORITY IN USA FOREIGN POLICY

Intertwining and interdependence of interests that state and non-state actors exert on the international scene indicate the breadth, diversity and complexity of relations prevailing in contemporary international relations. The current global security environment, the dependence of the economy of the world the power of energy and the threat of natural disasters caused the extreme complexity of relations between all the actors on the geopolitical scene. Bearing this in mind as well as study of nature and the power factor and other non-state actors and determining factors and activities that affect the decision-makers to a specific component of power directed towards achieving the national interest, is a complex problem, subject to constant change.

The Asia-Pacific region covers an area of East and Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania,¹ within which exist two out of three largest world economies (People's Republic of China and Japan), the most populous nations (PRC) and the country with the largest Muslim population (Indonesia). This region is a vital driver

¹ Certain definitions of the Asia-Pacific region include the country's Pacific coast of the Russian Federation. In various articles, in the Asia-Pacific region ranks also India, which is acceptable only due to the fact that addressing relationships in the Asia-Pacific region with the exception of India was questionable due to the high impact of PRC and India to the entire region. However, a purely geographic terms, India comes out of the Indian, not the Pacific.

of the global economy and includes the world's busiest international maritime routes and nine out of ten world's largest ports by quantity of goods transported (seven in China, one in South Korea and one in Singapore) [9]. The Asia-Pacific region is rapidly militarized and nuclear potential of a certain countries, additionally actualized significance of this region. Under these circumstances, the strategic complexity that this region is facing is quite unique [10]. Taking into account the spatial definition of the Asia-Pacific region, and a key area occupied by China, Japan, DPR Korea and R. Korea, US geostrategic interests in the region and prospects of applying the concept of smart power, it is relevant to go through the context of US relations with these countries in the region.

CHARACTERISTICS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

As mentioned above, the Asia-Pacific region is a vital driver of the global economy. China, Japan, R. Korea and DPR Korea occupy the most important cities in the region in terms of power resources they have, while their mutual relations and the consequences arising from them, reflect the character of the region, stressing the importance of each of these countries, both regionally and globally.

The most important country of this region is undoubtedly the People's Republic of China, which was, in today's form, established on 1st October 1949. In a country with a long history and civilization, different physical-geographical characteristics and a mosaic of religions,² from the Qin Dynasty until the founding of the Republic of China in 1911, dynasties alternated one after another. Republicans remain in power until 1949, when the Communist Party seized power and proclaims the People's Republic of China. Republicans retreat on the Chinese island of Taiwan, where they formed government and proclaimed the Republic of

² About 60% of Chinese identify themselves as atheists, one third followed traditional beliefs or a mixture of Confucianism and Taoism, 8% or 100 million Chinese are active Buddhists. Buddhism represents the largest organized religion in China. Officially there are 20 million Muslims, 15 million Protestants, and 5 million Catholics.

China. Taiwan still strives to maintain independence, which causes political disagreements between the People's Republic of China and the USA that tacitly support such a status of Taiwan, although it was recognized as a part of a unified China by re-establishing diplomatic relations and the status of permanent members of the UN Security Council.

PR China with about 1,355 billion inhabitants is the most populous country of today, covers the area of 9.6 million km², has a land frontier of 22,117 km and borders with 14 countries. At the same time, China has a long coastline length of over 14,500 km, the country enters the Yellow Sea, the East and South China Sea. In the west, extends to the high mountain ranges of the Himalayas, from which in the north located Tibetan plateau and the Gobi Desert. These geographical units are real physical and geographical barriers, which both facilitate cooperation with other countries, and prevent eventual conquest of the Chinese territory. East of these mountain ranges, plateaus and desert stretches all the way to the Yellow Sea, the East and South China Sea, a part of China, which is the most densely populated, in which is concentrated the most important part of the Chinese industry and manufacturing capacity, often called the heart of China or Heartland [11]. This "heart of the country" has been the driving force for thirty years of continuous economic growth so far in an unprecedented global practice.

Extremely quick recovery of Asia-Pacific region was primarily attributable to the economic growth in China, while what should strengthen China in second place on the list economically most developed countries of the world, where in 2010 overtook Japan, is the expectation that in the next 15 years, about 150 million Chinese people will become members of the middle class, consumer society pillar of a state. However, China remains a land of contrasts between the rich and densely populated east of the country and the poor, undeveloped and sparsely populated west, which includes the autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang where separatist movements are administered (ie. External China).

In addition to the economic importance of PR China certainly has in international relations, its role in military terms also grows. Thus, People's Liberation Army (Noack), with approximately 2,3 million active soldiers represents a respectable military force in the region and in the world. At the same time constantly increasing allocations for the military budget which is in the last few years exceed \$ 100 billion (starting from 2012), with the technical modernization and modern training, are the result of economic growth, industrialization and the raging commitment, position China geopolitical player of the global reach.

An important aspect for understanding the position of the People's Republic of China in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as how to understand the relationship of China and the countries of the region, as well as China and other countries of the world, represent a specific socio-political system of this country, which affects the system of government and the armed forces.³

The Asia-Pacific region, as the extremely economically dynamic world region, is also characterized by the fact that the demand for energy among the countries in the region ranked in order of highest priority, in order to facilitate further economic development, while the lack of oil or natural gas produced distortions in the economic sphere, economy and security that would be shed on the whole world. In the response to the question from where is China supplying mainly energy, can be concluded in the directions of its strategies in the 21st century. China is supplying energy principally from the Middle East and Africa (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Angola and RF). Supplying of energy due to geographical position of those countries, takes main maritime routes that are under the control of the United States, it is clear that

³ The authority is presented in the form of the State Council, headed by the Prime Minister, whose members are confirmed on People's Congress (SNK). SNK also confirmed by the President of the People's Republic of China, who is also the General Secretary of the Communist Party and chairman of the Central Military Commission and chief of the armed forces. The Communist Party has 70 million members, while the other 8 parties recognize the leading role of KP's Republic of China.

China's commitment to the transition from the mainland to the naval force.

Modern China is at the one of the kind crossroads where it has reached due to a very dynamic development of hard power, primarily economic, which affected the strengthening of military power. In the article "Eurasian geopolitical and geostrategic perspective of the People's Republic of China", Mr. Ivan Zaric noted the dilemma of whether China has the capacity to operate simultaneously in two directions - by land, over the western province of Xinjiang and Tibet through, in order to influence the central part of Eurasia rich with resources necessary for the further growth of the Chinese economy - or, in geopolitical terms, it will primarily turn to strengthen courses of action (Pacific, Indian) caused by "increasing needs a strategic presence in the Eurasian Rimland and security of vital marine lines of communication which China imports large part of the raw materials necessary for its economy and exports goods to foreign markets. These two lines of geopolitical action China amounts another important question: whether China may be the first in the history of the great powers that will be able to align its potential to make the concept of integrated geopolitical power, thus to harmonize its Behemoth i Leviathan?" [11]. China will not only be able to formally express its peaceful path of development, but it will be essential that their energy, economic and territorial aspirations formed in accordance with the imperative of regional stability, which has no alternative if we want to avoid a confrontation, first with the neighbors, and then with the United States, still the only force with global character.

Another country that represents a significant factor in the region, a country with a turbulent and long history, is Japan. With an area of 378 thousand km², Japan spans the western rim of the Pacific Ocean, in the distance of 2,800 km, and it is home to about 127 million people, while the territory is made up of 3,325 islands, including its four largest: Kyushu, Shikoku, Honshu and Hokkaido. When it comes to religion, 85% of the population are

Buddhist, while 99.4% of the total population consists of Japanese. Koreans and other minorities make about 0.6%, population and the official language is Japanese. An additional feature of Japan is that it is a highly urbanized country, with 79% in urban areas [12].

Despite its turbulent history, wars and destruction that Japan has suffered, especially in huge losses during the Second World War and with the possession of very few natural resources, Japan has become one of the economically and technologically most developed countries of the world. The recent history of Japan was marked with the relations with the United States that created security policy economic giant on the Pacific Rim, while at the same time security, territorial and economic relations with the People's Republic of China is very complex. When in 2010 happened the shift between Japan and China in the second place on the list of countries with the most developed economies, geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-strategic position of the two countries has largely begun to reflect the different relationships in the waters of the East China Sea and the region in general. In this position, Japan [13]⁴ which is dependent on a raw materials is trying to, through the creation of relatively independent security policy, supported by the potential for further independent development of the armed forces of all types, to find a new path that will lead to maintaining the city respectable nation, in circumstances where China is surely pave the

⁴ Japan is ranked as the second largest net importer of fossil fuels in the world in 2012, after China. A change occurred after the nuclear disaster in Fukushima in 2011, followed by Japan stopped with the production of el. energy in all nuclear power plants. The loss of nuclear capacity has resulted in a change in the import of crude oil and natural gas. Japan is now the third-largest oil consumer and importer in the world, behind the US and China. In addition, it is ranked as the world's largest importer of liquefied natural gas and the second largest importer of coal, behind China (since 2002, Japan imports all the necessary quantities of coal, mainly from Australia). Japan own source provides less than 15% of the total energy. In 2012, about 83% of Japanese crude oil imports originate from the Middle East, compared to 70% in the mid-1980s. Saudi Arabia is the largest oil supplier to Japan, accounting for 33% of imports. UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Iran are significant exporters of oil to Japan. For information on Japanese imports of energy seen in Japan is the second largest net importer of fossil fuels in the world see *Japan is the second largest net importer of fossil fuels in the world* [13].

way to a position of regional leaders. The alliance with the United States is one of the possible directions Japan is keeping the status of a major regional act [12].⁵

Next geographical and political determinants which must be given due attention is the Korean peninsula. The space divided into two sovereign territories - the Republic of Korea (R. Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), has not always been disunited [14].⁶ Korea (territories of R. Korea and DPRK, or the Korean peninsula) is part of the East Asian region, which lies between China and Japan. "Old" Korea was throughout history been involved in the conflict between the two Asian "giants". However, despite the fact that it is located between two strong countries, it still plays a very important role in the international context, managed to preserve its uniqueness and to develop own culture, identity and advanced technology. The old Korea was far from weak and small countries. It is proud of the fact that he had never been subdued until the twentieth century when it fell under Japanese occupation.⁷ Before that, throughout history, many Chinese dynasties were unsuccessful in trying to strategically occupy the peninsula.

5 At the time of the Korean conflict and establishing a balance of power with China and the Soviet Union, the United States has continued to reconstruct post-war Japan. On 8th September 1951, the United States and Japan signed an agreement on mutual security (Mutual Security Treaty), which includes the stationing of US troops on Japanese soil for the defense of Japan. Later, on 8th March 1954, the two countries signed an agreement on mutual cooperation in the field of security, which is focused on assistance in the field of defense. Agreement of 1954, among other things, allowed the US to have military bases on Japanese territory. These databases are mostly on the island of Okinawa, which had historical significance for the United States since the fight in the Second World War. The purpose of the upgrade package, in 1960 signed the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the USA [12].

6 Until the moment of separation, the Koreans were united nation with a long and rich history. The root of the Korean people is located on the territory of present-day Siberia and Manchuria. Korea's real name is Hanguk in the Republic of Korea and DPR Korea in Đoson. Both calls originate from the name of the dynasty that ruled kingdoms in certain specific periods [14].

7 Period of occupation still affects the relations between Japan and R. Korea. Although the two countries are allies in many areas, the period of occupation gives negative effects on modern relationships. It is still topical issue of sexual abuse of Korean women by Japanese army during that period.

The division on the so-called 38th parallel (38 degrees latitude), occurred after the surrender of Japan in 1945⁸ and signing the truce, thus division of areas of interest between the USSR and the USA. At that time Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation under which it has been since 1910. The division was formalized in 1948 with the establishment of two separate governments with opposing ideologies, the northern (communist) and southern (democratic, capitalist) Korean Peninsula. The reasons of the divisions are debatable, but one thing is certain - different views on the future and communism divided peninsula and the nation in two opposing groups, which led to the outbreak of the so-called "Three Year War", which lasted from 1950 to 1953 when a ceasefire agreement was signed. The war has never formally terminated, while occasional incidents taking place even today. The United States played a key role in the division and conflict, insisting that the formation of R. Korea could stop the penetration of communism to Japan and further in the region. On the other hand, it was the interest of the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union to stop penetration of USA over the 38th parallel, which prevents the use of the peninsula as a possible support for future endangering of China and USSR.

Since 1960, economic development of Republic of Korea was export-oriented, and it was so significant that it was named the "miracle on the river Hangang". Through the expansion of international trade and commerce, R. Korea has shown the world its rich cultural heritage, as well as modern technology. Possibly distortion of the security situation would produce negative consequences for the further economic development and progress of the country. Republic of Korea, with the security arrangements it has with the United States, continues to invest in its own defense system and the growth of the military budget was up to 31.9 billion USD in 2014 [15]. It has a well-equipped army of 640,000 soldiers and

8 Demilitarized zone width of 4 kilometers was built after the Korean War in 1953.

it is putting efforts to build a secure environment for further development [16].⁹

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the northern neighbor of Republic of Korea is an independent socialist state guided by the Juche¹⁰ idea and the Songun¹¹ [17]. These ideological ideas were guiding the North Korean policies and have significant impact on the socio-political structure of the country. Thus, the supreme leader of the DPRK is also the first president of its Commission for National Defence. The highest authority is Supreme People's Assembly, whose mandate lasts five years. In the National Assembly, there are three parties which always made uniform attitudes, on the orders of the supreme leader. Such a political system and ideology exert a crucial influence on economic policy and economic system of the DPRK. The resources of production are owned by the state and the social and cooperative organizations, while the economy is planned.

However, giving the fact that DPRK is closed to the outside world, it does not provide a more precise insight into the economic indicators of organized planned economy. Common

speculation that DPR Korea is among the least developed countries of the world, and that in it the population is largely affected by the hunger. One of the important factors of foreign policy positions, in this context, are the relations with the People's Republic of China, which is the most important economic partners and donor for DPRK for food and raw materials. Despite difficult economic conditions in which it operate, DPR Korea seeks to establish a national unity with the south of the country to the complete victory of socialism [18].

DPR Korea occupies an area of 123 thousand km² [17] and has population of about 25 million people, mostly Buddhists and Christians. With the weak economy, defense spending represents a major item in the budget of the DPRK. Thus, the allocation for defense accounts for about 22% of GDP (about 8 billion USD), a DPRK armed forces number about 1.2 million active-duty soldiers [19].

However, despite the relatively outdated military technology from eastern origin, the main and still unconfirmed force the North Korean Army are ballistic missiles of medium and long-range nuclear warheads. Since 1964, when the complex for nuclear research was established, with the symbolic help later from the USSR, DPR Korea has repeatedly signed and violated agreements with the United States and the international community on the use of nuclear material for military purposes. A key feature of the foreign policy of DPR Korea, in addition to the closure to the world, also makes the struggle against imperialism, for which North Korean leaders directly accused the United States and Japan. Because of this policy DPR Korea is one of the most prominent security and foreign policy problems for the US administration.

In addition to these four countries, the impact on development and stability of the region exhibit also Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand. At the same time, these countries have more or less, close relationship with the United States and frequently seek to achieve a symbiosis of

9 During the 50's, R. Korea was ranked among the poorest countries. However, the economic reforms that the R. Korea carried out mostly under the influence and with the help of the United States, contributed to the economic recovery, so that its economy is now the 14th largest in the world. US influence on R. Korea is also reflected in the social system, and perhaps the most in the security domain, given that the United States give security guarantees that country. After the end of the Korean War, in order to establish a "dam" by the advance of communism from the direction DPRK, 1954, the US and R. Korea signed the Agreement on Security (ROK / U.S. Mutual Security Agreement), in which they agreed to defend each other in case of external aggression. In 1978, the two countries have established combined forces command, based in Seoul and the US Armed Forces generals at the helm, in defense of R. Korea. U R. Korea has stationed around 28,500 US troops. Ruler. Korea believes the US military presence crucial dissuasive factor, and some officials worry that reducing America's role constituted an encouragement for a possible negative effect DPRK [16].

10 Juche idea means, in short, that the masses of the people the masters of the revolution and construction company, and they are the main motive force of the revolution and construction. This idea is based on the philosophical principle that man is the master of everything and decides everything [17].

11 *Songun* politics is rooted in the ideology that gives priority to the military and which generates the idea of Juche. President Kim Il Sung (he was a leader of the DPRK since its inception in 1948 until his death in 1994) is the founder and leader of Songun ideology Songun revolution [17].

their own national interests with the interests of the United States.

On the significance of Asia-Pacific region for the future geopolitical and geostrategic considerations, scientists and politicians were pointing in the period between the two world wars. Thus, the American geopolitician Nikolas Spajkman anticipated three large centers of world power, “the Atlantic coastal region of North America, Europe coast and the Far Eastern coastal areas of Eurasia” [20]. By introducing the concept of the *Far plunger*, Zbigniew Brzezinski points out that “regional dominant China should become an USA far east anchor in traditional domain of power politics”, [21] and continues that “... with the implications of these realities need to be faced, because the current interaction in the Far East between three the major powers - the US, China and Japan, creates a dangerous regional intertexture and almost certainly will produce a tectonic geopolitical shift” [21]. Certainly, a major cause of action of the USA active foreign policy in the APR, according to Brzezinski is the growing power of China and the potential volume of Chinese spheres of interest and point of conflict.

The growing economical, cultural and military power of the countries from Asia-Pacific region in the near future will be reflected on the political power and international credibility, which are conditions for complete access to the international scene, while an active contribution to international progress (Bank of BRICS) can bring countries in the region to the positions recognized leaders in global terms. Since we live in era of energy, dependence on the future development of energy will create access to the vital national interests of the APR. The growth of the economy of developing countries also creates a new global dependencies. Key countries suppliers relying on exports to China - which is the ultimate destination for more than half of the total amount of metal ore that is exported from Australia, Indonesia and Peru, and more than a third of exports is from Brazil and Chile.

Characters of future alliances or conflicts between countries in the region depend on the

awareness of the inevitable co-existence in the geographical area that represents a constant of their relationship and forces external factors to seek to achieve their national interests in the Asia-Pacific region. The most powerful external factor that threatens to change power relations in the region are the United States, who are planning a “rebalancing” of military deployments to the economically most dynamic region of the world in order to achieve geostrategic interests.

THE TRANSFER OF THE CENTER OF GRAVITY OF US FOREIGN POLICY FROM THE MIDDLE EAST TO THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Topical of USA foreign policy is characterized by the involvement in war and economic tension, through the pursuit of security environment that guarantees the realization of national interests in full scale in more than two regions of the world simultaneously. Current available economic resources of the United States and current trends dissipated power in a number of state and non-state actors do not contribute to the sustainability of such state. Rebalance of military assets from one to another more acute security regions, is perhaps the only viable solution for the United States.

“The end of the war in Iraq and reducing engagement in Afghanistan allows us to transfer effort from these wars to stabilize our presence in the Asia-Pacific region,” [22] is the official statement one of the members of the Obama administration, in light of the transfer of the center of gravity of US foreign policy from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region. The engagement of the US in the APR and move the center of gravity of foreign policy, does not mean the abandonment of the defense of national interests of the American nation in the region of the Middle East. Permanent presence in the region of the Middle East, where the involvement of US troops began immediately after the Second World War, caused the obvious difficulties related to the implementation of Western values.

Inconsistency in support of Sunnis and Shiites has produced anti-American sentiment in

majority of the Muslim population, especially in the region of the Middle East. A priori the US position on the exclusive right on oil from the region and the necessity of implementation of Western values, was the cause of seven decades of a long diplomatic and military engagement of the US in the “global zone of potential violence” [21].

Realizing the fact that they do not have the capacity to control equally the global ambience and paying attention to every region that is of their national interest, the United States submitted a role of the global leader to the interested partners or allies. In this way, the US transferred the focus of the foreign policy towards the regions where countries strengthen their resources of power, challenging the leading position of the United States in the 21st century. The Asia-Pacific region in this century represents a qualitatively new stage to USA to demonstrate their power to persist in achieving interests and to confirm the role of a global leader. Also, during the search of ways for a speedy recovery of the economy and society after the financial crisis, “this region has a remarkable economic importance to the United States, so US presence produces multidimensional consequences”, [20] while US investment in the region counts hundreds of billions of dollars. This points to the conclusion that “no matter of the attempts to create exclusive trade bloc that could disenable economic access to major US trading partners in the region (particularly Japan, China, Republic of Korea, or Taiwan), or actions that threaten the economies of major trading partners, would be threatening to the USA vital national interests” [23]. At the same time, the US military doctrine “Maintaining global leadership: Priorities for defence in the 21st century”, from the January 2012, China and Iran were put in the same context as potential opponents, stating that the two countries would continue to use unconventional methods to reduce capacity for the projection of US power [24].

Demonstrating the capacities and determination to solve the outstanding issues of Taiwan, islands in the East and South China Sea, where exist a close US allies - Japan, Vietnam,

Singapore and the Philippines, China is turning from a state of passivity by announcing its way to the status of a regional power. China is developing stable economic relations with Japan, R. Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines, putting into the background historical heritage, ideology and current territorial disputes. This may lead to interference with the US to fully realize their interests in the region, while further strengthening the power of China and the possibility of the formation of the allied relations between these countries in the region which would create the possibility of a new Asia-Pacific region with a weaker US influence. The US military doctrine indicates the maritime crisis as a certain scenario in the case of restraint striving for the realization of the US national interests in the region. Accordingly, it has been announced the deployment of 60% US naval forces in the region and capacity building to fight under the nuclear, air-naval, missile and cyber threats. Development of a new, air-naval combat concept as a new operational doctrine, underlines the willingness and determination of the United States to oppose the strengthening of the military power of the People’s Republic of China and the DPRK threats [25].

All this points to the remarkable interplay and interdependence that characterize the interests of the US and China in the APR, and that is conditioned by the “historic relocation of relative wealth and economic power from West to East” [26]. The Asia-Pacific region is undoubtedly a testing ground for the USA big game, and the growth power of China is the main cause for that. Moving the center of gravity of the foreign policy will be realized primarily through the dislocation of military assets in the area of the region, as already proven recipe, while the strategy of using these new deployments depends on the context.

The presence of about 100,000 troops permanently stationed with the USA 7th fleet RM guarantees the development of the security situation, more or less in line with American plans and long-term stability in the region. If necessary, the withdrawal of part of military assets due to falling economic power of the United States would open the possibility of conflict,

primarily between Japan and China regarding the territorial disputes in the East China Sea.

China, Japan and R. Korea, as the Far East (also arguably the world's) economic and commercial forces, and their needs for fossil fuels have attracted worldwide attention and started the process of transformation of international politics. In circumstances where an increasing demand of the Asian countries for energy and when relocation of the center of gravity of the geostrategic interests of the US in the region of the Middle East to the APR is announced, the geo-strategic interests of China are moving towards the Persian Gulf, and especially to the maritime route from Ormuz Strait to the Strait of Malacca, as a major maritime route for the transport of energy resources from the Middle to the Far east. The USA will, in order to maintain the position of global power which tends to keep control of all the most important strategic points in the maritime world, will find economically viable modality of the strong military presence in the two most important regions of the world. Control Rimlenda has been and will remain the most important zones of American geopolitical and geo-strategic engagement.

GEO-STRATEGIC INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Spikeman's *Rimlend*, the zone of the geopolitical challenges and new global challengers, the is the stage for establishing a balance of power at the beginning of the 21st century. By integrating hard and soft power through smart strategy, the United States, which still have the largest capacity of economic, military and political power, will use the unique ability to mobilize for action allies and partners and thus to design their own power and influence at the global level in achieving their vital national interests [27].¹²

12 Alliances do not exist, there are only interests. "It is naive to think in these terms, it is the main element which is connected or connecting. Classical Geopolitics, geostrategy ie, preaches another principle, which is that the alliances and connections dictated by the highest and the most pressing national interest - the preservation of the state. Accordingly, in one-time ally of the one that supports just such interests against threats that evidently exist. The closeness of ideology is of secondary importance. Look at the attitude of the West and Tito's Yugoslavia fifties and cooperation the United States and Saudi Arabia." [27]

Therefore, according to the Strategy of National Security from 2002, in order to maintain its presence in the APR and achieve geostrategic interests, some of which will be largely depend on economic growth and security environment, the United States emphasized support in providing the conditions for the continuation of their development and the realization of common interests. The Strategy from 2002 highlights the following:

- it will be provided to Japan all necessary conditions for the further strengthening of power in the direction of positioning as one of the leading economic powers of the regional and global level on the basis of common interests, values, diplomatic cooperation and mutual security commitment,
- the cooperation with Republic of Korea will continue to strengthen economic growth and prudent security policy towards the northern border, which would through clever use of military assets and security hinterland in the form of the United States be a reliable guarantor of stability in the region and the world as a whole;
- traditional military cooperation with Australia, which has its roots in battle during World War II, will greatly facilitate taking of the same approach regarding the current global and regional security issues;
- maintenance of the respective military assets in the region of the Pacific reflects the US commitment to allies, based on actual demand of the US to take advantage of its technological, economic and diplomatic superiority to control the most important strategic points in the region;
- improving the stability through alliances, as well as through institutions such as ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, on the development of various regional and bilateral strategies to manage change in this dynamic region [28].

Doctrinal document of the highest USA state institutions, actions and performances of the most prominent individuals of the current administration headed by President Obama do not diminish the actuality of the stated goals proclaimed in 2002, but they significantly

stress them. At the same time, all interested international actors deals the analysis of the stated objectives deal and in the announced changes on the global scene [29].¹³ In contrast to the NSS in 2002 when, under the definition of cooperation in APR explicitly stated goals of cooperation for each country individually, National Strategy of 2015 represents a continuity of improvement, expansion and establishment of new partnerships in the APR, according to the which will promote cooperation and establish, but does not explicitly targets for each country individually [30].

It is evident that the US doctrinal and strategic documents, such are the National Security Strategy and Military Strategy, apropos National Defense Strategy, as well as the declared goals of the Obama administration towards APR, have China and its growing power in the middle of geo-strategic considerations at the beginning of 21st century. The growing military power of China, according to the interpretations of American analysts, is the threat to US interests in the region [31]. Geostrategic positioning of military and civilian capacities in the area of the United States in the Indian Ocean, the Strait of Malacca, the South and East China Sea, the waters around Taiwan, the base in Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia and islands near the American region (Guam), will enable the United States to be able to follow the further growth of China and DPRK nuclear armament [32].¹⁴ At the same time, this will

¹³ President Obama's policies regarding the APR is largely characterized by addressing three questions: 1) strengthening ties with Japan and other US allies in the region; 2) strengthening the relationship between the US partner in the region, including the countries of SE Asia and India and 3) forming a multi-layered network of relations between the countries gathered around the US alliance with the addition of significant strategic engagement in the framework of the Summit of Eastern Asia (East Asia Summit), as well as with other regional institutions. In this context, the United States seek to strengthen not only its traditional alliances, based on bilateral arrangements, but to establish the so-called. minilateralne relations through arrangements between the US - Japan - South Korea, the US, Japan - Australia and the United States - Japan - India, through the expansion of cooperation in the joint military exercises and training [29].

¹⁴ Guam, the largest and most populated island in the southern part of the archipelago of the Marianas. It was in the possession of the United States from 1898 to 1941 and then from 1944 onwards. During World War II it was occupied by Japan. It is now one of the largest military bases (aviation, naval infantry) United States in that part of the world. Administratively under the Department of the Interior (Department of Interior) of the US [32].

provide the most dynamic presence in the field of maritime trade routes today. Strengthening maritime power of USA allies and partners in the region, with the imposition of service in the fight against pirates and terrorists, will enable the improvement of the image of the countries in the region and beyond, while the combined actions will limit the projection of naval power of the People's Republic of China. Stating that "dynamic international environment, in which different nations are growing influence ... while emerging powers in every region of the world tend to be more expressed", [33] President Obama suggests the US role as a balancer of power in the APR, in order to prevent the occurrence of regional hegemon that would brought uncertainty among neighbors.

The economic part of the strategy the United States is committed to strengthening freedom of the market at the global level, where stand out as particularly important arrangements like Trans-Pacific Partnership TPP and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership T-TIP. It is pointing out that security is based on the strong US economy, and the freedom to use the most important routes for conducting free trade is presented as a necessary condition for maintaining the security of the United States. In accordance with the interconnection of economic and security aspects, the United States will enter the revision of its military capabilities, in particular the 7th Fleet, whose strength will be projected to about 60% of the total capacity of RM. Further, the base on Guam ("unsinkable NA") will get more and more important, which will require modernization and capacity increase of the base.

In addition to the requirement for strengthening democracy, free markets and human rights, with transparent presence of military assets as a security guarantor countries of the region, the US will seek the way to "suppress" the enemy military force which would threaten vital US interests in the region, deter aggression against countries allies and partners, and ensuring access to markets and partners in the region. Creating security environment in Asia-Pacific region by strengthening allied relations and partnership, is the concept of

US foreign policy, which, in terms of the economic interdependence of the United States, China, Japan, R. Korea and other countries in the broader region, represent the best way to achieve geostrategic interests. The circumstances that currently prevail in international relations, reflecting the needs of the majority of countries for security engagements with allies, partners and neighbors, lead to the conclusion that only with comprehensive smart strategies, countries can create a safe environment and ensure the realization of their national interests. In this context, regional initiatives which USA try to revive, and new ones that are established, are gaining in importance and are taking positions that allow them to monitor directions for further development of China, preventing the establishment of alliances with other countries in the region and possibly containment if there is a mutual opposition of vital national interest. Engaging all elements of soft and hard power which United States have at their disposal and skills of their conversion into smart power for appropriate strategies, will be a challenge in relations with stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region.

THE APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “SMART POWER” IN ACHIEVING THE GEOSTRATEGIC INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stressed the importance of US policy of smart power during exposure on her appointment to this position in 2009. On that occasion she pointed out that “America cannot solve on its own the most pressing problems, and the world cannot solve them without America... I believe that US leadership was required, and coveted. We must use what we call ‘smart power’, the full range of tools at our disposal - diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal and cultural - with the selection of appropriate or a combination of tools available for each specific circumstance. With smart leadership, diplomacy will be the vanguard of foreign policy.” [34] In the light of the statement, the United States

turned to the EU as a strategic partner, which focuses on trade and financial stability of relations with countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

At the same time, measures were also undertaken to strengthen ties with allies in the wider Asia-Pacific region, so that the United States continues its active foreign policy administration by combining all the elements at their disposal, which eventually makes smart power. Examples of this approach are economic arrangements that the United States seek to ensure with countries with Europe and the Asia-Pacific region such are Trans-Pacific Partnership TPP and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership T-TIP. While T-TIP refers to an agreement with the European Union, the United States TPP arrangement considered vital for their involvement in the APR, but also as a strong signal of the commitment and demonstration of determination to remain a driving force towards prosperity and security in the region [35]. The primary aim of the arrangement of TPP is growth of the American economy (increase exports, competitiveness, preservation of jobs, establishing middle-class workers, creating the conditions for the marketing of goods of individual producers, small and medium enterprises), as the basis of stability, security and creating conditions for the manifestation of global influence.

To achieve a goal, TPP emphasizes the importance of establishing the “fair conditions” at the global level, which creation would allow the US economy to be dominant, without possibility that any growing economy endanger it. It is not difficult to conclude that the “fair conditions” means those conditions that will be in support of achieving the national interest of the US, and therefore the impact on global flows.

The circumstances under which the US would seek to achieve geostrategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region are different from all previous and certainly represent a new quality. After many more or less successful, military, diplomatic and cultural offensive that led around the world, the United States have become aware that “power always depends on context” and that “power in the world today, distributed in a pattern that resembles a

three-dimensional chess game. On the top chessboard, military power is largely unipolar, and the US is likely to retain the championship in the foreseeable future. But on the middle of the chessboard, economic power has been for more than a decade multipolar, including the USA, Europe, Japan and China as the major players and others who are becoming increasingly important ... Lower chess board is the area of cross-border of international relations which are beyond the control of government and include a variety of non-state actors, such as bankers ... terrorists ... or hackers... This chess board also includes new transnational challenges such as pandemics and climate change. On the underside of the board, power is widely scattered, and there is no sense to speak of unipolarity, multipolarity, hegemony or to any other similar cliché...” [2].

In considering the circumstances that affect the application of an appropriate foreign policy strategy of the USA in the region, it is necessary to acknowledge values, interests, motives and traditions of the involved stakeholders, with their aspirations for the magnification power and resources while ensuring the integrity of the territory. Also, alliances and partnerships among countries in the region are a manifestation of power focus resources towards the achievement of a stable security environment, “... in order to reduce the uncertainty of their mutual relations” [36]. Also, knowledge of how the individual countries of the region perceived threats from the US and its neighbors is another very important segment that complements the “framework for action” of the US administration.

Circumstances that will significantly shape the strategy for resource conversion of the soft and hard power into smart power, the tendency towards achieving US geo-strategic interests in the region, are: historical, colonial, cultural and religious heritage of the region, increasing the resources of hard and soft power countries in the region and the emergence of the People’s Republic of China as a regional leader and a global force in economic, military and political relations between the countries of the region and their impact on future cooperation through

regional arrangements and alliances, territorial disputes between countries in the region and US interests in resolving these disputes.

Impact on the security and control of strategic maritime and inland areas, ensures the safety of others of the consequences of modern threats, the armed forces of the United States supported with the diplomatic actions, try to frame and set the agenda which will make the preferences of China and the DPRK irrelevant and beyond the boundaries of tolerance of other actors in the region. In this way the US military or diplomacy may not have to force the partners to the operation against the forces that want to change the existing situation (status quo), but will “shape the preferences of others so they will affect their expectations in terms of what is legitimate and feasible” [2]. The fact is that “whoever controls the Malay Straits holds effective in the grip of a Chinese strategic energy transmission and can jeopardize Chinese energy security at any time” [37].

At the same time, the outcome of US smart power projection would mean to protect economic investments of the US and EU in China and the region, as well as the prevention of conflicts between countries in the region. The complexity of the security dilemma in which the growing power of China leads to a tendency towards balancing power by the countries of the region, conditions inevitably share the strongest global reach balancer of power - the United States, in setting the geopolitical agenda. Achieving positive effects of the application of the concept of smart power will be conditioned by the ability of the US to establish an agenda, or “framework for action” to ensure the implementation of geostrategic interests.

We can conclude that the application of the concept of smart power in the exercise of geostrategic interests of the US in the Asia-Pacific region, its scope and efficiency, will be conditioned on the specifics of each individual geo-strategic interests. In addition, the specificity of the geo-strategic interests are reflected in the characteristics of the geographic area for which the interest is linked, the current situation of mutual relations of neighboring countries as well as geostrategic perception of

any interested state and non-state actors in the region and beyond.

CONCLUSION

The Asia-Pacific region is a vital driver of the global economy and included the world's busiest international maritime routes and nine of the world's largest ports by quantity of goods transported. The region has been rapidly militarized and nuclear potential of individual countries additionally actualized significance of the region. Under these circumstances, the strategic complexities that region is facing are unique.

Intertwining and interdependence of the US and China interests in the APR are conditioned by historical relocation of relative wealth and economic power from West to East. The Asia-Pacific region is undoubtedly a testing ground for the big USA game, a growth power of China is the main cause. Moving the center of gravity of the foreign policy of engagement will be realized primarily through the dislocation of military assets in the area of the region, as already proven recipe, while the strategy itself will be using these new deployments depends on the context.

The contemporary global security environment, which among other things, is the result of active engagement of the United States foreign policy, corresponds to several, but not all countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The rise of new forces in the region, such is the People's Republic of China and its activities in the region and globally, are not in the interest of neither the United States nor the individual regional actors, so it is likely that the US will continue to strive to maintain the role of balancer of power in the economic and military most dynamic region of the world. From the standpoint of US geostrategic interests, control the straits, the world's maritime trade and military routes and preventing the emergence of a regional hegemon in the Asia-Pacific region will represent the direction that will be directed projections of soft and hard power of the United States. Geostrategic positioning of military and civilian capacities in the area of the United States of the Indian Ocean, the Strait

of Malacca, the South and East China Sea, the waters around Taiwan, the base in Japan, R. Korea, Australia and the US islands in the vicinity of the region, will enable the United States to follow the further growth of China and DPRK nuclear armament.

The circumstances that currently prevail in international relations, reflecting the needs of the majority of countries for security engagements with allies, partners and neighbors, lead to the conclusion that only comprehensive smart strategies, countries can create a safe environment and ensure the realization of national interests. In this context, regional initiatives USA revive and new established, are gaining in importance and are taking positions that allow them to monitor directions of further development of China, preventing the establishment of alliances with other countries in the region and possibly containment if there is a mutual opposition of vital national interest. Engaging all elements of soft and hard power that United States have at their disposal and skills to converse them into smart power application of appropriate strategies, will be a challenge in relations with the most important factors in the Asia-Pacific region.

The real starting assumption for the application of the concept of smart power is the availability of resources and assessment of soft and hard power which will be with the appropriate strategies converted into smart power. Clearly set goals of US power projection in the region are one of the most important steps and certainly precedes them define the real degree of viability of national interests. Of importance to the selection of appropriate strategies will be the assessment of the state of resources of hard and soft power of countries to which it plans to exert influence. Good assessment of the context involves continuous to monitor aspirations of potential actors in which power projects and the status of each actor in a network of interdependence and intricacy of interest.

The leaders of the United States will inevitably follow key trends both in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as in their own country, with special emphasis on the perspective of developments in the security, economic and

political spheres. In the end, Joseph Nye argued that Americans would “have to stop to ask questions about who is number one, and to give up talking about domination and begin to ask questions how the different resources of power can be adjusted in smart strategies

for power with others rather than just over the other nations” [2]. Only under these conditions, the application of the concept of smart power in the exercise of geostrategic or any other US interests in the Asia-Pacific region has good prospects.

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