



TALKING POINTS

Asan Plenum 2013: “New World Disorder”
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Talking Points for: Douglas Paal, Vice President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

The rigid bloc structure of Cold War international relations gave way to an historically atypical and ephemeral unipolar moment of American dominance in the 1990s. That was followed by a new, fluid balance-of-power pattern of international behavior. This new balance-of-power is necessarily hybrid in nature, as it retains Cold War characteristics, with NATO in the West, and the US alliance system in the Pacific. Capitals such as Moscow and New Delhi These two alliances continue overall to provide a stabilizing function in the sense that their existence has so far helped forestall dangerous security competition. In Asia, where increasing economic integration has not yet bridged deep differences between the states over culture, history, levels of development, and ethnicity, regional security and economic architecture still lags far behind Europe’s.

But we are now approaching a period when the re-rise of China, together with its military modernization, may challenge the existing soft or fluid balance-of-power system. In a sense, we are at a crossroads, where the choices our nations make can take us down the way of accelerating strategic competition, or onto the path of effective conflict prevention and management. So far, the tendency toward competition and confrontation is gaining on the trend toward effective cooperation. Leaders need to take stock and begin to act to reverse this trend.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.