

Vietnam's Foreign Policy in an Era of Rising Sino-U.S. Competition: Providing Equity to the Major Powers While Pursuing Proactive International Integration

Carlyle A. Thayer Presentation to
International Conference on Great Power Rivalries,
Domestic Politics, and Southeast Asian Foreign Policy
The Dorothy Borg Research Project
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Outline

Introduction

1. Foreign Policy Framework
2. Domestic Factors
3. Key Issues Driving Foreign Policy
4. Providing Equity to the Major Powers
5. Proactive International Integration
6. Implications for the United States

Introduction

- “ One-party state
- “ Mono-organizational socialism
- “ 1978 - Renovation and Opening Up
- “ Explosion of organizational activity
- “ NGOs, Community-based Organizations and “civil society”
- “ Political Civil Society

1. Foreign Policy Framework

1. Independence and Self-Reliance
2. Multilateralization and Diversification of External Relations
3. Struggle and Cooperation
4. Proactive International Integration

2. Domestic Factors

“ Sources of Political Legitimacy

- . Patriotism and nationalism
- . Legal-rational
- . Performance

“ Elite Factionalism

“ New Domestic Actors

- . Retired officials
- . Political and religious activists, bloggers

3. Key Issues Driving Foreign Policy

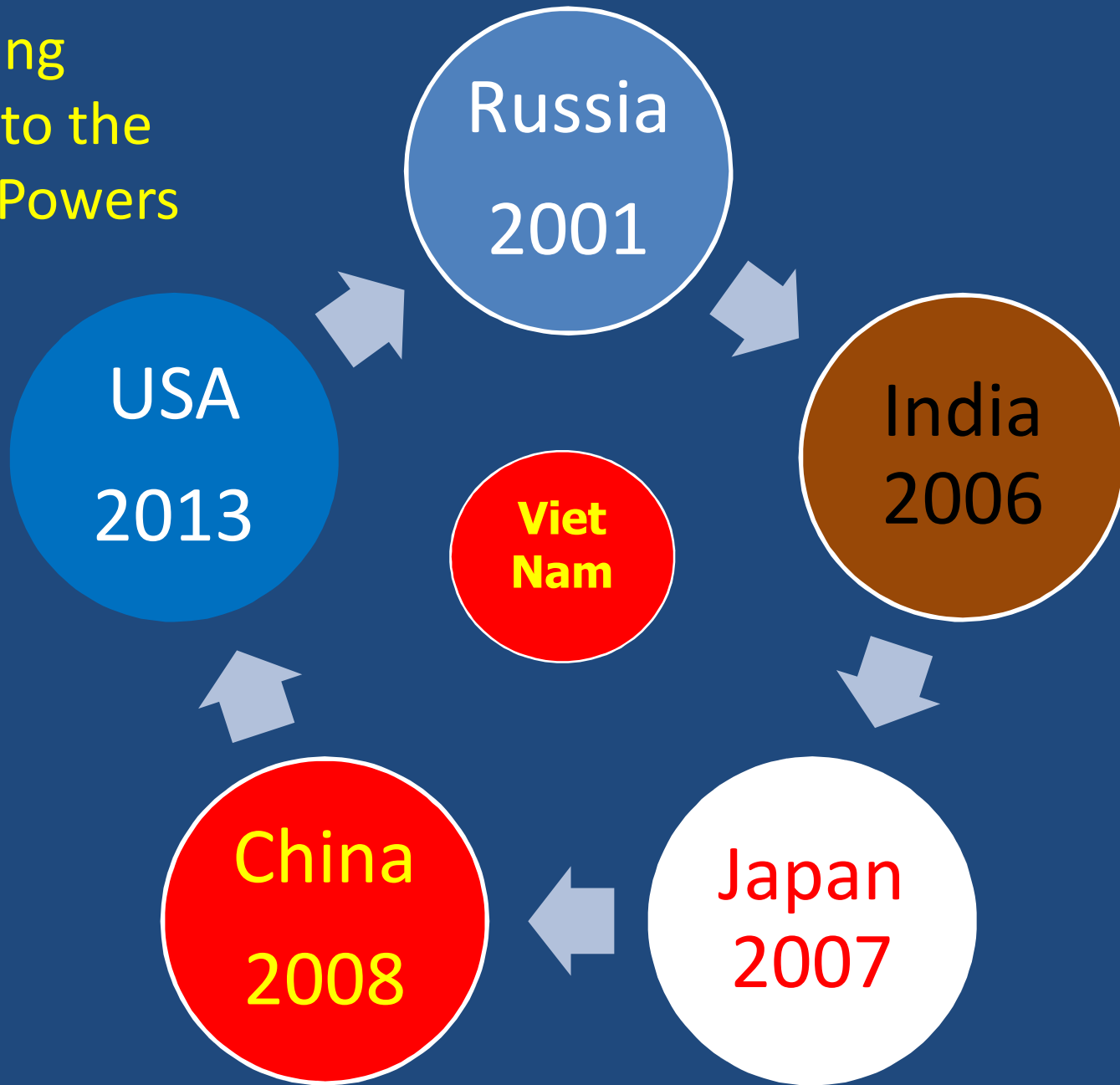
- “ Responding to public opinion
- “ Democracy, human rights and religious freedom
 - . Bloc 8406 and the APEC Summit 2006
- “ Environmental concerns over resource extraction – bauxite mining
- “ Territorial disputes in the South China Sea
 - . HD 981 Crisis 2014 and violent anti-China riots

4. Providing Equity to the Major Powers

Strategic Partnerships

- “ Russia (2001)
- “ Japan (2006)
- “ India (2007)
- “ China (2008)
 - . Comprehensive strategic cooperative partner
- “ United States (2013)
 - . Comprehensive partnership

Providing
Equity to the
Major Powers



5. Proactive International Integration

- “ Membership in multilateral organizations
- “Proactive, active international integration”
 - . 11th National Party Congress (2011)
 - . Politburo Resolution No 22 (April 2013)
- “ Trans Pacific Partnership
- “ ASEAN-centric multilateral associations
 - . Strategic partnerships with ASEAN members

6. Implications for the United States

Convergence of Interests

- “ Strengthening ASEAN
- “ Maritime Security & Rule of Law – UNCLOS
- “ Nuclear non-proliferation
- “ Countering violent extremism
- “ Mitigating climate change
- “ Vietnam’s stability and development

Implications for the United States

But Not Congruent Interests

- “ Market economy status
- “ Democracy, human rights, religious freedom
 - . Threat of peaceful evolution
- “ “Three no’s” defense policy
- “ Relations with Russia
- “ Access to Cam Ranh Bay

Đinh Thế Huynh and John Kerry



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