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Murray Hiebert

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Murray Hiebert specializes in the areas of defense and security, international security, trade and economics in Asia, Oceania, and Southeast Asia at the CSIS in Washington, DC.

Prior to joining CSIS, Hiebert was senior director for Southeast Asia at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Earlier, he worked in the Wall Street Journal's China bureau, where he covered trade issues and before that, for the Wall Street Journal Asia and the Far Eastern Economic Review in Washington, reporting on U.S.-Asia relations.

Mr. Hiebert is the author of two books on Vietnam, including *Chasing the Tigers* (Kodansha, 1996) and *Vietnam Notebook* (Review Publishing, 1993).

Subject Area/Topic: President Obama's "Pivot to Asia"

Highlights: Hiebert quoted former Secretary of State Clinton on the need to rebalance toward Asia. This is essential, as he sees it because (1) "the Asia-Pacific region has become a key driver of global politics"; and (2) "Asia's dynamism could play an important role in building the US economy." It follows from this that "one of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will be to lock in increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic and otherwise—in the Asia Pacific region."

This comprehensive approach to the region will include strengthening military alliances and a broad-based military presence. He sees these strategic steps as essential because "...our economic recovery at home will depend on exports and the ability of American firms to tap into the vast and growing consumer base of Asia." This cannot occur unless peace and security are maintained.

As the Chinese economy has grown, the economic role of the US in the region has diminished. Trade that once went directly to US companies now goes through China. He gave as examples manufactured computer parts that now go to China to be assembled into iPhones, etc. Hiebert sees a twelve Party trade agreement as a partial solution to this. In addition to the main topic, Hiebert discussed in varying detail the internal situation in The Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Myanmar. On the trivia side, he mentioned that the tiny oil-rich country of Brunei has only 45,000 citizens and none of them works. Shell Oil is the source of their income.