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***“Asian Pivot” or “Return to Asia”? Some Reflections on the Asian Policy of the Obama Administration***

May 22, 2017, 10 - 11.30 a.m., Rynek Główny 34, 3rd floor, room No. 34

Abstract:

When first announced in 2011, the US “pivot to Asia” created a strong reaction, both positive and negative. The US allies in the region were looking forward to a major enhancement of the mutual cooperation in a number of areas; the European allies expressed anxiety the “US leaving Europe”; and China also became anxious about what the Chinese leadership perceived as the US attempt to contain China. Now, in 2017, it is already possible to reflect on whether the pivot (or return/rebalancing, as it was later called) really had any significant impact on the geostrategic balance in Asia, on the strengthening of the US position in Asia-Pacific and on resolving some of the outstanding issues that Barack Obama, as the first US “Pacific President” sought to tackle. Also, it would be interesting to reflect on whether the potential achievements would have a lasting effect or whether they would simply be negated by the policies of the following administrations, starting with that of President Trump.

***“Clothes without Pockets” and the Chinese Markets: The American Perceptions of China and Southeast Asia and the Transformation over Time***

May 25, 2017 , 9.30 - 11.00 a.m., Rynek Główny 34, 3rd floor, room No. 33

Abstract:

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the US was becoming first a regional and gradually a global power, the eyes of many US politicians, entrepreneurs and even military commanders were set on Asia-Pacific. While the European powers such as the United Kingdom, France or even the Netherlands were much more strongly established in Asia, the US, with the acquisition of the Philippines after the war with Spain in 1898, also became a player in Asia and the fabled markets of China got within the American reach. The images of the Asia and Asians dated to this period, however, are to a large degree grossly inaccurate and reflect most of the contemporary prejudices towards “inferior” cultures and races. In the US, these images were only strengthened by the influx of mainly Chinese (but also other Asian) migrants to America in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the end of World War II, which meant a major political and geostrategic realignment in Asia, the US (despite the fact that the Philippines were granted independence) became truly a major player in Asia after the “traditional” colonial powers lost their influence. The question is whether the stereotypes and generalizations which shaped the general US view of Asia and Asians have changed over the decades or whether they have remained largely the same and if so, what impact these views had on the US strategy in the region.

## *NATO and the US in the Age of “Hybrid Warfare”*

May 26, 2017, 11.45 a.m. - 1.15 p.m., Rynek Główny 34, 3rd floor, room No. 25

### Abstract:

After the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, NATO has for a period struggled to find a new purpose. While the enlargement of NATO continued, it was still debated whether the Alliance should be more active outside of its “own territory”, whether it should focus more on specialized operations or whether it should become more of a political-military union, which would be a symbol of the Trans-Atlantic partnership. This was in general accompanied by reducing the defense spending in most of the member states and by withdrawing the US forces from their bases on the European continent. The events of the past years have drastically changed this outlook. With the developments on the “eastern flank” of the Alliance, along with the crises and conflicts in the MENA region, NATO faces new challenges and tasks. At the same time, it is obvious that the conflicts in today’s world are very different from what the Alliance has been preparing for during the nearly five decades of the Cold War. The US is, and has been, trying to appeal to the other allies to do more, both in terms of spending and in terms of building up their military capacities. On a number of occasions, the US representatives have voiced their dismay at the slow pace of progress achieved so far. Is Europe as a whole not doing enough? What is the future of NATO, when the member states are often divided on the perception of the individual threats and the adequate reaction to them? Is NATO really “outdated”? These are some of the questions that this lecture will seek to address.



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