America and the Asia-Pacific: The Geopolitical Vision of General Douglas MacArthur

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ABSTRACT

General Douglas MacArthur was a military hero in three wars of the twentieth century and a successful statesman in postwar Japan. He was also, however, a geopolitical visionary who saw America’s destiny connected to developments in the Asia-Pacific region. During the course of his 52-year military career, MacArthur consistently urged American leaders to shift or “rebalance” their focus and priorities to the Far East and the Pacific. After he was relieved of command in Korea in 1951, he continued to promote the idea that Asia and the Pacific were equally as or more important to U.S. security than Europe and the Atlantic. This paper will explore the evolution of MacArthur’s geopolitical thought in the context of three great wars of the twentieth century, and show how he foreshadowed the current U.S. “pivot” to Asia.