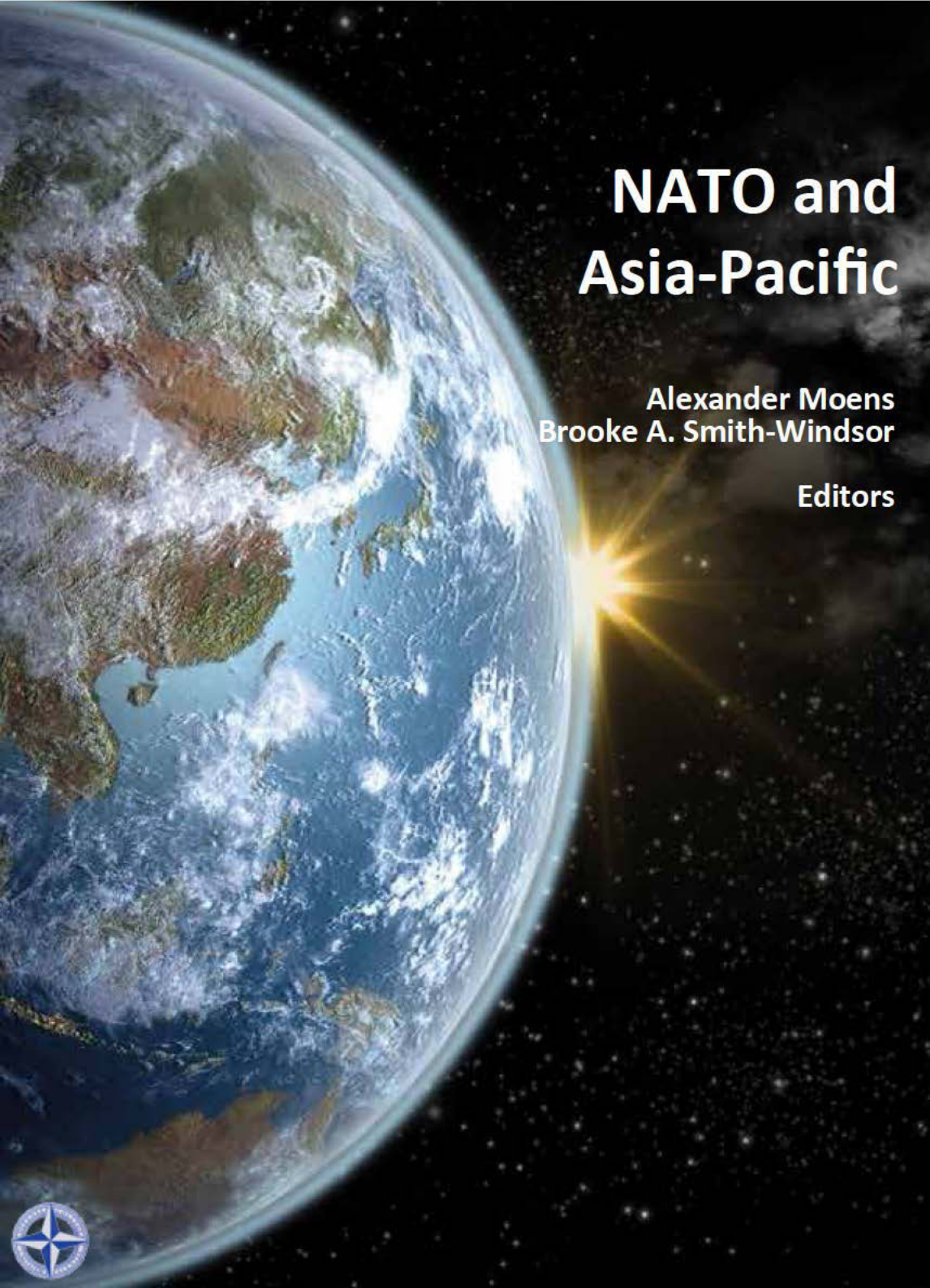




NATO and Asia-Pacific

**Alexander Moens
Brooke A. Smith-Windsor**

Editors



NATO and Asia-Pacific



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

NATO and Asia-Pacific

Foreword by

*Rear Admiral Allan du Toit, Royal Australian Navy
Australian Military Representative to NATO, 2013-2015*

Edited by

Alexander Moens and Brooke A. Smith-Windsor

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NATO Defense College, Research Division

Via Giorgio Pelosi, 1 - 00143 Rome, Italy

Fax +39-06-50 52 57 97

E-mail: m.dimartino@ndc.nato.int

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NATO and Asia-Pacific

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Contributors

Robert Ayson is Professor of Strategic Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, where he works closely with the Centre for Strategic Studies. He has also held academic positions with the Australian National University, Massey University and the University of Waikato, and official positions with the New Zealand government as an intelligence analyst and select committee advisor. He is an Honorary Professor with the New Zealand Defence Force Command and Staff College and an Adjunct Professor with the Australian National University (ANU)'s Strategic and Defence Studies Centre. Ayson gained his PhD in War Studies as a Commonwealth Scholar at King's College London and his MA as a Freyberg Scholar to the ANU. His recent writings include *Asia's Security* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Rear Admiral **Allan du Toit** retired from the Royal Australian Navy in March 2016 after over 40 years service in two Commonwealth navies. He was raised in Durban, South Africa, and entered the South African Navy in 1975 where he served mainly at sea before transferring to the Royal Australian Navy in 1987. He subsequently saw extensive operational service at sea with the RAN in the Asia-Pacific region, including command of the amphibious ship HMAS Tobruk during peacekeeping operations in Bougainville in 1998, multi-national maritime interception operations commander enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq in 2001 and Commander, Task Force 158 in the North Arabian Gulf in 2007-8. He also served in a wide range of single-service and joint appointments ashore, including Commander Border Protection Command in 2008-2010. His final appointment was as Australia's Military Representative to NATO and the European Union based in Brussels from 2013-16. He is a graduate of the South African Military Academy, University of Stellenbosch and University of New South Wales. He has written and

lectured extensively on historical and contemporary defence and naval affairs and served as president of the Australian Naval Institute from 2011-2012. He was appointed a Member in the Order of Australia in 2004.

Stephan Frühling, PhD, is Associate Professor at the ANU's Strategic and Defence Studies Centre. In 2015, he was the “Partners Across the Globe” fellow in the Research Division of the NATO Defense College (NDC), and a member of the Australian Government’s external panel of experts on the Defence White Paper from 2014 to 2015. He was a Managing Editor of *Security Challenges* from 2006 to 2014, and inaugural Director of Studies of the ANU Military Studies programme at the Australian Command and Staff College from 2011 to 2012. He is a Chief Investigator on an Australian Research Council Discovery project on nuclear extended deterrence in US alliances. His most recent publications include *Australia’s Nuclear Policy* (with Michael Clarke and Andrew O’Neil, Ashgate, 2015); *Australia’s Defence: Towards a new era?* (with Brendan Taylor and Peter Dean, Melbourne University Press, 2014), and *Defence Planning and Uncertainty* (Routledge, 2014).

Andreas Heinemann-Grüder is Professor of Political Science at Bonn University, and Senior Researcher at the Bonn International Centre for Conversion. He studied History, Political Science and German Literature at the Free University of Berlin (First State Exam in 1982, Second State Exam in 1985). In 1987/88 he joined a postgraduate programme at Lomonossov University in Moscow. In 1989 he finished his PhD at the Free University of Berlin and, in 1999, he defended his Habilitation at the Humboldt University of Berlin. From 1989 to 1992, he worked as a researcher at the Berghof Institute for Constructive Conflict Transformation. From 1993 to 1995 he taught as Assistant Professor at Humboldt University Berlin, and in 1995, as Visiting Professor, at Duke University, North Carolina. From 1996 to 1999, he was DAAD Professor for German and European Politics at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and in 2001/2002 he was professor *pro tempore* in Comparative Politics at the Humboldt University of Berlin, followed by a

teaching assignment at the University of Cologne (2002-2006) and then by his current position at the University of Bonn. He became a Senior Researcher at the Bonn International Center for Conversion in 2015, having previously held this position from 1999 to 2010. Between 2010 and 2012 he was Director at the Academy for Conflict Transformation, Bonn. He is a member of the Council for Civil Conflict Prevention at the German Foreign Office.

Yee-Kuang Heng is Associate Professor of International Relations at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore (NUS). Dr Heng graduated with a B.Sc. (First Class Honours) and PhD in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), where he studied on a British Government research scholarship. He previously held faculty positions at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and at the University of St Andrews, United Kingdom. His research interests include the globalization of risk and strategic cultures, security studies and soft power in the Asia-Pacific. From April 2016, he will assume a new position at the University of Tokyo, Japan.

Geunwook Lee is Professor of Political Science at Sogang University (Seoul). He was born in Seoul and graduated from Seoul National University with a BA (1994) and MA (1996). He received a doctoral degree in government (international relations and security affairs) from Harvard University in 2002. Since March 2004, Lee has been teaching international relations at the Department of Political Science, Sogang University. He has written several articles in English and published them in prestigious journals such as *Security Studies*, *The Cambridge Journal of International Affairs*, and *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*. He also published three books – *After Waltz: Development and Changes in International Relations Theory after Kenneth N. Waltz*; *American War in Iraq: Invasion by Bush, Withdrawal by Obama* (Korea's National Academy of Sciences Outstanding Research Award, 2012); and *The Cuban Missile Crisis: Analysis into the Most Dangerous Moment of the Cold War*.

Christina Lin is a fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS-Johns Hopkins University, where she specializes in China-Middle East and NATO relations. She was a 2013-2014 Transatlantic Academy Fellow at the German Marshall Fund and a former visiting fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Lin has extensive US government experience working on China security issues, including policy planning at the US Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the US Department of State. She is the author of *The New Silk Road: China's Energy Strategy in the Greater Middle East*. Lin has also been a key author of the annual China file for Jane's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Intelligence Centre at IHS Jane's.

J. Mohan Malik, PhD, is Professor at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. He is the author and editor of several books, most recently *Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific* (2014), *China and India* (2011) and *Religious Radicalism and Security* (2004), and has contributed numerous book chapters and published nearly 240 articles in journals such as *Asian Survey*, *Asian Politics & Policy*, *Arms Control*, *The Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *China Quarterly*, *Comparative Strategy*, *Contemporary Security Policy*, *Orbis*, *Pacific Affairs*, *Pacifica Review*, *World Affairs*, and *World Policy Journal*. His op-eds have appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *International Herald Tribune*, *The Japan Times*, *The Diplomat*, *The National Interest*, and *YaleGlobal Online*. Malik has testified before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, and done consultancy work for the Australian Department of Defence, Booze Allen Hamilton, and Jane's Information Group.

Alexander Moens, PhD, is Professor of Political Science at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. He was the first Marcel Cadieux Fellow at Canada's Foreign Affairs Department in Ottawa in 1992, and the first NATO Defense College Eisenhower Fellow in 2015. Moens is the author of *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush: Values, Strategy, Loyalty* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, November 2004), and *Foreign Policy Under Carter: Testing Multiple Advocacy Decision-making* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), as well as

editor and co-editor of various books on security and defence policy.

Heidi Reisinger is a former Senior Research Advisor at the Research Division of the NATO Defense College (2011 to 2015). As an official of the German Ministry of Defense, her previous appointments include: the Federal Chancellery, where she served on the staff of the Foreign and Security Policy Adviser to Chancellor Angela Merkel; in the Federal Ministry of Defense Security Policy Division as Senior Desk Officer for bilateral relations with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia; and at the German Armed Forces College for Information and Communication as a Research Associate and Lecturer on Russian affairs, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as German foreign and defense policy. Reisinger is an Ancien (graduate) of the NATO Defense College Senior Course 111. She studied Slavic Studies, Political Science and Philosophy in Berlin and Moscow. She has published extensively on security policy, and in particular on NATO and Russia. Her commentaries have appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Cicero*.

Following five years of service as an officer in the UK Royal Marine Commandos, **Philip Shetler-Jones** pursued a civilian career in international peace operations with the United Nation (UN), European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Association of Southern Asian Nations (ASEAN). Shetler-Jones took a Masters in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School, Tufts University as a Fulbright Scholar, and a PhD from the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield in the UK. He is currently working as a freelance consultant based in Brussels.

Christopher M. Schnaubelt is a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, focusing on counterinsurgency, stability operations, security force assistance, and partner capacity development. His previous positions include Senior Advisor to the Afghan Deputy Minister of the Interior for Strategy and Policy; Transformation Chair at the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy; and Deputy Director for

National Security Affairs in the US Embassy Baghdad Joint Strategic Plans and Assessments (JSPA) office, with projects that included working directly for Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus as a co-director of the Joint Strategic Assessment Team that drafted a new joint campaign plan to implement the “surge” in 2007. Schnaubelt is also a retired US Army Reserve Colonel with assignments that included brigade-level command of a training regiment, Director of Logistics for Area Support Team-Balkans in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chief of Policy for CJTF-7 in Iraq, and command of two different tank battalions. He holds a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the US Army War College and a PhD in political science from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Brooke A. Smith-Windsor, PhD, is Deputy Head and a founding member of the NATO Defense College (NDC) Research Division (Rome, Italy), where he holds the portfolio of global partnerships (cooperative security) and maritime strategy. Prior to his NDC appointment, he was Director of Strategic Guidance at Canada’s Department of National Defense, where he served for 13 years. Smith-Windsor was a lead facilitator for the NATO Military Committee in coordinating the 28 national Military Representatives’ advice on the development of NATO’s 2010 Strategic Concept and was a strategic advisor to the working group that authored NATO’s 2011 Alliance Maritime Strategy. He is one of only two NATO officials ever invited to attend the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) National Defense University (NDU) in Beijing, China (International Symposium Course 2015). Smith-Windsor is the principal editor of two books on NATO’s global partnerships: *AU-NATO Collaboration: Implications and Prospects* (NDC 2013) and *Enduring NATO, Rising Brazil – Managing International Security in a Recalibrating Global Order* (NDC 2015). His commentaries have appeared in leading current affairs and defense publications such as *Security Dialogue*, *Financial Times*, *Financial Times Deutschland*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Le Figaro*, *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, *Defense News* and *Canadian Military Journal*.

Stéfanie von Hlatky, PhD, is Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University and the founder of Women in International Security-Canada. Prior to her appointment at Queen's, she was a visiting assistant professor at Dartmouth College and a senior researcher at ETH Zurich's Center for Security Studies. Von Hlatky was also a postdoctoral fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Peace and Security Studies and a policy scholar with the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars in Washington, DC. She has published *American Allies in Times of War: The Great Asymmetry* with Oxford University Press, in 2013, and *The Future of Extended Deterrence: The United States, NATO and Beyond* with Georgetown University Press, in 2015 (co-edited with Andreas Wenger). She obtained her PhD in political science from the University of Montreal, where she was also executive director for the Centre for International Peace and Security Studies.

Tsuneo 'Nabe' Watanabe is a director of foreign and security policy research and senior fellow of the Tokyo Foundation, an independent think tank in Tokyo. In October 2008, Watanabe joined the Tokyo Foundation after serving as a senior fellow at the Mitsui Global Strategic Studies Institute in Tokyo since April 2005. In 1995, Watanabe joined the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC, where he has served as visiting research scholar, research associate, fellow, senior fellow and currently adjunct fellow. His publications include *On China's Military Rise* (co-authored, Tamkang University Press, 2015), *NATO after the Cold War* [in Japanese] (co-authored, Minerva Shobou, 2012), *US-China Trading Places in 2025* [in Japanese] (PHP Research Institute, 2011) and *Strategic Yet Strained* (co-authored, Henry Stimson Center, 2008). Watanabe received his D.D.S. from Tohoku University in Japan and his M.A. in political science from the New School University in New York.

Mark Webber is Professor of International Politics and Head of the School of Government and Society at the University of Birmingham. He is author of *The International Politics of Russia and the Successor States* and *Inclusion, Exclusion and the Governance of European Security*, co-author

(with Mike Smith and others) of *Foreign Policy in a Transformed World*; (with Stuart Croft and others) of *The Enlargement of Europe*; and (with James Sperling and Martin Smith) of *NATO's Post-Cold War Trajectory: Decline or Regeneration?* He is the editor of *Russia and Europe: Confrontation or Cooperation?* and co-editor of *Theorising NATO: New perspectives on the Transatlantic Alliance*. He has also had articles on NATO published in *International Affairs*, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *Journal of European Integration*, *Great Decisions* and *Civil Wars*.

List of Acronyms

ABCA	American, British, Canadian, and Australian
ACO	Allied Command Operations
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADIZ	Air Defence Identification Zone
ADMM	ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ANA	Afghanistan National Army
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUSCANNZUKUS	Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
A2AD	Anti-Access Area-Denial
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CAB	Cabinet
CARAT	Cooperation Afloat Readiness Training
CBRN	Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CENTCOM	Central Command
CICIR	Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations
CMF	Combined Maritime Force
CNOOC	China National Offshore Oil Corporation
COMEDS	Chiefs of NATO Military Medical Services
COMLOG WESTPAC	Commander Logistics Group Western Pacific
COSCO	China Ocean Shipping (Group) Company
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
CTF-151	Combined Task Force 151
CUES	Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid (hereditary material)
DSG	Defense Strategic Guidance

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DSPG	Defense Strategic Planning Guidance
EADRCC	Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre
EAS	East Asia Summit
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ETIM	East Turkestan Islamic Movement
EU	European Union
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
FPDA	Five Powers Defence Arrangements
FRANZ	France, Australia, New Zealand
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSOMIA	General Security of Military Information Agreement
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
IMDEX	International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference
INTERFET	International Force for East Timor
IPCP	Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JMSDF	Japan Maritime Self Defence Force
KITA	Korea International Trade Association
KOGAS	Korea Gas Corporation
KORUS FTA	South Korea United States Free Trade Agreement
KPA	Korean People's Army
LCS	Littoral Combat Ship
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MBT	Main Battle Tank
MD	Missile Defense
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MH370/MAS370	Malaysia Airlines Flight 370
MIO	Maritime Interdiction Operations
MNNA	Major Non-NATO Ally
MSC-HOA	Maritime Security Center—Horn of Africa

NAPCI	Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NFTC	NATO Flying Training in Canada
NDC	NATO Defense College
NMIOTC	NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre
NMS	National Military Strategy
NSS	National Security Strategy
NZ	New Zealand
OBOR	One Belt, One Road
OCIMF	Oil Companies International Maritime Forum
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAP-T	Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PM	Prime Minister
POSOW	Paramilitary Operations Short Of War
PRC	People's Republic of China
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia
RIMPAC	Rim of the Pacific Exercise
RMB	Resources, Markets and Bases
ROK	Republic of Korea
RSN	Republic of Singapore Navy
R&D	Research & Development
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SACT	Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCS	South China Sea

SDD	Seoul Defense Dialogue
SDF	Self Defense Forces
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization
SFU	Simon Fraser University
SHADE	Shared Awareness and De-confliction
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
SOF	Special Force Operations
SOFEX	Special Operations Force Exercise
STANAG	Standardization Agreement
STRIKFORNATO	Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Air Defense
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNPKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USFK	United States Forces Korea
XPS	Exercise Panzer Strike
3G	Global Governance Group

Foreword

Over the past decade, the centre of world power has been quietly shifting from Europe to the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, NATO, which includes Pacific-rim countries, is considering the substance and direction of its cooperative security relationships with its four Asia-Pacific Partners – Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. These nations, and other regional countries, which have unique insights into their own geographic and strategic environments, are in turn considering the way in which they might best interact and cooperate with the Alliance.

Regional proximity and collective defence commitments will always be paramount for NATO, but it cannot be the defining perspective in an increasingly globalised, interconnected and uncertain world. The rise in wealth and defence expenditure in the Asia-Pacific region is occurring in a part of the world where numerous simmering and unresolved maritime territorial claims, disputes and nuclear crises exist. NATO is not immune from such developments. NATO does not have the luxury to choose the future strategic challenges it will face.

While we live in a multi-polar world, it is clear that the relationship between the United States, the leading member of NATO and a significant Pacific power, and a rising and prosperous China, will – more than any other – determine the outlook for international security and prosperity, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. As China, the world's second largest economy, has grown economically, it has invested some of its growth into modernising its military. That is normal and natural. Some competition between the United States and China is inevitable, but both seek stability, not conflict, and this should be actively encouraged by NATO and its partners in the region.

The global maritime trading system, in particular, is one that no one owns but all benefit from. The impact of trade, containerisation and just-in-time supply chains means that good order at sea in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific is just as important to NATO members and its partners, as the security of trade and shipping in the Atlantic and Mediterranean is important to all nations in the Asia-Pacific region. It is a system that can only work effectively if there is a strong and determined cooperative and collaborative rules-based international effort to keep the global commons functioning. It is an area where the geo-strategic interests of NATO and its partners increasingly intersect.

As the global interdependence between commerce and security, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, takes on increasing importance, NATO, the world's premier political-military alliance, and one of the most successful regional security enterprises in history, has, as this book variously underscores, a clear global cooperative security interest in the region. It is an interest that needs to manifest itself in clear and precise, mutually defined and driven partnership objectives, opportunities and engagement, without alienating, and preferably in cooperation with China, which has every prospect to play a constructive role in helping to maintain security in the region. But such promise will not be realized by inertia. Thus, this publication represents a timely and most welcome investment in charting thoughtful action for the future.

*Rear Admiral Allan du Toit, Royal Australian Navy
Australian Military Representative to NATO, 2013-2015*

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*Alexander Moens, Simon Fraser University
Brooke A. Smith-Windsor, NATO Defense College*

Introduction

The Future of Geopolitics will be decided in Asia

Brooke A. Smith-Windsor

Towards the US rebalance

In her seminal article in the November 2011 edition of *Foreign Policy*, then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton candidly stated:

*The future of geopolitics will be decided in Asia ... and the United States should be right at the center of the action. From opening new markets for American businesses to curbing nuclear proliferation to keeping the sea lanes free for commerce and navigation, our work abroad holds the key to our prosperity and security at home.*¹

While the Clinton statement went on to stress the diplomatic and economic, as much as the security, dimensions of the so-called US “pivot” to Asia-Pacific, two months later the US Department of Defense offered further clarity regarding the strategic military implications: “While the military will continue to contribute to security globally, *we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region.*” The document went on to state:

*Our relationships with Asian allies and key partners are critical to the future stability and growth of the region. We will emphasize our existing alliances, which provide a vital foundation for Asia-Pacific security. We will also expand our networks of cooperation with emerging partners throughout the Asia-Pacific to ensure collective capability and capacity for securing common interests.*²

This was accompanied by an announcement the same month by then US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta that the US would withdraw two

1 Hillary Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century,” *Foreign Policy* 189, Nov 2011, pp. 56-63.

2 US Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012.

combat brigades from Europe. Mohan Malik, an American contributor to this volume, helps to place these decisions in context:

At the heart of these geopolitical equations is a major power shift toward China, with significant ramifications for regional balance of power, alliances, international institutions, and world order in the early 21st century. The struggle for dominance over “contested commons” (maritime, cyber and outer space) is intensifying. Strategic concerns loom large as China’s growing ambition, power and reach run up against the interests of old, established powers.

The American defense policy recalibration came at a juncture when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)—Washington’s steadfast Euro-Atlantic Alliance since 1949—was itself more engaged outside its immediate treaty area than ever before. Its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, which included contributions from Asia-Pacific partners, was approaching a peak deployment of approximately 130 000 troops, and it had just concluded the first-ever out-of-area combat mission where European Allies rather than the US were in the lead—Libya—conceivably contributing to Washington’s calculus to increasingly leave the security of Europe’s periphery to Europeans, while it focussed shrinking defense resources (with then approaching sequestration) elsewhere. But that did not mean that some European Allies were not concerned that the pivot or rebalance might be the harbinger of a wholesale American withdrawal from their continent, even if the May 2012 Chicago Summit Declaration of NATO Heads of State and Government had optimistically declared that:

NATO-Russia cooperation is of strategic importance as it contributes to creating a common space of peace, stability and security. We remain determined to build a lasting and inclusive peace, together with Russia, in the Euro-Atlantic area, based upon the goals, principles and commitments of the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the Rome Declaration. We want to see a true strategic partnership with Russia with the expectation of

*reciprocity from Russia.*³

Cognizant of lingering reservations about American long-term intentions vis-à-vis Europe, by November of the same year the US Security of State decided to address them head on:

*... we look to our longtime European allies to help improve security and build new economic relationships in Asia. And let me be clear: Our pivot to Asia is not a pivot away from Europe. On the contrary, we want Europe to engage more in Asia, along with us to see the region not only as a market, but as a focus of common strategic engagement.*⁴

The statement is notable in that it served to both reassure yet continue to reorient European defense expectations: the US would certainly not abandon NATO, however, the *quid pro quo* was that Europeans would be expected to join Americans in increasingly thinking about how to address challenges and support Western allies in an Asia-Pacific region home to the globe's fastest growing defense budgets, nuclear proliferation, and (to borrow from Malik) increasingly contested commons, all the while boasting two of the world's largest economies⁵ and the fastest population and economic growth rates (already accounting for a quarter of European Union exports alone).

The choice of the phrase "*continue to* reorient European defense expectations" towards Asia-Pacific is a deliberate one. It could not be otherwise as NATO (and by implication *all* of its 26 European members with Canada) had already begun to pay greater attention to the region in the run-up to Clinton's respective 2011 and 2012 statements cited above. Notwithstanding the Asia-Pacific contributions to ISAF mentioned previously, the following is illustrative but by no means exhaustive:

3 NATO, *Chicago Summit Declaration*, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Chicago on 20 May 2012, Press Release (2012) 062.

4 Hillary Rodham Clinton, "US and Europe: A Revitalized Global Partnership," A Statesman's Forum with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 29 November 2012, http://www.brookings.edu/-/media/events/2012/11/29-clinton/20121129_transatlantic_clinton.pdf (accessed 2 December 2015).

5 China surpassed Japan as the world's second largest economy in 2010.

- Since 2008, NATO counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden working alongside force contributions from Australia, China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and Singapore
- In February 2012, the first-ever visit by a NATO military delegation to China.
- New Zealand-NATO, *Individual Partnership Cooperation Programme* (IPCP), June 2012: “Despite our geographic distance, the partnership between New Zealand and NATO continues to grow in relevance: we are affected by, and can affect, security developments beyond our borders.”⁶
- Australia-NATO *Joint Political Declaration*, June 2012: “We recognise that while Australia and the member nations of NATO are geographically distant, we would benefit from close cooperation on the global security challenges. In our inter-linked, globalized world, we must have a wider outlook on our security interests. We understand the need to manage effectively risks and threats to our mutual interest, such as political instability from failed states, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and cyberattacks.”⁷

And the momentum did not stop in 2012. Two notable milestones occurred the following year:

- In April 2013, the first-ever visit by a NATO Secretary General to the Republic of Korea: “*NATO’s partnership with the Republic of Korea is still young, but it has great potential.*”⁸
- Japan-NATO *Joint Political Declaration*, April 2013: “*Although*

6 New Zealand-NATO, *Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme between New Zealand and NATO*, 4 June 2012, <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/downloads/disarmament/New%20Zealand%20-%20NATO%20Partnership%20and%20Cooperation%20Programme.pdf> (accessed 2 December 2015).

7 Australia-NATO, *Joint Political Declaration*, 14 June 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_94097.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed 2 December 2015).

8 NATO, “First visit by a NATO Secretary General to Republic of Korea focuses on cooperation,” 11 April 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_99519.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed 2 December 2015).

the security environments are different in the Euro-Atlantic region and the Asia-Pacific region, and notwithstanding geographic distance between Japan and the member nations of NATO, we believe that in a more globalized and interlinked world, each of these two regions is affected by, and can affect, political and security developments beyond its borders.”⁹

It is important to recall that these occurrences are wholly consistent with NATO’s grand strategy as articulated in its prevailing 2010 *Strategic Concept*,¹⁰ which affirms:

The citizens of our countries rely on NATO to defend Allied nations, to deploy robust military forces where and when required for our security, and to help promote common security with our partners around the globe ...

The Alliance is affected by, and can affect, political and security developments beyond its borders. The Alliance will engage actively to enhance international security, through partnership with relevant countries and other international organisations; by contributing actively to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament; and by keeping the door to membership in the Alliance open to all European democracies that meet NATO’s standards ...

NATO remains the unique and essential transatlantic forum for consultations on all matters that affect the territorial integrity, political independence and security of its members, as set out in Article 4 of the Washington Treaty. Any security issue of interest to any Ally can be brought to the NATO table, to share information, exchange views and, where appropriate, forge common approaches.¹¹

9 Japan-NATO, *Joint Political Declaration between Japan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 15 April 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_99562.htm (accessed 2 December 2015).

10 NATO, “Active Engagement, Modern Defense,” *Strategic Concept* for the Defense and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Lisbon, 19-20 November 2010, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf (accessed 2 December 2015).

11 The Washington Treaty refers to NATO’s founding treaty, *The North Atlantic Treaty* agreed in Washington DC on 4 April 1949.

Thus, contrary to an oft-heard popular myth, future membership in the Alliance and therefore access to its collective defense guarantee (Article 5 of the Washington Treaty) for Asia-Pacific nations is clearly not on the cards. Yet, prospects for greater cooperation with them and their various multilateral organs in crisis management and counter-proliferation, for instance, certainly is. By the same token, it is also important to acknowledge that Article 5 has a regional dimension even if not for Asia-Pacific partners—it being applicable to Pacific North America north of the Tropic of Cancer (Article 6 of the Washington Treaty). To reinforce the point, Philip Shetler-Jones, an additional contributor to this volume, recalls the words of former US Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder:

*... we also see threats looming on the horizon—including from far beyond Europe. North Korean missiles are an Article 5 threat to the United States and Canada just as Syrian missiles are an Article 5 threat to Turkey and Europe. And we want to make sure that we face these threats collectively, as true partners. So the question is not whether Washington will choose Asia or Europe. As my former boss, Secretary Hillary Clinton, used to say ... we Americans know how to walk and chew gum at the same time. The question is whether our NATO Allies will make the commitments necessary to face 21st century dangers together. Our Alliance depends on our collective ability to stand up to threats against any member state—no matter what their geographic origin.*¹²

With this perspective in mind, it should perhaps come as no surprise that in early 2013 NATO's strategic commander charged with anticipating and planning for the future—Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)—specifically called on the NATO Defense College (NDC) Research Division to initiate a project to assess “how Europe, North America, and the Asia-Pacific intersect and what it means for NATO.”¹³

12 Ivo Daalder, “Remarks at Carnegie Europe,” Brussels, 17 June 2013, <http://nato.usmission.gov/sp-06172013.html> (accessed 2 December 2014).

13 Jean-Paul Paloméros, General, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, “ACT Comments and Recommendations to the Draft Research Activities for 2013,” Enclosure to SACT Letter to NDC Commandant dated 30 January 2013.

Planning thus began for a track 1.5 dialogue between representatives of NATO nations and like-minded Asia-Pacific Partners to be symbolically convened in one member state's gateway to the Pacific—Vancouver, Canada. The essence of the issues to be addressed in May 2014 was to be centered on future prospects for NATO engagement *with* Asia-Pacific (building on the productive collaboration in ISAF and the counter-piracy mission off Somalia) as well as the possibility of engagement of the Alliance *in* Asia-Pacific. Specifically, the following questions were circulated to prospective dialogue participants:

- What are the implications for NATO of its key ally's strategic pivot or rebalancing to Asia and how do states in the region interpret this pivot? In what ways can NATO be helpful in creating common perceptions and practices that make the rebalancing question more inter-regional in scope and substance?
- What are the interests of European and North American members of NATO in working with states of the Asia-Pacific region and, by the same token, what are the interests of the latter in working with NATO? In what ways can the NATO Alliance connect with Asia-Pacific security and defense fora to identify common interests and facilitate institutional connections on these?
- NATO has had a decade of specific cooperation with four Asian partners (Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Japan) which was especially focused on the ISAF operations in Afghanistan. Given the winding down of that mission, how can these ties be maintained after 2014 and used to facilitate even wider and deeper cooperation?
- Asia-Pacific security challenges span the spectrum of traditional sovereignty questions, current hot topics such as piracy as well as long-term comprehensive security issues. How can NATO contribute to addressing these regional security concerns?

And then Crimea happened.

Fallout from Crimea

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and illicit foment of unrest and violence in Eastern Ukraine, almost overnight turned post-Cold War assumptions about the relative security and stability of the European continent on their head. NATO was once more challenged to look long and hard at the credibility of its collective defense guarantee in Europe.

For several Alliance members bordering Russia, talk of Asia-Pacific suddenly seemed an unwelcome diversion and at worst an affront to the Alliance's core purpose to defend the European democratic space. Thus, as the May 2014 Vancouver dialogue on the US rebalance approached, the questions tabled were no longer simply about "NATO *with* and/or *in* Asia-Pacific," but *whether* the Alliance should even bother expending further resources vis-à-vis that part of the world. Ever mindful of the "tyranny of the present" and the fact that in an Alliance of 28 member states' diverse threat perceptions and national priorities must be taken into account in shaping NATO policy, the latter question was added to the Vancouver deliberations but not to the exclusion of the original ones.

The approach proved prescient. While since Crimea, the Alliance has reaffirmed "its strong commitment to collective defence and to ensuring security and assurance for all Allies"¹⁴ as set down at the September 2014 Wales Summit, its global perspective and commitment to crisis management and cooperative security (partnerships) has been retained. This includes the Asia-Pacific. As NATO's Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow affirmed a month after the Wales Summit:

NATO is committed to long-term engagement ... with all of Asia, to making that engagement both political and practical. Improving maritime security is a key area for future practical cooperation ... I see a bright future for the partnership between NATO and [our] Asia-Pacific partners.

¹⁴ NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration*, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales, 5 September 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm (accessed 2 December 2015).

*By working together and forging a common understanding of where our interests coincide, we can shape decision-making, maximize our influence in world affairs, and promote the international rules-based order that has served our nations and our peoples so very well for such a very long time.*¹⁵

Navigating the policy options

So it is to this backdrop that this selection of original manuscripts was compiled. Taken together they are representative of a policy debate that is by no means concluded but, quite to the contrary, continues to mature in both Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific regions. The scholars represented in these pages, most of whom gathered alongside officials for the May 2014 Vancouver discussions, were encouraged to take subsequent months for further reflection based on the peer review of their original interventions as well as relevant international developments. The latter has included, for example: Russia's 30 year gas deal with China in view of European sanctions over Crimea;¹⁶ the announcement of a Russian-led "Eurasian Union;"¹⁷ Japan's reinterpretation of Article 9 of its post-War constitution opening up prospects for the greater employment of the Self Defense Forces (SDF) alongside Allied militaries;¹⁸ and a marked increase in tensions in the South China Sea with Washington's most overt challenge to Beijing to date as regards maintaining freedom of navigation and the post-War rules-based international order.¹⁹

15 Alexander Vershbow, "Multilateral security cooperation: 'From conflict to cooperation,'" Opening remarks by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow at the Seoul Defense Dialogue, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 30 October 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_114268.htm (accessed 2 December 2015).

16 "Russia signs 30-year gas deal with China," *BBC*, 21 May 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-27503017> (accessed 2 December 2015).

17 John Henley, "A Briefer on Vladimir Putin's Eurasian Dream," *The Guardian*, 18 February 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2014/feb/18/brief-primer-vladimir-putin-eurasian-union-trade> (accessed 2 December 2015).

18 Matt Ford, "Japan Curtails Its Pacifist Stance," *The Atlantic*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/japan-pacifism-article-nine/406318/> (accessed 2 December 2015).

19 Ben Blanchard and Andrea Shalal, "Angry China shadows US warship near man-made islands," *Reuters*, 28 October 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/28/us-southchinasea-usa-idUSKCN0SK2AC20151028#PJVKhVF0CK0q9IHW.97> (accessed 2 December 2015).

One central theme to emerge throughout the chapters contained herein is that when it comes to NATO's relations with Asia-Pacific, it is not an either or proposition, but rather a question of degree. Within this collection, even the most conservative of commentators on the issue—the British scholar Mark Webber—concedes that the Alliance cannot afford to be “invisible” vis-à-vis the region. Indeed, no contribution could be considered remotely guilty—to borrow from Webber's compatriot and most vocal challenger in these pages, Philip Shetler-Jones—of “ignoring the Asian dimension in Western strategy [which] is tantamount to geostrategic malpractice.”

Part 1—*The Rebalance in Context*—by two American scholars explains the evolving geopolitical dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region and traces the origins of the US rebalance in addressing them. Mohan Malik observes that “On a whole range of issues, China, along with Russia, is challenging the legal and security institutional framework of the post-Second World War international order built by the United States and its allies.” Depending on the policy choices made on both sides of the equation, he paints a picture of four possible alternative futures. These are useful for NATO strategists in understanding what the Alliance should be prepared for out to 2030 as the center of global geopolitics shifts to the Asia-Pacific region, as well as in informing policy choices with respect to shaping desired outcomes or end states. Christopher Schnaubelt follows with an historic resume of the US involvement in Asia-Pacific up to the present rebalance. He explains the current hierarchy of strategic documents setting out the policy and observes that in an era of shrinking US defense budgets and shifting priorities, Europe inevitably will be expected to do more. To reinforce the point, he cites US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter: “... if Europe wants to be a force in the world it needs to be more than a moral and political economic force, which Europe is because it shares many of our values and demonstrates them around the world. But it has to have the military power that goes with that as well ... ”

The second part—*Understanding NATO Policy Options*—begins with the question, “What should NATO do about Asia?” to which Philip Shetler-Jones in essence replies a great deal. A Herculean call for Alliance

engagement with and in Asia-Pacific is made based on the avowed lessons of history, prevailing circumstances, and future imperatives. Mark Webber, while, as pointed out above, does not exclude some interaction, presents the opposite, minimalist extreme. The New Zealand scholar, Robert Ayson, follows with a cautious, middle-of-the-road approach in assessing Alliance policy options. He countenances against expectations for structured official linkages between NATO and regional multinational fora (e.g. ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defense Ministers Plus, East Asia Summit) given their diverse (including sometimes undemocratic) memberships, an already crowded institutional security architecture, and prevailing antagonisms to formal, multilateral defense alliances in certain quarters. Instead, he sees bilateral contacts with like-minded, liberal democratic countries from Asia-Pacific still holding out the best prospects for cooperation with NATO and its member states. And even here, rather than direct involvement in the region (which he acknowledges might be welcomed by some but risks antagonizing China if not handled carefully), the Alliance's value-added is largely positioned as a purveyor of functional expertise in areas such as cyber and CBRN²⁰ defense and humanitarian assistance/disaster response (HA/DR). The Canadian scholar, Stéfanie von Hlatky, concludes Part 2 by arguing that "NATO is implicated in the US rebalance by association with its indispensable member state." She offers a number of policy choices in response: deepening relations with former ISAF Asia-Pacific partners, "following the US lead deeper into the region"; engaging in a "counter-pivot" to another region (e.g. sub-Saharan Africa) to share the burden of global security and stabilization efforts with the US; or (in contrast to Ayson) to forge closer contacts with regional multilateral fora and activities as confidence building measures rather than to contain a rising China.

Part 3—*Regional Perspectives on NATO Policy Choices*—considers the specific national viewpoints and policy considerations of a number of Asia-Pacific countries vis-à-vis relations with NATO. The Australian analyst, Stephan Frühling, stresses shared values and historic links with

20 Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear.

Anglo-Saxon member states of the Alliance as an underlying driver behind episodic Australian-NATO relations, which can be traced as far back as the early 1950s. While geographic distance and differing strategic priorities nevertheless translated into relative isolation between the two actors for most of the Cold War, that soon changed in the mid-2000s with joint involvement in Afghanistan. Looking to the rationale for continued Australian-NATO relations in the post-ISAF future, he suggests Canberra's emphasis will be on functional, military-technical cooperation ("NATO as a cost-effective way of cooperating with high-end military establishments of which it shares its basic values ...") in such areas as cyber, amphibious operations, ballistic missile defense and logistics. Prospects for continued maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean are also profiled. The Japanese scholar Tsuneo 'Nabe' Watanabe similarly underscores the potential for functional cooperation with the Alliance in areas such as cyber, counter-proliferation and HA/DR, but in this case (and in contrast to Ayson) also with a view to direct NATO contacts with regional multilateral fora (e.g. ASEAN): "NATO's cooperation in building the Asian security architecture would not alarm China or other Asian countries ... given its geographical and political distance from the Asia-Pacific. In addition, major NATO members, such as Germany, France, Britain and Canada have close economic ties with China." The political value-added of cooperation with NATO also profiles significantly in terms of assuaging regional fears about, and providing legitimacy for the greater use of the SDF in international peace support operations. As the author frankly states, "Japan is more interested in legitimacy than capability." As with the Australian and Japanese contributions, the subsequent chapter by South Korean scholar Geunwook Lee downplays any interest or expectation on the part of his country in terms of looking to NATO to guarantee its own security—this being handled through longstanding bilateral arrangements with the US. Here too, however, the functional as well as political value-added of NATO engagement is highlighted: functionally, in terms of sharing lessons learned from Afghanistan to prepare for a potential ROK-led stabilization mission in the event of North Korea's collapse; politically,

in terms of managing possible Korean unification and the reconciliation of Japan's Second World War legacy with regional actors like the ROK, based on the German-NATO experience in Europe. The final chapter of Part 3 presents perspectives from Singapore—not an official Alliance “Partner Across the Globe” but a country having worked closely with NATO in Afghanistan over many years. As its author, Yee-Kuang Heng, explains in looking to the future: “Singapore’s pragmatic approach to developing ad hoc partnerships means it can potentially adopt a plug and play approach with NATO, based on functional cooperation on certain issues within the Asia-Pacific region.” While like many states in the region ever wary not to “be seen as belonging to an anti-China Western posse,” Singapore, he suggests, would likely consider enhanced relations on a-political issues such as HA/DR, submarine rescue and military medicine among others. This would include through bilateral as well as regional multilateral frameworks and exercises. Interest is also expressed in NATO as a shared “risk manager” with Asian partners on issues such as piracy, terrorism, proliferation and conflict resolution. Singapore is additionally positioned as an ideally-suited “connector hub” for such efforts provided a “global collective security” versus “more narrowly focused ‘European collective defense’” NATO is sustained.

The last part of this volume—*Great Power Counter-Balance?*—examines the implications for NATO of apparent moves on the part of Russia to pivot East and China to pivot West in tandem with the US rebalance to Asia-Pacific. Two German analysts, Andreas Heinemann-Grüder and Heidi Reisinger, take into account developments such as the previously mentioned Eurasian Union project of President Vladimir Putin juxtaposed with President Xi Jinping’s “Silk Economic Belt, and Maritime Silk Road—One Belt, One Road” initiative. Recent energy and arms deals between the two powers are likewise addressed. In the end, however, they conclude that the respective motivations behind such initiatives are (over the long term at the very least) divergent and the relationship fundamentally asymmetric (with China in ascendance): “China enters the relationship as the far stronger partner and is not likely to sacrifice its integration into the world

economy and its access to Western markets and technology in the name of a ‘holy authoritarian alliance’ with Russia.” The following chapter by the American scholar Christina Lin focuses on the China’s movement westward across the One Belt, One Road to the Greater Middle East or MENA region including through increasing long-range maritime power projection and overseas basing. Rather than view such developments as a threat to Western interests, however, Lin argues that they represent an opportunity for NATO and its Asia-Pacific Partners to cooperate with China on a range of issues, the lack of shared values aside. These include maritime security (building on the positive experiences of the international counter-piracy coalition off the Horn of Africa), counterterrorism (given a shared interest in combatting Islamist extremism), crisis management and HA/DR, all to jointly forge MENA stabilization post-Arab Spring, and to possibly serve as a model for future, similar cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region itself. Where Western and Chinese interests in MENA deviate, Lin argues for confidence building measures to mitigate the risk of miscalculation and escalation.

* * *

As the preceding paragraphs make clear, navigating NATO policy options vis-à-vis Asia-Pacific necessarily begins from the perspective that the region is far from monolithic. So too, therefore, must any start to reading this book. Whether considering NATO *with* Asia-Pacific or NATO *in* Asia-Pacific, there will never be a one size fits all approach. Different histories, different value systems, different geographic settings, and different political-economic interests and prospects will motivate regional actors to cooperate with NATO (or not) for different reasons, on different subjects, in different places through different means and different mechanisms. With this in mind, the following pages offer a myriad of ideas for the differentiated and judicious policy choices that the Alliance will be compelled to make in response. They should be explored, just as they are offered, with an open mind and in the spirit of academic freedom.

PART 1

THE REBALANCE IN CONTEXT

Geopolitics: Asia Out of Balance?

*Mohan Malik*¹

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Indo-Pacific region, which spans from the western Pacific Ocean to the western Indian Ocean along the eastern coast of Africa, stands at a crossroads. Home to several rising, industrializing, contending powers and some fragile states, this region is where geopolitics meets geoeconomics and traditional security issues intersect and merge with non-traditional transnational security issues. The Obama administration's efforts to "rebalance" the US role in the Indo-Pacific are influenced by rapidly changing geopolitical equations. At the heart of these equations is a major power shift: The region's center of gravity is moving toward Asia's giants – China and India. This has significant ramifications for the regional balance of power, alliance networks, international institutions and emerging world order in the early 21st century. China, however, is the most important piece of the geopolitical puzzle.

The Shangri-La meeting in Singapore in May 2014 saw some sharp exchanges between Chinese and other participants. Beijing's deployment of an oil rig protected by more than 80 naval vessels in the South China Sea, four days after President Barack Obama's "reassurance trip" to China's East Asian neighbours in April 2014, was widely seen as a deliberate and calculated provocation. Yet China's move fits a pattern of advancing territorial claims on its periphery through coercion, intimidation, and the threat of force, using what may be called "paramilitary operations short of war" (POSOW). China's drilling rig was also a political statement of Beijing's resolve and capability to control and exploit the South China Sea

¹ A shorter version of this paper, "China's Dangerous Game of Geopolitical Poker," was published in *The National Interest* (18 June 2014).

and deny it to others – and this message is meant as much for Washington as for Tokyo, Hanoi, Manila, Jakarta, and New Delhi. While exploring oil in the disputed waters, the \$1 billion oil rig supposedly drilled a big hole in Washington’s “Pacific pivot” strategy, insofar as it undermined Washington’s credibility as a regional security anchor or security guarantor. In essence, it made a mockery of Obama’s security assurances to regional countries against Chinese coercive tactics aimed at changing facts on the ground and in the water. Beijing calculates that neither the mighty United States nor China’s weak and small neighbours will respond with force to counter Chinese incremental efforts to turn the South China Sea (SCS) into a “Chinese lake.” China is known for doing things in small steps and piecemeal, quietly, patiently, eventually bringing the pieces together “when the conditions are ripe.”

The key reason for China’s aggressive posturing on the seas is the tectonic shift in Beijing’s strategic environment that occurred following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. For the first time in its long history, China no longer faces any threat whatsoever on its northern frontiers and this immense geopolitical development largely explains the Chinese military’s expansionist moves on its eastern seaboard and south-western frontiers. It is worth recalling that the successive Chinese dynasties built the Great Wall to keep out the troublesome northern Mongol and Manchu tribes that repeatedly overran Han China. In 1433, faced with increasingly bold raids by Mongols and a growing threat from other Central Asian peoples to its land borders in the northwest, China’s Ming rulers halted Admiral Zheng He’s expensive ocean voyages and burned the great fleet in its moorings so as to concentrate their resources on securing the Middle Kingdom’s land borders. From the 18th to the 20th centuries, threats – first from the ever-expanding Czarist Russia and then from the Soviet Union – kept the focus of Chinese military planners on their northern frontiers. Except for a very brief period of bonhomie in the 1950s, Beijing was preoccupied throughout the Cold War with the threat from the north until the Soviet collapse in 1991.

Shifting Alignments

Despite Moscow's geopolitical concerns about Chinese encroachments in Russia's Far East and the loss of Central Asia to China's growing influence, President Vladimir Putin – faced with isolation by Europe and the United States following Russia's annexation of Crimea and continuing intervention in eastern Ukraine – has accepted unpalatable terms from China to clinch a massive gas pipeline deal that will diversify Russian energy export markets away from Europe, and make China Russia's major ally.² While a re-energized Russia is in an expansionist mode in its "Near Abroad," a rising China is seeking to establish its sovereignty in its "Near Seas." For its part, China has been at odds with Washington over confrontations with its maritime neighbours in the East and South China seas. On a whole range of issues, China, along with Russia, is challenging the legal and security institutional framework of the post-Second World War international order built by the United States and its allies. Even though China has backed Russia neither on Georgia nor on Crimea, Putin believes the ties between Moscow and Beijing are at their "peak." As a former Chinese Ambassador to Russia, Li Hui, put it: "Sino-Russian relations have never been as good as they are these days."³ Nursing grievances over their perceived slights and humiliations by the West and inspired by their nationalist narratives of past greatness and grandeur, both Beijing and Moscow seem determined to re-establish their pre-dominance over their regional spheres of influence and keep others at bay. Admiral Jonathan Greenert recently admitted that China's new air and naval capabilities have caused the United States Navy to change its deployment posture "inside the first island chain" (China's identification of a maritime zone from Japan and Taiwan to the Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia, delimiting the East and South China Seas).⁴

2 Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, *Vladimir Putin faces giving ground in China to seal gas deal*, Telegraph, May 19, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/oilandgas/10842418/Vladimir-Putin-faces-giving-ground-in-China-to-seal-gas-deal.html> (accessed 20 August 2014).

3 Mu Cui, *Putin in China: A win-win situation for Beijing*, 20 May 2014, <http://www.dw.de/putin-in-china-a-win-win-situation-for-beijing/a-17648162> (accessed 24 September 2014).

4 Jacqueline Newmyer Deal, *Chinese Dominance Isn't Certain*, The National Interest, 22 April 2014, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/chinese-dominance-isnt-certain-10340> (accessed 24 April 2014).

If a “Sino-Russian alliance” is being resurrected, then in a complete reversal of roles from the early Cold War era, China – not an economically and demographically shrinking Russia – is the stronger partner in this alliance. As in the past, entanglements in the West have once again led Russia to make concessions in the East. Beijing’s game plan is to make Russia economically dependent on China, just as the West has come to depend on cheap Chinese manufactured goods. India will need to recalibrate ties with a Russia that plays second fiddle to China and joins Beijing in arming Pakistan. Not surprisingly, the media are awash with reports of a “new Sino-Russian strategic alliance threatening to dominate [the Eurasia] heartland,” thereby signaling a “nightmare of Mackinderesque proportions for Washington.” Some envision a Beijing-Moscow-Teheran axis, wedded to an expansive symbiosis of energy, trade and security across the Eurasian land mass.⁵ Though Russia’s pivot to Asia is motivated by turbulence on the western front and comes from a position of relative economic weakness and demographic decline, Washington is nonetheless being increasingly challenged by states seeking to revise regional balances of power in a manner detrimental to US interests and the interests of its friends and allies. President Obama’s decision to step up military operations against Islamic extremists in Iraq and Syria has raised fresh doubts in Beijing and Moscow about the direction of Washington’s “Pacific pivot.”

Thus, the public perception of Asia as being out of balance is widespread at the beginning of the 21st century. America’s war-weariness in times of fiscal constraints is apparently emboldening revisionist powers China and Russia. The Obama Administration’s efforts to “rebalance” the US role in the Indo-Pacific were influenced by public perceptions of strategic imbalance and rapidly changing geopolitical equations. At the heart of these geopolitical equations is a major power shift toward China, with significant ramifications for regional balance of power, alliances, international institutions, and world order in the early 21st century. The struggle for

5 Pepe Escobar, “China pivot fuels Eurasian century,” *Asia Times*, 19 May 2014.

dominance over “contested commons” (maritime, cyber and outer space) is intensifying. Strategic concerns loom large as China’s growing ambition, power and reach run up against the interests of old, established powers.

There is an interesting debate amongst China-watchers on whether China will be a different kind of global hegemon, or behave just like the United States and other hegemonic powers in the past.⁶ Chinese leaders, of course, lose no opportunity to eschew any hegemonic aspirations or superpower behavior. Yet, official claims to the contrary notwithstanding, China is behaving just as other rising powers have behaved in history: it is laying down new markers, drawing new lines in the land, air, water, sand and snow all around its periphery, seeking to expand its territorial and maritime frontiers, forming and reforming institutions, and coercing others to fall in line. Map-making seems to be a growth industry in China.⁷ Beijing’s international behavior (i.e., its “exercise of power”) neither is nor will be different from that of other great powers. The Indo-Pacific region is thus on the threshold of change: challenges, opportunities and uncertainties abound. I argue that seven major strategic shifts will determine China’s strategic behavior in the years and decades to come, and lay out four alternative strategic futures for Asia’s geopolitical landscape to the year 2030.

Asia’s Rising Powers Versus Europe’s Retiring Powers

Power in the international system is always relative and ever-shifting. States rise and fall primarily due to their uneven rates of economic growth, wars, domestic disorder, and imperial overstretch. Some states grow more rapidly than others, thanks to domestic policies and institutions, technological

6 Zackary Keck, *China Won’t Be a Different Kind of Global Power*, The Diplomat, 2 July 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/07/china-wont-be-a-different-kind-of-global-power/>; Chen Dingding, *China Is a Different Kind of Global Power*, The Diplomat, 28 June 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/china-is-a-different-kind-of-global-power/> (accessed 29 June 2014).

7 Since 2009, when Beijing officially stated its nine-dash line claim to over 80 percent of the South China Sea, the Chinese government has spent billions of Yuan on reprinting new official maps (and shredding old ones) so as to show the South China Sea as part of “national blue territory.”

breakthroughs, and political leaders' ability to mobilize national resources that place them at an advantage over others.

During the past three decades, China has demonstrated tremendous ability to plan and mobilize national resources to implement goal-oriented, timely action strategies in economic, diplomatic, and military arenas. One could even say that the global impact of China's success will be "*Chigantic*" (amend the Oxford Dictionary). If China can sustain its growth, its GDP, military, and R&D spending could rival those of the United States in quantitative terms. China has the potential to emerge as a peer competitor, far more powerful than the former Soviet Union.

No rising power is ever a status quo power. Power is, by nature, expansionist. It is actually intoxicating. In 2009, the bestseller in China was a book called *Unhappy China*. When the world is their oyster, why should China be so unhappy, one might ask. Historically, rising powers are highly suspicious, even paranoid: they think others are out to get them, and stop their march to glory and greatness. Expecting too much too soon, they overreact. That sometimes leads to their unraveling, as was the case with Japan and Germany. Rising powers also tend to be impatient, and often take risks. They flex their muscles and test the resolve of old, established powers. They seek to benefit from the weakness, not in capabilities, but in resolve of the established powers, by employing asymmetric strategies to chip away at their hegemony.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, China has transitioned from a "hide and bide" policy to one of seizing opportunities, taking the lead and showing off its capabilities to shape others' choices in its favor. The postwar international order has depended on three factors: US alliances, uncontested American maritime dominance, and a stable, unmolested balance of power. All these are now being challenged by China's growing power and purpose. China no longer sees US primacy as serving its interests. One Chinese military officer observed: "American forward presence and alliances constrain China's future growth and goals in the region."⁸ Beijing dubs US alliances "relics of

8 This and next quote based on remarks by a Chinese naval officer at APCSS-CASS workshop in Beijing,

the Cold War” which must be dismantled to restore what it calls “natural power balance in the region” (translation: a Sino-centric hierarchical order of pre-modern Asia). It is not in China’s DNA to play second fiddle to any other power. Moscow learned this the hard way in the 1950s. Now it is the turn of the many Americans who have long dreamt of co-opting China as a junior partner. Many would argue that regimes that do not share power or abide by the rule of law in their own domestic affairs behave identically on the international scene.

China’s Asia strategy is to undermine the United States’ credibility as the regional security guarantor. Beijing’s diplomatic rhetoric notwithstanding, the “new model of great power relations” seeks US recognition of China’s primacy in Asia in a geopolitical deal that limits Washington’s regional role and presence, and relegates traditional US allies (especially Japan) to the sidelines. This push and shove will continue for decades, because the Chinese see the US as “in irreversible retreat, and growing weaker as China grows stronger.”⁹ From Beijing’s perspective, the main issue is how to manage, and profit from, America’s decline. The challenge, from Washington’s perspective, is how to manage China’s rise within the US-led order without diluting its own role and presence. Whoever emerges as the winner will ultimately determine the future world order. It is against this backdrop that officials from the Obama administration have been visiting Asian capitals to reassure US friends and allies about security commitments, and reaffirm Washington’s determination in its rebalance to Asia.

Significantly, China is not rising in a vacuum. Under Shinzo Abe’s leadership, Japan is becoming a “normal nation” with the lifting of restrictions on collective self-defense and arms transfers. India has been economically and strategically rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific for nearly two decades, under its “Look East” policy. With the victory of Narendra Modi’s BJP

20 November 2013.

9 Chen Jimin, *The Crisis of Confidence in US Hegemony*, China-US Focus.com, 20 May 2014, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/the-crisis-of-confidence-in-u-s-hegemony/>; Editorial, *China is not a threat, but a challenge*, The Observer, 24 May 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/25/observer-editorial-china-challenge-not-threat> (accessed 25 May 2014).

government in May 2014 elections, India is back in the reckoning. Since Beijing will not abandon its policy of engaging India economically while keeping it in check geopolitically, a revitalized India will form the southern anchor of an Asian balance of power and frustrate Chinese efforts to establish supremacy. Small and middle powers (Singapore, South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Australia) are also maneuvering for balance and advantage. Indonesia and Vietnam, in particular, are upgrading their naval power, as territorial disputes in the South China Sea escalate. For its part, Russia is using its vast energy resources to stage a comeback on the world stage. Though it predates the Ukraine crisis, the Russian pivot to Asia is set to accelerate in view of Western sanctions, Gazprom's \$400 billion gas deal for a period of 30 years with China, and growing demand for Russian weaponry and energy by China's neighbours.¹⁰ Russia is unlikely to slide into the role of "China's Canada" without resistance. While tilting toward China, Russia is also actively developing good relations with "China-wary" countries – Vietnam, India, Indonesia, South Korea and Japan. It is, indeed, a very complex and crowded geopolitical space.

The Indo-Pacific powers are today where Germany, France, Britain, and Italy were at the beginning of the 20th century. They are looking outward globally in search of markets, resources and bases, jockeying for power and influence, outmaneuvering and outbidding each other in different parts of the world, and forming natural resources-based partnerships characterized by hedging strategies. The major power competition is between China and the United States; in the maritime and continental domains, it is between China and Japan, and between China and India. The Indian and Chinese navies are increasingly tending to wave their respective flags in the Pacific and Indian oceans. The logic of geopolitics – that is, Japan's and India's worries about their place in a Sino-centric Asia – will forge closer bonds with Abe and Modi at the helm in the two countries.¹¹ The emerging India-

10 Zachery Zeck, *Russia Accelerates Asia Pivot*, The Diplomat, April 18, 2014 <http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/russia-accelerates-asia-pivot/> (accessed 20 April 2014).

11 Brahma Chellaney, "Narendra Modi: India's Shinzo Abe," *The Diplomat*, 16 May 2014 <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/narendra-modi-indias-shinzo-abe/> (accessed 17 May 2014).

Japan defense relationship will intensify Beijing's strategic competition with both Tokyo and New Delhi. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks in Japan against "18th century expansionism" were widely seen as an oblique criticism of China's approach to its land and maritime disputes on its periphery. Over the long term, Tokyo could effectively displace Moscow as India's preferred partner in Asia.

Much like Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Indo-Pacific of the early 21st century is thus home to several rising, contending powers and some fragile or failing states. As new powers rise in Asia, new strategic balances are emerging as partnerships and alliances among states shift. Simply put, the Indo-Pacific of the early 21st century bears more resemblance to Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, not the Europe of the old, no longer assertive powers of the 21st century. Russia's moves against Ukraine may have unnerved European powers, but there is no sign of a major strategic pushback by European countries against Moscow. That is certainly not the case in Asia. For the first time in modern history, Asians are now spending more on defense than Europeans. (The International Institute for Strategic Studies pegged Asian defense spending in 2013 at \$287 billion, or an average + 8.6% per annum, while European spending declined to \$262 billion, an average - 3.6% p.a.¹²) The rise of nationalist leaders in Japan, the Philippines and India is partly explained by their predecessors' perceived failure to deal strongly with Chinese transgressions.

China's 'Geopolitical Discomfort,' not Containment

This is the decade of power transitions in Asia. For small and weak states in China's neighbourhood, it is the decade of living dangerously. Among regional countries, China arouses unease because of its size, history, proximity, power and, more importantly, because memories of "the

12 See: Michael Mosettig, *Asia Now Spends More for Defense than Europe*, April, 2013, <http://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/ei-blog/174-april-2013/1713-asia-now-spends-more-for-defense-than-europe-415>.

Middle Kingdom syndrome” or tributary state system have not dimmed. Historically, there has never been a time when China has coexisted on equal terms with another power of similar or lesser stature. As in the past, a rich and powerful China demands obeisance and deference from other countries. Many Chinese experts look to the past to chart Asia’s future. As Yan Xuetong says, “Ancient Chinese policy (Sino-centric hierarchical order) will become the basis for much Chinese foreign policy, rather than Western liberalism or communist ideology.”¹³ What has changed is that Beijing’s economic interests have now displaced the ideological fervor of the past. Beijing is treating its Asian neighbours in the same way that successive imperial dynasties treated them in the past. In Asian capitals, there are hardly any takers of “China’s peaceful rise” (ask Mongolia, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines or India) or of “non-interference in internal affairs” rhetoric (ask North Korea, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal or Sri Lanka).

The growing economic ties between China and its Asian neighbours have created a sense of dependency and despondency. While China’s neighbours do not oppose China’s power and prosperity, they do not welcome their own loss of strategic autonomy in foreign policy. Neither belligerence nor deference is seen as a prudent policy option with respect to China. With few exceptions (notably Pakistan), most Asian countries (including North Korea) show little or no desire to live in a China-led or China-dominated Asia. Instead, they seek to preserve existing security alliances and pursue sophisticated diplomatic and hedging strategies designed to give them more freedom of action. Given China’s centrality in Asian geopolitics, “hedging” or old-fashioned “balancing” vis-à-vis China is becoming the preferred option, without giving up on the many benefits of engaging Beijing. To this end, each major power is rebalancing its posture and strategy. The US “rebalance,” India’s “Look East,” ASEAN’s “Look West” and Australia’s “Look North” policies, as well as Japan’s defense cooperation with Australia, the Philippines, Vietnam and India, are signs of the times.

13 Yan Xuetong, *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*, Princeton University Press, 2011.

Territorial integrity is the core interest of all nations: weak or strong, big or small. The mounting tensions between China and its neighbours, from India to Japan, over land and maritime disputes have geopolitical implications. Beijing says that history – that is, the Chinese Communist Party’s version of Asian history – trumps international law. China’s unresolved land and maritime disputes and the “Middle Kingdom syndrome” work to Beijing’s disadvantage, and to Washington’s advantage. Referring to heightened tensions over territorial disputes, China’s Defense Minister, General Chang Wanquan, told then US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in April 2014 that Beijing would make “no compromise, no concession, [and] no trading” in the fight for what he called his country’s “territorial sovereignty.” Chang warned Hagel: “The Chinese military can assemble as soon as summoned, fight any battle, and win.”¹⁴ The Chinese are genuinely aghast at the defiance and insolence displayed by their smaller and weaker neighbours. Beijing expects its neighbours to respect China’s core interests by placing them over and above their national interests – a sort of tributary relationship that acknowledges China as the lord of Asia. In this context, US military support is seen as the biggest hurdle in inducing Asians to accommodate and acquiesce to Chinese power.

Beijing’s aggressive posturing since 2007 on land and maritime disputes all along its periphery has driven China’s neighbours into Washington’s embrace. So, I would argue that Washington’s “pivot” or “rebalance” strategy is also “made in China.” China’s unresolved territorial disputes with neighbours are creating close bilateral partnerships where they never existed before – e.g., Canberra-Tokyo, Manila-Hanoi, Manila-Tokyo, Tokyo-Hanoi, Hanoi-New Delhi, Manila-New Delhi, and Tokyo-New Delhi. The target of everyone’s balancing in Asia is China, not Russia or the United States. In fact, those who are counterbalancing China (e.g., India, Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia) are being armed by both Russian and American weaponry.

14 Lolita Baldor, *Hagel, Chang Air Differences Over Disputed Islands*, RealClearDefense.com, 8 April 2014, http://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2014/04/08/hagel_chang_air_differences_over_disputed_islands_107175.html (accessed 10 April 2014)

Historically, the rise of a continental power has always led to the formation of a coalition of maritime powers to counterbalance it. This is particularly so if that continental power happens to have an authoritarian regime nursing historical grievances with active territorial disputes and/or happens to be a polarizing power. China is no exception to this rule. Being a distant hegemon, the United States remains the balancing power of choice for most countries on China's periphery. Therein lies the paradox: despite its relative decline, the United States has become the most sought-after power in the region. Everyone wants to benefit from economic ties with China, but no one wants the region dominated by Beijing or their policy options constrained by China. Put simply, there is no desire to replace the fading American hegemony with Chinese hegemony. Therefore, even as they become increasingly dependent on the Chinese market for economic growth and prosperity, most Asian countries are strengthening their security ties with the United States as part of a dual hedging and balancing strategy and seeking greater US involvement in regional diplomatic, economic and military affairs.

Much as Beijing would like to restore China's primacy in Asia, China's territorial expansion and structural changes in Asian geopolitics over the last 300 years rule out a return to the Sino-centric hierarchical tributary state system of the past. Since geography defines a country's role and power, there is no turning back the clock. A major reason the United States is a global superpower is its unique geography. China does not have Canada and Mexico on its borders, but large powerful states – Russia, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, and India – that will do everything to counterbalance China's growing power for historical, civilizational, geopolitical, and geoeconomic reasons. The new regional geopolitics means that each has the potential to spoil China's "coming out" party of the century if Beijing becomes too ambitious. This disconnect between China's ambitions in Asia and the changes in the geopolitical dynamics of the region leads to what the Chinese ruefully call the "containment of China." Objectively speaking, it is more a question of "geopolitical discomfort" than of containment. For containment, in George Kennan's classic multidimensional construct

(economic, diplomatic, military and political), is largely counter-productive in a globalized economy. Managing China's rise and molding its behavior is the biggest diplomatic challenge facing the region and the world in the coming years.

The Old 'New' Great Game: Resources, Markets and Bases (RMB)

Economic expansion creates overseas interests, fuels grandiose geopolitical ambitions, and inevitably leads to military expansion to protect access to overseas resources, markets and bases (RMB). So, the "new" great game is all about resources, markets and bases. Interestingly, RMB (*renminbi*) is also the name of the Chinese currency. It is certainly all about wealth, power and security. What was it that led to the colonization of Asia, Africa and Latin America by industrializing European powers in the 18th and 19th centuries? It was not the "white man's burden." It was the search for natural resources to fuel industrial growth; markets to dump manufactured goods; and bases (coaling stations) to protect both. These three – resources, markets and bases – always go together. That is exactly what is driving China's foreign policy today, and to some extent, India's. The new kids on the block are actually playing a very old game of world politics. Trade, markets, resource extraction, port and infrastructure development are now the key ingredients of China's foreign policy today. Just as the US is pivoting to Asia, China is pivoting to the West (toward Africa, the Middle East, Southwest Asia, Central Asia and Russia) for resources, markets, and diplomatic space. During his visits to Tajikistan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and India in September 2014, China's President Xi Jinping sought support for his ideas, first articulated in 2013, about the "Silk Road Economic Belt" in Central Asia and the "Maritime Silk Road" along the trade routes which connect it to the Middle East through the Indian Ocean, where evidence is mounting of China's growing intent and capability to project military assets, from submarine patrols, to surface

taskforces, to counter-piracy, search-and-rescue and evacuation missions.¹⁵ As in the past, the “new” great game is essentially about having pliant and friendly regimes in resource supplier nations and port access. The game of world politics does not change much, though the players do.

Global Dominance by a Single Power is Passé

Global dominance by a single power is a thing of the past. No single power can dominate in the future, no matter how much soft and hard power it has. Nor can G-2 manage the world. The United States is slowly and grudgingly coming to terms with this new reality. Several powerful states possess varying degrees of intent and capability to modify and shift regional balances of power. In many multilateral forums, the US no longer sets the agenda, nor is it able to determine outcomes. The rise of regional hegemons is changing the global distribution of power and the US-led system is giving way to regional economic and security arrangements that both bypass and undermine the post-Second World War system.

What kind of a power you are actually matters more than how powerful you are. The Chinese seem convinced that once their country acquires comprehensive national power, everything will fall into its proper place and everybody will fall in line. However, the acquisition of “comprehensive national power” alone will not make China a global superpower. Major powers become great powers with the support of small and middle powers. In terms of number of allies (58) and potential partners (41) worldwide, the United States still remains an unrivalled superpower.¹⁶ The support of small and middle powers, or lack of it, makes all the difference between great power dominance and defeat. That is why middle powers are called “pivotal states” or “swing states.” You cannot be a leader if you do not have followers. During the Cold War, China and Egypt were both middle-

15 Rory Medcalf, “Asia’s ‘Cold Peace’: China and India’s Delicate Diplomatic Dance,” *The National Interest*, 24 September 2014 <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/asias-cold-peace-china-indias-delicate-diplomatic-dance-11338?page=show> (accessed 24 Sept 2014).

16 “Geopolitics: The decline of deterrence,” *The Economist*, 3 May 2014, p. 24.

ranking powers and “swing states.” When they shifted their support from the Soviet Union to the United States, they became pivotal players in the Asian and Middle Eastern balance of power respectively. That tilted the scales against the Soviet Union, and what followed is common knowledge. In a geopolitical replay, Washington is courting the new “swing states” (India, Indonesia and Vietnam) so as to counterbalance China’s growing assertiveness in the region. And Beijing and Moscow are again courting each other to counter Washington.

Geopolitics Matters: Mackinder Matters as Much as Mahan

Asia’s geopolitical center of gravity is shifting inland, with implications for the maritime powers. To understand the great power games of the 21st century, we need to go back to the classics on geopolitics by Halford Mackinder, Nicholas Spykman, Kautilya and Sun Tzu. Naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan matters, but so do the former geopoliticians. Mahan advanced the notion that sea power was the key for supremacy. Mackinder argued that control of the heartlands meant eventual control of the world. The United States has long defined its core interest as preventing any power or coalition of powers from creating and dominating major regions of the world and turning them into spheres of influence. Continental powers like Russia and China remain wedded to the notion that, whenever powerful and united, states expand and, whenever weak and divided, they invariably contract. That is why both China and Russia are engaged in salami slicing in the east and west. Notwithstanding the focus on maritime rivalries, new economic hubs, institutions, transport corridors, high-speed railways, expressways, and pipeline networks are changing the geopolitics of Eurasia. During the Cold War, much of the economic growth took place within the US hub-and-spokes alliance network in maritime Pacific Asia. Post-Cold War, economic growth has taken place in China, India, and continental Southeast Asia, outside of the US Pacific alliance network.

Much like Britain and Russia in the past, China is now employing modern transportation technology, high-speed railways, expressways and pipeline networks to redraw the geopolitical map of Eurasia. As part of its “Go West” strategy, Beijing is spending hundreds of billions to create its “economic hub-and-spokes system” in continental Asia, via pipelines, highways and railway networks linking China with Central, Southwest and Southeast Asia.¹⁷ These spokes or arteries will bring in raw materials and energy resources and export Chinese manufactured goods to those regions and beyond. However, not enough attention is being paid to Eurasia, because three centuries of Anglo-American maritime dominance seem to have caused a certain degree of “land-blindness” among policymakers.¹⁸

Technology is the Great Equalizer

Technology is the wild card. It is a game changer. No one could have foreseen in 1990 how the Internet would change everything. In war and peace, technology shapes relations among nations. Technology determines hierarchy in international relations: who is at the top and who is at the bottom of the international pecking order. Few economists predicted the rise of China as an economic powerhouse. Why? Because economists cannot foresee the impact of yet-to-be-invented technologies. New types of manufacturing based on disruptive technologies such as 3D/4D printing, advances in biotechnology, robotics, and quantum computing will be game changers. What would a revolution in manufacturing based on 3D/4D printing mean for “made-in-China”? Unlike in the past, technology diffusion is rapid and instantaneous in today’s world. Tomorrow’s technological breakthroughs will create new winners and losers, and present new opportunities and challenges.

Furthermore, geology (energy security) and geopolitics (national security) are closely interlinked. Historically, every international order is

17 Yun Sun, *March West: China’s Response to the US Rebalancing*, Brookings.edu, 31 January 2013 <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/01/31-china-us-sun> (accessed 1 Feb 2013).

18 See: Anthony Bubalo and Malcolm Cook, “Horizontal Asia,” *The American Interest*, May/June 2010.

based on an energy resource. We moved from the age of sail to the age of coal and steam, the basis of Pax Britannica. When the British ran out of steam, literally speaking, the US-led Pax Americana came into being, based on oil, gas and nuclear energy. The Chinese have been investing heavily in alternative energy resources to usher in the age of Pax Sinica.

Just when China and the rest were writing off America as a declining power, the country finds itself on the cusp of achieving energy self-sufficiency, thanks to a breakthrough in fracking technology. The shale revolution could help the United States rejuvenate itself and prolong American dominance of the international order. To paraphrase Mahan: “Whoever has the technological edge will dominate the world. In the 21st century, the destiny of the world would be decided not in the battlefield, but in the S&T (science and technology) field.”

The doom and gloom on the energy front eight years ago that preceded the global financial meltdown in 2008 has given way to an energy boom five years later. The energy boom in the US, Canada and Australia, if exploited fully, has the potential to change the power dynamics among great powers, revitalize US alliances and redefine relationships between the traditional suppliers and consumers. It could turn yesterday’s winners into tomorrow’s losers. Just as the “old” Middle East is “moving East” to forge closer energy ties with China and India, the “new Middle East” (comprising Canada and the United States) should be “looking West” to sell tight oil and gas to the energy-hungry economies of Japan, China, India, South Korea, and various Southeast Asian countries. The shale oil and gas bonanza would enhance American diplomatic leverage through consumers and producers. The world oil market, with the inclusion of the United States and Canada, would be more diversified, more stable for oil prices, and reduce consumers’ over-dependence on the volatile Middle East, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cartel, and Putin’s Russia.¹⁹

19 Robert D. Blackwill and Meghan L. O’Sullivan, “America’s Energy Edge: The Geopolitical Consequences of the Shale Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2014, pp. 104, 109.

The Future of Asian Geopolitics

These strategic trends will shape the future of Asian geopolitics, in particular the interactions among the United States, China, Russia, Japan and India. Power asymmetry among major powers means that each will form flexible ad hoc partnerships with the others where their interests converge, mobilize the support of one against the other when their interests collide, and checkmate the others from forming an alignment against it as they compete, coalesce and collude with each other when their objectives coincide. China is, of course, the most important piece of the geopolitical puzzle.

No country threatens China today as it is presently constituted. As the largest (in terms of territory) and the most powerful (economically and militarily) country in Asia, should it agree to freeze and accept the territorial status quo all along its land and maritime boundaries, it could unravel the Cold War-era US alliances and undermine the *raison d'être* of the US forward presence. But do not put your money on that. As one Chinese strategist (essentially echoing Defense Minister General Chang) said: "Giving up claims to 'lands lost to others'... It's unthinkable. It's inconceivable."²⁰ China's ultimate goal is to realign the regional political order in accordance with its strategic preferences, interests and objectives. Since the prospects of the PLA accepting the territorial status quo are nil, the question thus facing the United States and its friends is how to sustain a robust balance of power that deters intimidation and aggression and reassures friends and allies faced with an increasingly confident and powerful China determined to establish its dominance on the Asian continent and its adjoining waters. Although the context and contours of great power politics have changed, China's behavior as a rising great power is not much different from those of other rising powers in history. As world order shifts, the risks of interstate conflict involving the US allies and partners may well be increasing.

20 Discussions with Chinese interlocutors, Beijing & Shanghai, 2013-2014.

As **Table 1** shows, there are four possible scenarios of evolving Asian geopolitics in the 2030s: US-led weak unipolarity, the return of bipolarity, a concert of powers in a multipolar Asia, and a Sino-centric hierarchical order. Of all the scenarios of Asian geopolitics, the one with the highest probability in the near future is that of a combination of weak unipolarity, and a bipolar Asia manifesting in geopolitical competition between China and the United States and other regional powers as well as selective partnership on transnational issues of mutual interest. Peace and stability will prevail if major powers work for a multipolar Asia with inclusive multilateral institutions and dispute resolution mechanisms. However, competition, rivalry, and even conflict will result should bipolarity re-emerge or should Beijing seek to re-establish a unipolar Sino-centric hierarchical order wherein the Middle Kingdom behaves in a hegemonic manner expecting obeisance and tribute from its neighbours.²¹

21 Zachary Keck, "China's Growing Hegemonic Bent," *The Diplomat*, 26 June 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/chinas-growing-hegemonic-bent/> (accessed 24 Sept 2014).

SCENARIOS	ALTERNATIVE FUTURES	PROBABILITY
I: <i>Weak Unipolarity</i> Superpower lacks super powers	<i>The US remains the predominant power</i> , though constrained by China and Russia. Regional security community (ADMM+8) evolves; territorial status quo and stable power balance prevails. Alliances and issue-specific coalitions-of-the-willing in place	<i>High</i>
II: <i>Bipolarity</i> The “new” Great Game	<i>Bipolarity (USA versus PRC)</i> re-emerges, forcing countries to choose sides. An arms race escalates, due to the PLA’s rejection of territorial <i>status quo</i> with Japan, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam and India. An “Asian NATO” (maritime coalition) counters a China-led bloc	<i>Very High</i>
III: <i>A Concert Of Powers</i> in a Multi-polar Asia	<i>Competitors-cum-Partners</i> . The US, China, India, Japan, Russia and ASEAN form an economic and security concert. The ADMM+8 and East Asia Summit emerge as viable security and economic forums. Territorial status quo prevails	<i>Low</i>
IV: <i>Back To The Future: A China-led Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere</i>	<i>A Sino-centric tributary order</i> . The unequal strategic equation between China and its Asian neighbours forces them to capitulate and accept China as the “benevolent big brother” following Taiwan’s surrender, the end of US forward presence, and the decline of Japan and India.	<i>Very Low</i>

Table 1. Asian Geopolitics: Alternative Futures in the 2030s

We live in a very complex, crowded, claustrophobic world, which is more interconnected than ever before. Geopolitics or military balance of power alone cannot explain everything. To grasp the implications of power shifts that are underway, security professionals need to understand the nexus between geopolitics and geoeconomics, and how geopolitical security issues now intersect with transnational security issues. The Asia-Pacific region

is where geopolitics meets geoeconomics, and traditional security issues intersect and merge with non-traditional transnational security issues. For instance, climate change or the water scarcity issue between China and South Asia and China and Indochina is both a geopolitical tool and a transnational issue. The rise of China and India touches on all the current “hot button” issues of the day—geopolitics, energy, economy, resources, climate change, weapons proliferation, maritime security, cyber and outer space. Significantly, transnational security challenges such as drugs and human trafficking, depletion of the ozone layer, the melting of the polar ice caps and rising sea levels do provide avenues for cooperation, setting aside traditional geopolitical rivalries and moderating major power competition.

Last but not least, nothing is inevitable in life and politics – domestic or world. The future is not a straight line. It is full of crossroads, shocks, setbacks, surprises, discontinuities, non-linearity and reverses. The Soviet Union and Japan illustrate that nothing is inevitable about the rise of China. Historically, rising powers, expecting too much too soon, have often shown an uncanny knack for being their own worst enemies. China does seem impatient to establish a Sino-centric order that excludes the United States and relegates its allies to the sidelines. Contrary to the received wisdom in international relations, a country’s foreign policy is *not* a cold calculation of costs and benefits or pros and cons alone. It is a mix of five “Ps”: passion, power, profit, pride and prejudice. That is what makes the task of predicting China’s future or the future of world politics so difficult. The risk of miscalculation lies in the Chinese military overestimating its strength and the rest of the world underestimating Beijing’s ambitions, power and purpose.

The Military Aspects of the US Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific

Christopher M. Schnaubelt

Introduction

Judging how the US “rebalance” or “pivot” to the Asia-Pacific might affect NATO and Europe requires understanding how the policy evolved.¹ The American strategy for paying increased attention to the Asia-Pacific region was not produced fully grown, like Athena clad in armor springing from the head of Zeus. Instead, it evolved over a period of years and was especially influenced by emerging fiscal concerns in the US defense budget. Furthermore, an assessment of the rebalance should also include an appreciation of American history in the region. The projection of US power in this area is not a new development: the US has been a Pacific power for more than one and a half centuries.

This chapter provides an overview of what the contemporary rebalance to the region means in terms of relocating military forces, including discussion of the historical background, associated policies and strategies that resulted in the pivot. It concludes with some parting thoughts on what the rebalance or pivot may mean for the US’ European Allies.

A Short History of the US in the Asia-Pacific Region

According to the US State Department Historian, “the same combination of economic considerations and belief in Manifest Destiny that motivated

¹ The original phrase used by then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was “pivot.” United States Department of Defense documents, however, use the phrase “rebalance.” The terms are used synonymously in this chapter.

US expansion across the North American continent also drove American merchants and missionaries to journey across the Pacific.”²

Whaling on the Pacific coast, increasing trade with China and the immigration of Chinese laborers, plus the requirement for coaling stations due to the conversion of naval and merchant shipping to steam power, provided economic impetus for the American empire to expand further west. The annexation of California in 1848 further enabled and encouraged this expansion by providing the US with a Pacific port. On 8 July 1853, against the wishes of Japanese leaders, Commodore Matthew Perry brought a squadron of warships into what is now called Tokyo Bay. This event may have been the earliest expansion of US long-term political and economic reach across either of its neighbouring oceans through the use of force.

The purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867 significantly increased America’s coastline along the Pacific, simultaneously further extending American territory into both Russian and British spheres of influence. David Pletcher notes that “... historians disagree as to whether [the purchase by the US] was motivated primarily by land hunger, economic expansionism, a desire for a greater American role in the Far East, friendship with Russia, [or] the desire to offset the new dominion of Canada ...” The arguments before Congress in favor of the sale were nonetheless primarily based upon potential economic advantages.³

Nonetheless, David Gompert argues that: “the event that christened the United States as a sea power and Pacific power was the destruction of the Spanish fleet in Manila harbor by Admiral Dewey’s Asiatic Squadron on 1 May 1898.”⁴ With a squadron of just six ships, Admiral Dewey defeated a larger force that was operating in its own territory and protected by

2 Office of the Historian, US Department of State, “The United States and the Opening to Japan, 1853” *Milestones: 1830–1860*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/opening-to-japan> (accessed 26 February 2015).

3 David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Involvement: American Economic Expansion Across the Pacific, 1784–1900*, Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press) 2001, p. 37.

4 David C. Gompert, *Sea Power and American Interests in the Western Pacific*, Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation 2013, p. 40, http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR151.html (accessed 4 March 2015).

“heavily fortified Spanish bases.”⁵ Although the proximate cause of the war was a dispute between the US and Spain over Cuba, Manila Bay—in the Philippines—was the first battle of the war. It was more than a month later when US Army troops landed in Guantanamo Bay and Santiago to rout the Spanish garrisons in Cuba.

As described by the US State Department Historian:

*The Spanish-American War of 1898 ended Spain's colonial empire in the Western Hemisphere and secured the position of the United States as a Pacific Power. US Victory in the war produced a peace treaty that compelled the Spanish to relinquish their claims on Cuba, and to cede sovereignty over Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to the United States [...] the war enabled the United States to establish its predominance in the Caribbean region and to pursue its strategic and economic interests in Asia.*⁶

Following the Spanish-American War, the US continued to expand its naval fleet. In 1900, US soldiers and marines conducted operations in Asia as part of the international intervention following the Boxer Rebellion in China. The American forces sent to rescue the besieged civilians and diplomats in Peking (Beijing) included two infantry regiments, a cavalry regiment, and an artillery battery from units stationed in the Philippines.⁷ A decade later, the US 15th Infantry Regiment was deployed to China following the collapse of the Manchu dynasty. It remained there until 1938, when it was withdrawn following the initiation of Japanese attacks upon China.⁸

US military efforts were focused on Europe during World War I but, in

5 Derek B. Granger, “Dewey at Manila Bay: Lessons in Operational Art and Operational Leadership from America’s First Fleet Admiral,” *Naval War College Review* Autumn 2011, pp. 127–142, <https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/672fc626-23db-484d-b276-5515b53b85dc/Dewey-at-Manila-Bay--Lessons-in-Operational-Art-an.aspx> (accessed 17 April 2015).

6 Office of the Historian, “The Spanish-American War, 1898,” *Milestones: 1866–1898*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/spanish-american-war> (accessed 17 April 2015).

7 LeeAnn Fawver, “1st International Relief Expedition,” US Army Homepage, 28 July 2009, <http://www.army.mil/article/25028/1st-international-relief-expedition/> (accessed 23 April 2015).

8 Roger D. Cunningham, “Book Review: *The United States 15th Infantry Regiment in China, 1912–1938*,” *On Point* January 2, 2011, <http://armyhistoryjournal.com/?p=526> (accessed 23 April 2015).

the aftermath of the Great War, America relocated a large part of its navy from Europe in order to form the Pacific Fleet. Yet, the US also seemed to lose much of its appetite for expanding its empire. According to Gompert, the US had become the dominant sea power in the Western Hemisphere but the purpose until about 1930 was to “achieve regional control but *not* to challenge or deny rivals in other regions.” Even interest in regional control waned as the size of the US Navy shrank. Meanwhile, US foreign trade began to stagnate and then plummet. Between 1929 and 1933 it fell by about 66% as America went through the Great Depression and entered a period of isolationism in foreign policy.⁹ The size of the US Army plunged from more than one million soldiers in France alone during the Great War to 147,000 throughout the entire Regular Army in 1922.¹⁰

During Second World War, the Pacific was one of two major theaters of war for the US. Despite a strategy of defeating “Germany first,” enormous resources were devoted to achieve victory over Japan. After the attack upon Pearl Harbor, US leaders determined that their ultimate military goal would be to seize the home islands of Japan. However, American naval and ground forces first had to push west through the Pacific to get to them. Mixing operational approaches of seizing ground and “island hopping,” the US captured or cleared the Gilbert Islands, Marshall Islands, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, parts of New Guinea, the Marianas and the Palau Islands, the Philippines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, among others.¹¹ The US recognized Philippine independence in 1946 but current American territories in the Pacific include Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

The US post-war presence in the Pacific included the occupation of Japan until 1952. America still maintains bases in Japan today, under the terms of a bilateral defense treaty. Since its intervention in the Korean War in 1950, the US has also maintained significant ground, air, and naval

9 Gompert 2014, pp. 42, 54. Italics in original.

10 Richard W. Stewart, ed., *American Military History: The United States Army in a Global Era, 1917-2003*, Washington, DC, Center of Military History, United States Army, 2005, p. 59.

11 See: Charles R. Andersen, “Western Pacific: The US Army Campaigns of World War II” US Army Center of Military Publication 72-9, 1994, <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-C-WestPac/> (accessed 21 April 2015).

forces in South Korea via a bilateral defense treaty. American troops also intervened in the Vietnam War, with forces in South Vietnam from 1961 until it closed its Saigon Embassy in 1975. The US normalized relations with a unified Vietnam in 1995.¹²

After beginning primarily with an era of conflict and imperialistic expansion, the trend of US relationships in the Asia-Pacific over the last century and a half has been towards expanding economic integration and peaceful political cooperation. The Obama administration's pivot to the Asia-Pacific recognizes these trends as the region becomes an increasingly important trading partner for the US. However, the US did not ignore the Asia-Pacific between the end of its military interventions and the advent of the Barrack Obama administration. For example, after describing the political, economic, and military challenges in Europe and the former Soviet Union, the 1993 National Security Strategy (NSS) of President George H.W. Bush stated:

*In Asia, our agenda is five-fold. First, the United States must maintain a strategic framework which reflects its status as a Pacific power and promotes its engagement in Asia. The key to the United States' strategic framework has been, and will continue to be, its alliance with Japan. Second, we must continue to expand markets through bilateral, regional, and multilateral arrangements. Third, we must carefully watch the emergence of China onto the world stage and support, contain, or balance this emergence as necessary to protect US interests. Fourth, we must continue to play a critical role in the peaceful unification process on the Korean peninsula. Finally, we should encourage the normalization of Indochina and the expansion and development of the Association of East Asian Nations.*¹³

According to President William Clinton's 1994 *National Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, "...our ties across the Pacific are no less important than those across the Atlantic ..." Furthermore, it noted that

12 US Embassy Hanoi-Vietnam, "Fact Sheet," 11 February 2015, <http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/usvnrelations.html> (accessed 23 April 2015).

13 The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, January 1993, pp. 7-8.

“East Asia is a region of growing importance for US Security and prosperity [...] President Clinton envisions an integrated strategy—a New Pacific Community—which links security requirements with economic realities and our concern for democracy and human rights.”¹⁴

In 2002, the first National Security Strategy published by the George W. Bush administration understandably focused on the events of 9-11 and did not provide a series of regional appraisals as did the strategies published by previous administrations. It considered the Asia-Pacific primarily in the context of its allies within the region: Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines. Nonetheless, it did briefly state that the US would “build on stability provided by these alliances, as well as with institutions such as ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, to develop a mix of regional and bilateral strategies to manage change in this dynamic region.”¹⁵

Yet the George W. Bush administration’s second National Security Strategy, published in 2006, returned to form and devoted more than two pages to a regional analysis of East Asia—much of it concerning China. The observations in this strategy included: “East Asia is a region of great opportunities and lingering tensions” and “The United States is a Pacific nation, with extensive interests throughout East and Southeast Asia.”¹⁶

Describing the Pivot

The previous section on the history of US activities in, and strategy concerning, the Asia-Pacific region begs the question: What is different about the rebalance announced by the Obama administration? As the remainder of this chapter will show, there are two unique aspects: (1) the specifics regarding the re-positioning of military forces; and (2) establishing the Asia-Pacific region as a priority at the expense of other areas during a

14 The White House, *A National Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, July 1994, pp. 19, 23.

15 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, p. 26.

16 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, p. 40.

period of declining US defense resources.

In order to depict how the policy evolved since the Obama administration took office, the next section provides an overview of the US rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region based on official statements and documents. Highlighting the parts most relevant to the Asia-Pacific rebalance should suffice to illuminate the implications for the Euro-Atlantic.

As the remainder of this chapter draws heavily from official documents, **Figure 1** may be useful in illustrating the relationship between the major US strategic publications. In theory, these documents present a hierarchy cascading from the National Security Strategy (which states the national objectives “or ends”), the Defense Strategic Guidance and the Quadrennial Defense Review (which are focused on resources or “means”) and the National Military Strategy (which addresses the how or “ways” to use the available means to achieve the desired ends). In practice, they all tend to cover the full “ends = ways + means + risk” spectrum of strategy and to a large extent represent updates of the preceding higher level documents.¹⁷

¹⁷ For a brief overview of how these documents fit together, along with a critique of the 2015 National Military Strategy, see: Peter D. Feaver, “How to Read the New National Military Strategy,” *ForeignPolicy.com*, 6 July 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/06/how-to-read-the-new-national-military-strategy/> (accessed 25 August 2015).

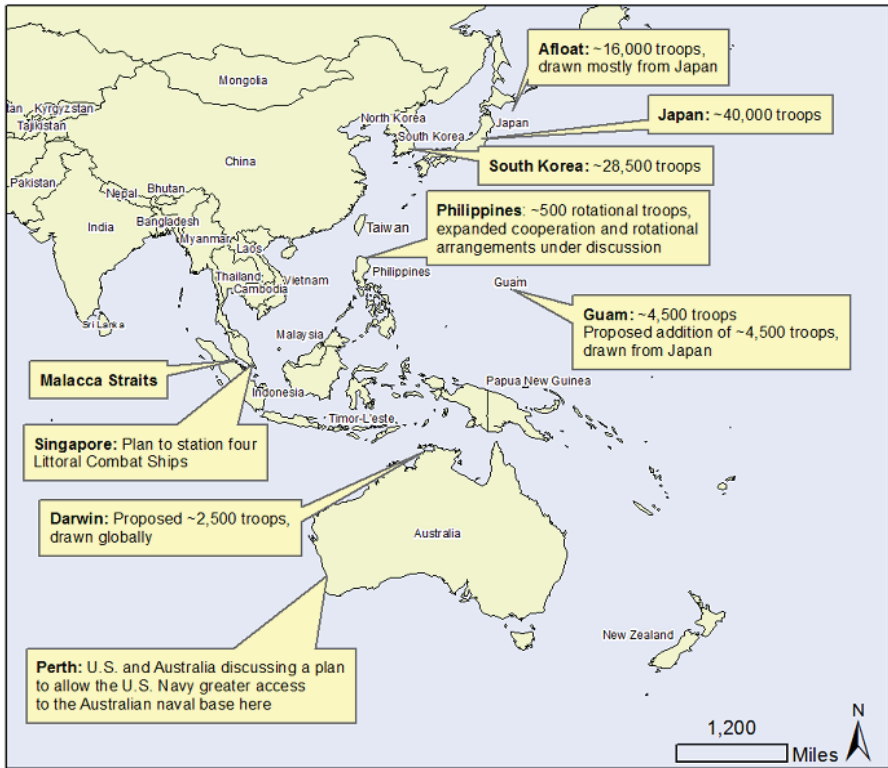


Figure 1. US Strategic Guidance Documents¹⁸

Map 1 illustrates some of the major aspects of the US rebalance as of March 2012. Not shown is an American pledge that 60 percent of its navy will operate in the Pacific.¹⁹

¹⁸ Adapted from Michael A. Santacrose, *Planning for Planners: Volume 1, Joint Operation Planning Process*, 2011, p. 157, https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/7d3f6744-b9c4-479b-9c8d-da2c132e368e/Planning-for-Planners_Jan_2012_new.aspx (accessed 25 August 2015).

¹⁹ Shawn Brimley and Jerry Hendrix, "Let's Lock in the Rebalance to Asia," *Defense One* 26 March 2015, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2015/03/lets-lock-rebalance-asia/108589/> (accessed 23 April 2015).



*Map 1. Highlights of US Rebalancing*²⁰

Some authors have asserted that the rebalance, or “pivot,” was a direct result of the 2010 US National Security Strategy (NSS 2010).²¹ This

20 Congressional Research Service, Report for Congress R42448, “Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration’s ‘Rebalancing Toward Asia’”, 28 March 2012, p. 3: <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/187389.pdf> (accessed 10 June 2014). See also: Lostumbo, et. al., “Overseas Basing of US Military Forces: An Assessment of Relative Costs and Strategic Benefits,” Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation, 2013: http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR201.html (accessed 23 April 2015).

21 E.g., Jonathan G. Odom, “What Does a ‘Pivot’ or ‘Rebalance’ Look Like? Elements of the US Strategic Turn Towards Security in the Asia-Pacific Region and Its Waters”, *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal* 14

document articulated the Obama administration's initial concept for securing US national security objectives, using a "whole of government approach" while emphasizing engagement as a major tool for protecting US national security interests through collective efforts. It defined engagement as "the active participation of the United States in relationships beyond our borders."²²

However, NSS 2010 did not explicitly indicate a shifting of resources or an increased priority for the Asia-Pacific region relative to Europe or other areas. Instead, it stated that: "The cornerstone of this engagement is the relationship between the United States and our close friends and allies in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East—ties which are rooted in shared interests and shared values, and which serves our mutual security and the broader security and prosperity of the world."²³

It also noted that the US pursues "regular collaboration with our close allies the United Kingdom, France, and Germany on issues of mutual and global concern" and that the US "relationship with our European allies remains the cornerstone of US engagement with the world, and a catalyst for international action [...] NATO is the pre-eminent security alliance in the world today. With our 27 NATO allies, and the many partners with which NATO cooperates, we will strengthen our collective ability to promote security, deter vital threats, and defend our people."²⁴

Accordingly, what is the source of the rebalance or pivot? Is it a break with the original Obama administration's National Security Strategy, or perhaps a major revision that was not published in a new document? The argument here is that rather than being a break or a revision, the rebalance is a logical *extension* of NSS 2010 considering the fiscal constraints that

(2012), http://blog.hawaii.edu/aplpj/files/2012/12/APLPJ_14-2.1_Odom_Final-PS2PDF.pdf (accessed June 10, 2014) and "The Problem With the Pivot" *Foreign Affairs* Nov/Dec 2012, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138211/robert-s-ross/the-problem-with-the-pivot> (accessed 10 June 2014).

²² The White House, *National Security Strategy May 2010*, Washington, D.C. p. 11, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf (accessed 23 April 2015).

²³ *National Security Strategy 2010*, p. 41.

²⁴ *National Security Strategy 2010*, pp. 11, 41.

subsequently emerged.

To substantiate this claim, it is important to highlight that NSS 2010 emphasized engagement and was not primarily focused on military resources but on “the effective use and integration of different elements of American power.” Diplomacy, development, economic growth, and cooperation with foreign governments on law enforcement and intelligence matters in addition to military power were identified as important aspects of a holistic programme for providing US security.

NSS 2010 described the importance of the NATO allies as well as Asian allies such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The strategy also considered North America and noted the prominence of Canada as both a security ally and the closest trading partner of the United States as well as the importance of trade and law enforcement cooperation with Mexico. No re-prioritization or shifting of attention was implied.

After affirming the importance of ensuring the strength of existing alliances, it stated that the US would build cooperation with other 21st century centers of influence. Asia was listed first, including China and India, and then Russia. It also noted the need to deepen bilateral partnerships with emerging centers of influence such as the other G20 nations and to strengthen regional organizations such as NATO, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the African Union, the Organization of American States, the Association of South East Asian Nations, and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Again, there was no discussion of tradeoffs or shifting resources between regions.

In February of the following year, the Department of Defense published the 2011 National Military Strategy (NMS 2011).²⁵ This is the military’s description of how it will carry out its responsibilities laid out within NSS 2010. It states that “ongoing shifts in relative power and increasing interconnectedness in the international order indicate a strategic inflection

25 <http://www.army.mil/info/references/docs/NMS%20FEB%202011.pdf> (accessed 23 April 2015).

point.”²⁶ While stressing the importance of current allies and partners, it also states that the US military “will pursue wider and more constructive partnerships” in supporting US foreign policy.

Describing the strategic environment, the NMS 2011 states in part that Asia has “two rising global powers and a large number of consequential regional powers” and is increasing its share of global wealth. However, it also recognizes changing power dynamics in the Middle East.

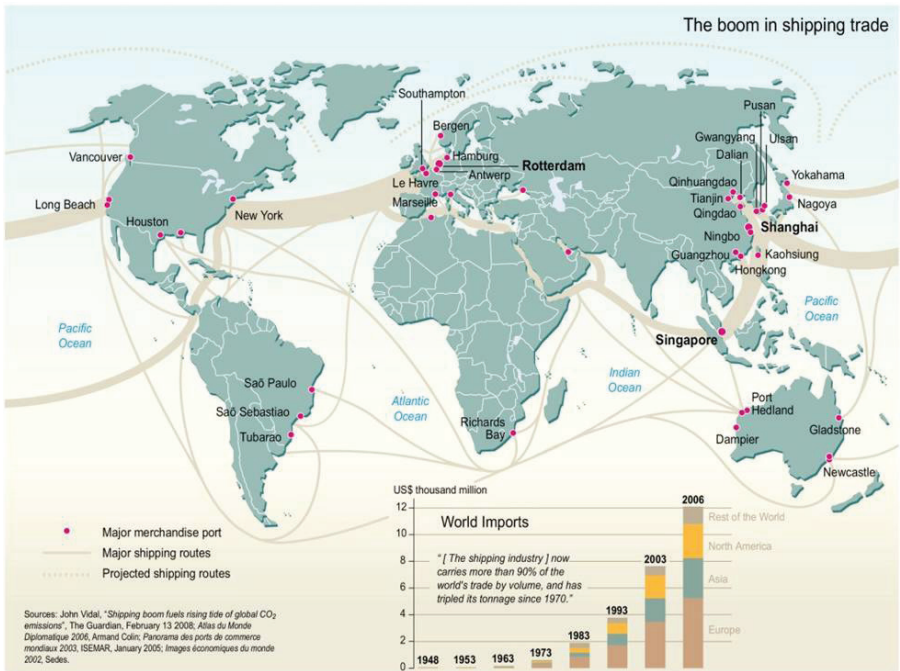
It first assesses security in North America and the Caribbean, South and Central America, the broader Middle East, Africa and Europe. When it comes to Asia and the Pacific, NMS 2011 states that US “strategic priorities and interests will increasingly emanate from the Asia-Pacific region.”

Why a Pivot?

As can be seen in the chart below, the reason for increasing US interest in the Asia-Pacific is clear. American economic and political interests in Asia and the Pacific have been growing since the 19th century. In 1900, five percent of total US trade was with the Asia-Pacific region. This percentage increased to fifteen percent in 1950 and reached thirty percent in 2012.²⁷ While shipping remains significant across the Atlantic, routes across the Pacific and in Asia have become responsible for greater tonnage in both absolute and relative terms.[Map 2]

²⁶ NMS 2011, p 1.

²⁷ Gompert 2014, p. 1. While the US still does most of its trade with Europe and North America, the Asia-Pacific is the region experiencing the greatest amount of growth, with the greatest potential for further expansion.



*Map 2. Worldwide Trade Routes*²⁸

Accordingly, NMS 2011 states that it expects the US to maintain a strong military presence in North East Asia for decades and to be working closely with Japan. America will invest new attention in South East and South Asia, primarily through bilateral engagement and regional forums, while expanding military security cooperation with the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and other states in Oceania. The strategy further states that the US will “seek a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive relationship with China that welcomes it to take on a responsible leadership role.”

²⁸ http://transportcity.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/world_trade_map.jpg (accessed 23 April 2015).

However, while adding more to the Defense Department's plate in the Asia-Pacific region, NMS 2011 does not explicitly say where the resources will come from. There is no mention of rebalancing between allies, partners, or regions.²⁹

One of the earliest indications of shifting both priorities and resources was an article by then-Secretary of State Clinton in the October 2011 issue of *Foreign Policy*, titled "America's Pacific Century."³⁰ The very first sentence states: "As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the United States stands at a pivot point." Arguing for continued American engagement in the world, she wrote that "one of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will [...] be to lock in a substantially increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise—in the Asia-Pacific region." Secretary Clinton's argument was not to shift resources from the Euro-Atlantic, but to continue increasing attention on the Asia-Pacific.

It may be worth observing that she uses the phrase "strategic and otherwise" rather than the word "military." The vast majority of her article concerns the potential economic benefits. The bulk of the strategy for the region would consist of what she calls "forward-deployed" diplomacy." She presents six key lines of action:

- To strengthen bilateral security alliances;
- To deepen working relationships with emerging powers, to include China;
- To engage with regional multilateral organizations;
- To expand trade and investment;
- To forge a broad-based military presence;
- To advance democracy and human rights.

²⁹ While the purpose of this chapter is not to present a critique of NMS 2011, it would not be unfair to describe it as being long on Ends and Ways but short on Means. It does not seem to anticipate the future cuts in defense budgets that would later heavily impact what could be accomplished.)

³⁰ Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy*, 11 October 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century (accessed 23 April 2015).

Very little of the article specifically mentions the military element of national power. In one of the exceptions, she writes that “Asia’s remarkable economic growth over the past decade and its potential for continued growth in the future depend on the security and stability that has long been guaranteed by the US military.”

Fewer American Defense Resources to Spread Around

Although she frequently used the word “pivot,” Secretary Clinton did not explain where the resources for more attention to the Asia-Pacific region were to come from. The obvious but unasked question is left open: Will there be a net increase in military, diplomatic, and development budgets, or will resources be reduced elsewhere? She implied the latter, touching upon the reduction in the costs of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Almost as an afterthought, she wrote that “other regions remain important, of course.” Europe gets special mention as a “partner of first resort” but, somewhat curiously, she continues that the US is “investing in updating the structures of our alliance.” This is conceivably a hint at something other than the previous long-term investments in increasing the collective *capabilities* of NATO. Rather than modernizing equipment and increasing force structure, this statement may portend an increased interest in streamlining NATO by reducing bureaucracy and the size and number of headquarters. In other words, it may imply switching the focus to making NATO more efficient rather than more effective.

More specifics about the rebalancing came during President Obama’s November 2011 trip to Australia and his speech to the Australian parliament.³¹ After acknowledging the 60-year alliance between the US and Australia, he stated that the purpose of his visit to the region was “to advance security, prosperity, and human dignity across the Asia-Pacific.” Furthermore, for the US he said the effort was part of a “broader shift

31 Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament> (accessed 23 April 2015).

[...] After a decade in which we fought two wars that cost us dearly, in blood and treasure, the United States is turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia-Pacific region.” The President reported that he had given directions to make the region a top priority. Thus, “reductions in US defense spending will not—I repeat—will not—come at the expense of the Asia-Pacific.”

Here then, was clear guidance that the resources to enable a greater focus on the Asia-Pacific region would come from elsewhere if necessary. Whereas Secretary Clinton previously implied that such a shift would come solely from savings created by the drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Obama signaled that reductions in US spending on Europe were possible: the defense budget might be cut everywhere else, but Asia-Pacific spending would remain untouched.

The reality of decreasing defense budgets and reductions in force structure in the coming years was reflected in the 2012 Defense Strategic Planning Guidance, published in a document titled “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense” (DSPG 2012).³² In his cover letter, President Obama wrote that the US “is at a moment of transition” and that “as we end today’s wars, we will focus on a broader range of challenges and opportunities, including the security and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific.”

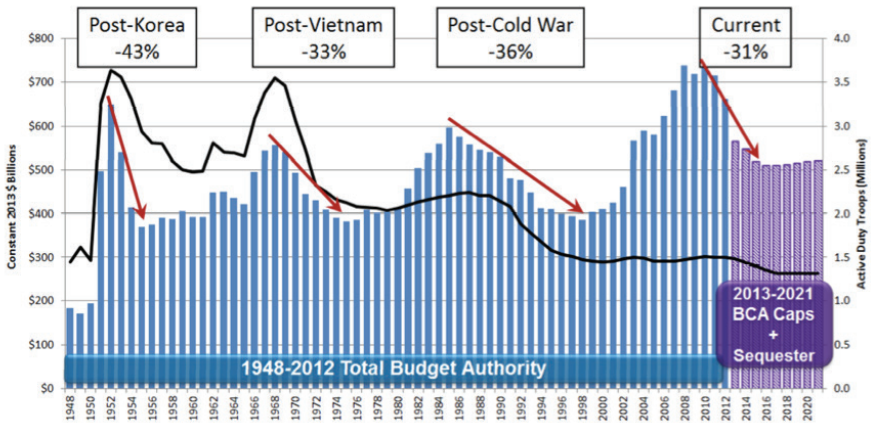
This was followed by a cover letter from then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, in which he wrote that the Department of Defense would “have global presence emphasizing the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East while still ensuring our ability to maintain our defense commitments to Europe, and strengthening alliances and partnerships across all regions.”

The main text of the document states that the US faces “an inflection point.” Accordingly, a strategy was needed to transition the Department of Defense in a way that would prepare for future challenges as well as “support the national security imperative of deficit reduction through a

32 http://www.defense.gov/news/defense_strategic_guidance.pdf (accessed 23 April 2015).

lower level of defense spending.”

Figure 2 shows the expected cuts in American military spending as operations in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down and in relation to spending caps imposed by the Congress. These are not the largest defense reductions in US history, but are significant nonetheless.³³



*Figure 2. 1948-2012 Total Budget Authority*³⁴

The following is arguably the key section in DSPG 2012: “US economic and security interests are inextricably linked to developments in the arc extending from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean region and South Asia, creating a mix of evolving challenges and opportunities. Accordingly, while the US military will continue to

33 Brad Plumer, “America’s staggering defense budget, in charts,” *Washington Post*, 7 January 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/01/07/everything-chuck-hagel-needs-to-know-about-the-defense-budget-in-charts/> (accessed April 23, 2015).

34 *Ibid.*

contribute to security globally, [emphasis in original] *we will of necessity rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region.*"

As for Europe, the guidance states that "Europe is our principal partner in seeking global and economic security." It recognizes the importance of American interests in bolstering NATO. Nonetheless, it further states that "most European countries are now producers of security rather than consumers of it."

The most complete document in terms of spelling out in detail what the rebalance will mean for the US military is the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR 2014).³⁵ It begins by stating: "The United States faces a rapidly changing security environment. We are repositioning to focus on the strategic challenges and opportunities that will define our future: new technologies, new centers of power, and a world that is growing more volatile, more unpredictable, and in some instances, more threatening to the US"

Among the priorities listed are:

- Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region to preserve peace and stability
- Maintaining a strong commitment to security and stability in Europe and the Middle East
- Sustaining a global approach to countering violent extremists and terrorist threats, with an emphasis on the Middle East and Africa.

Providing an analysis of regional trends, it states that "The Asia-Pacific region is increasingly central to global commerce, politics, and security." However, it also says that "Europe remains our principal partner in promoting global security." Despite making Asia-Pacific a priority, the US has "deep and abiding interests in a European partner that is militarily capable and politically willing to join with the United States to address future security challenges. Our commitment to the NATO Alliance is steadfast and resolute, and the United States will work with allies and

35 http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf (accessed 23 April 2015).

partners to ensure NATO remains a modern and capable alliance.”

The QDR 2014 goes on to provide an overview of the downsizing of the US military, particularly the Army, which will be reduced from its present size of approximately 540,000 in the active component and 560,000 in the reserves, to about 450,000 active duty and 525,000 in the reserves. After years of building up forces and increasing budgets, the American military will be getting smaller due to funding cuts.

The QDR most recent Obama administration strategy document, National Security Strategy 2015 (NSS 2015), states that: “The United States has been and will remain a Pacific power. Over the next 5 years, nearly half of all growth outside the United States is expected to come from Asia.”³⁶ NSS 2015 is consistent with the trajectory of the previous National Security Strategy. However, it may be worth noting that for the first time within a US National Security Strategy the section on the rebalance to Asia and the Pacific precedes the section on strengthening America’s alliance with Europe. This order of presentation could be symbolic of an increased priority for the Asia-Pacific, indicating that Europe remains important but is no longer America’s premier overseas concern.

Conclusion

The emerging challenges of the terrorist organization calling itself the Islamic State are putting even greater pressure on US defense without a corresponding increase in military spending. The recent behavior of Russia has also raised doubts about stability in Europe. As NSS 2015 puts it: “Russia’s aggression in Ukraine makes clear that European security and the international rules and norms against territorial aggression cannot be taken for granted.”³⁷

However, at the time of writing there is no clear majority in the

36 The White House, *National Security Strategy May 2015* Washington, D.C. p. 24, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf (accessed 24 April 2015).

37 NSS 2015, p. 25.

US Congress for reversing the defense cuts. Furthermore, the Obama administration has not publicly expressed interest in halting the planned reductions in American force structure.³⁸ Even if the defense cuts are partially ameliorated, the size of the US military is likely to get smaller during the next few years.

The ongoing turmoil in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the increasing priority on the Asia-Pacific region mean that Europe is going to have to take more responsibility for its own security. The European members of NATO and the European Union must simply either figure out how to make “Smart Defense” a reality and provide greater collective capability at less cost or increase their own defense contributions. In providing global security, the US needs its European allies to do more and to become partners instead of dependents.

As US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter recently said, “... if Europe wants to be a force in the world it needs to be more than a moral and political economic force, which Europe is because it shares many of our values and demonstrates them around the world. But it has to have the military power that goes with that as well. [...] It’s not like we have to do everything ourselves.”³⁹

38 However, a deal in Congress was recently reached that might ease some of the effects of automatic cuts required by Sequestration. See: Rachel Blade, “Defense, appropriators win in budget deal” *Politico* 24 April 2015, <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/04/defense-appropriators-win-in-budget-deal-117333.html>.

39 *Fox News*, “Pentagon chief Carter: Europe ‘not doing enough’ on defense,” 22 April 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2015/04/22/pentagon-chief-carter-europe-not-doing-enough-on-defense/> (accessed 24 April 2015).

PART 2

UNDERSTANDING NATO POLICY OPTIONS

What should NATO do about Asia?

Philip Shetler-Jones

Introduction

Can the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) 2014 Wales Summit be judged a success? Allies mostly concentrated on pressing questions like how to stand up to Russia and make collective defence credible; and – a last minute entry – what to do about the Islamic State. Given events in Ukraine, this approach was somewhat understandable; but it did not escape criticism.¹ Some observers felt the Summit failed to deliver even in terms of its immediate objective of restoring credibility on Article 5 deterrence in Europe,² let alone putting the Alliance on course to navigate successfully around existing and emergent features of the strategic environment.

This Euro-centric agenda made the 2014 Summit a somewhat parochial affair. What does that say to those 33 partner nations and organizations that came to Wales? Those who bought into the idea of NATO as being about more than territorial defence could be forgiven for being disappointed at the apparent difficulty the Allies have in seeing events in a global context. Even if today's problem is Russia, history suggests the courses of action are not restricted to what Allies do alone along a front line in Europe. The

1 H. D. Erlanger, J. Hirschfeld Davis and S. Castle, "NATO Plans a Special Force to Reassure Eastern Europe and Deter Russia" *New York Times*, 5 September 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/06/world/europe/nato-summit.html?_r=1 (accessed 15 September 2014). J. R. Holmes, "A Clausewitzian view of NATO," *The Diplomat*, September 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/a-clausewitzian-view-of-nato/> (accessed 16 September 2014).

2 G. Will, "Has NATO lost its will as well as its muscle?" *Washington Post*, 5 September 2014. I. Kearns, *NATO in Wales: Summit of missed opportunities*, European Leadership Network, 2014, http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/nato-in-wales-summit-of-missed-opportunities_1913.html (accessed 19 September 2014).

failure to consider this problem and ways of solving it in a global context is worrying in itself. This chapter argues that the larger problem with the Summit was that it represents an ongoing failure to align the Alliance with one of the most important long-term trends in global security: the shift of global power to the East.

What if the Summit had addressed the big questions, like the following: Where does a North Atlantic alliance fit into the Asian Century? If America rebalances to Asia, will the security of European Allies become less important for Washington, or should NATO be reconceived to ensure trans-Atlantic solidarity on a strategy for managing the security issues that are emerging in Asia? As the Asian region gets richer and more powerful, tensions are rising; how can NATO protect its Allies against the consequences of conflict in Asia? Post-Afghanistan, how does NATO give purpose to partnerships with countries like Japan, Australia, Korea, and Mongolia? Is NATO putting the right value on the contribution Asian nations and organizations make to its security?³ In short, what should NATO do about Asia?

The crisis in Ukraine meant the Summit passed on these larger questions, but sooner or later NATO will need to take its role in Asian security much more seriously. The reasons for this are becoming clearer year by year. First, as the stability of Asia's security environment has become increasingly valuable for global economic prosperity, it is also becoming more fragile, so Allies have a stake. Second, America's commitments in Asia mean conflict there is likely to involve NATO's leading Ally, and Washington would expect NATO Allies' support; Allies will be involved.⁴ Third, history shows that Asian Partners play a key role in successful Western grand strategy, and Allies are going to need them again.

This chapter bases the rationale for a NATO Asia policy on a deeper

3 These questions were raised at a conference just before the summit, and the discussion was covered in J. Hemmings, "NATO and the Pivot after Wales," 12 September 2014, *ISN ETH Zurich*, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?lng=en&id=183520> (accessed 21 September 2014).

4 As M. Tsuruoka and H. Kundani point out in "The illusion of European neutrality in Asia," posted in *European Geostrategy* on 25 September 2014, <http://www.europeangeostrategy.org/2014/09/illusion-european-neutrality-asia/> (accessed 25 September 2014).

appreciation of the West's strategic history, and an updated assessment of how shifts in global order are increasing opportunities for NATO's Asian partnerships as well as their value. The chapter concludes with a number of concrete recommendations on how NATO can invest appropriately to capture the rising value of Asian partnerships.

Lessons of history

In order to make a proper estimation of NATO's role today, we need to look much further back than the Alliance's Cold War origins and its post-Cold War role. The geostrategic patterns of world order (bipolar and unipolar, respectively) that shaped NATO's role for the past several decades are becoming less and less relevant as a framework for understanding the value of Asian partnerships. Indeed, in order to think about how the "West" or the trans-Atlantic community secured its interests in an era more like the "multi-polar" world that we see emerging around us today, we need to look back to before even the origins of the Alliance.

The rise of China and the EU, as well as some smaller powers, is returning us to a world that resembles more closely the multi-polar order of the early 20th century. The present "post-post-Cold War" order so far goes without a name, but it presents features that put pundits and scholars in mind of revival. Robert Kagan's (2008) *The Return of History and the End of Dreams* intimated at what could follow when rising powers disrupt the unipolar order of the post-Cold War era. Another book with a catchy title and a similar theme was Robert Kaplan's (2012) *The Revenge of Geography*, which focused on six key regions / powers (Europe, Russia, China, India, Iran and Turkey). Centennial comparisons with 1914 are not just about nostalgia. Today's combination of a multi-polar and globally distributed order without ideological competition is making our era feel like the return of history and the revenge of geography.

If the unipolar moment is yielding to something more historically "normal", then it pays to remember that alliances with Asia have long been

part of Euro-Atlantic “normal”. Since the era of the British Empire through Second World War and the Cold War, alliances in Asia have been a key element of the strategies that delivered victory for the West. Britain’s alliance with Imperial Japan (1902-1923) secured its Asian possessions, enabling it to balance against Tsarist Russia and concentrate its fleet against Germany. In World War I thousands of Asian soldiers fought and died alongside Europeans. A generation later, the Allies relied on Chinese resistance to tie down the Imperial Japanese Army and leach resources away from the Pacific front. During and after the Korean War, alliances with Japan and the Republic of Korea played a key role in the strategy of containment. Mao’s China was later enlisted in the struggle against the Soviet Union and helped the West to bleed the Red Army in Afghanistan. Imagine what a difference it would have made had the Nazis coordinated their policy with Imperial Japan. It could have changed the outcome of the offensive against the Soviet Union and tipped the course of the war in their favor. Ignoring the Asian dimension in Western strategy is tantamount to geostrategic malpractice.

If history teaches that we are likely to need Asia again, that lesson cannot be put into practice without first addressing the reasons that have prevented NATO from taking a more meaningful position on Asian security. In general terms, the arguments against such a role are linked to three problems that characterize the Alliance today: division, shortsightedness and weakness.

The greatest driver of instability in Asian security is China’s rise, but NATO Allies are far from having an agreed policy on what this means. This is as much the case within governments as between them.⁵ When it comes to a China policy (let alone an Asia strategy), the Alliance is divided.

As we saw in Wales, NATO Allies are in large measure focused on collective defence and responding to the threat from Russia on their Eastern borders. “Global NATO” has always been a divisive idea.⁶ Despite all the

5 See: E. Luttwak, “The Three China Policies of the United States” chapter 21 in *The Rise of China and the Logic of Strategy*, in which the divergent perspectives of treasury, defence and foreign affairs departments in the US system are described. Cambridge Massachusetts, the Belknap press of Harvard University, 2012.

6 M. Venning, “Out of Area or Out of Business? ‘Global NATO’ through the European Lens,” *RUSI Newsbrief*, 27 July 2012.

talk about globalization, there is still considerable resistance to the idea that the solution to some of our local problems is to be found in a wider geographical or geo-strategic context. A short-sighted view of history and the future hampers strategic thinking in the Alliance.

Finally, cuts in NATO Allies' defence spending have further reduced its capability to deploy in Asia. At the same time, Asian nations are becoming progressively better armed. Europe is being out-spent on defence,⁷ and the Alliance is becoming – relatively speaking – militarily weak.

For these and other practical-sounding reasons, many respond to the question “What should NATO do about Asia?” by answering: “Nothing”. Their arguments run as follows: NATO is concerned with the north Atlantic area, and that is a long way away from Asia. This geographical restriction is even spelled out in the NATO charter. Anyway, few European Allies have the capability to reach Asia, let alone make a decisive combat contribution. Only France and the United Kingdom (UK) regularly deploy east of the Malacca straits. Together with the Netherlands and Denmark, a scratch force could conceivably be put together,⁸ but how long will these nations be able to sustain this capability? If mounting an operation in Libya proved a strain, what chance is there of operating effectively on the other side of the world? The crisis in Ukraine may stimulate an increase in defence investment, but the theme so far is speed (rapid response force) rather than distance – let alone stamina. We are unlikely to see resources go into sustainment or long-range maritime capability. Besides, there has long been a view – often confirmed by messages from Washington – that it is better to leave it to the Americans to manage Asia through its network of regional allies. In sum, things have moved on from the day when the Alliance was warned that it would be “out of area or out of business.”⁹ Russia's aggression in Ukraine proves NATO's business is still at home,

7 IISS Military Balance 2013.

8 P. Stares and N. Regaud, “Europe's role in Asia-Pacific Security,” *Survival*, 39:4, 1997, pp. 117-139.

9 M. Liebig “Out of area or out of business?,” *Executive Intelligence Review* EIR Volume 17, Number 50, 28 December 1990, http://www.larouche.pub.com/eiw/public/1990/eirv17n50-19901228/eirv17n50-19901228_033-nato_out_of_area_or_out_of_busin.pdf (accessed 28 November 2014).

protecting Allies from threats on their borders.

These arguments against a role in Asia seem pragmatic, but the lessons of the past suggest they are based on blinkered and short-sighted perceptions. It is not only that history teaches us that Western grand strategy has been tied to Asia for over a century, the arguments that NATO has to stay out of Asia also overlook the geostrategic trends we see emerging today.

Lessons of the present

For those who place less importance on history, the purpose of NATO is understood in terms of the recent past, or at most only in terms of the period of NATO's existence. Today's NATO has largely been defined by the concepts and policy positions designed to support the "out of area" NATO of the 1990s, and the "Global War on Terror" period between 11 September 2001 and the crisis in Ukraine. But the ambition of a "globally aware, globally connected and globally capable" Alliance promoted by former Secretary General Fogh Rasmussen¹⁰ as well as the concept of a "global NATO" have recently suffered two blows.¹¹ First, the credibility of Allied military operations out of area is undermined by disappointing outcomes in Afghanistan and Libya. Then Vladimir Putin's moves in 2014 forced the European Allies to face the extent to which years of defence cuts had hollowed out the Alliance's capabilities to conduct the core function of the NATO Charter: deterrence and, if necessary, Article 5 collective defence

10 A. Fogh Rasmussen speech at Chatham House, "Delivering Security in the 21st Century," 4 July 2012, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Meetings/Meeting%20Transcripts/040712rasmussen.pdf> (accessed 1 January 2015). On 10 July 2014 Fogh Rasmussen gave a speech at the Marines' Memorial Club Hotel in San Francisco entitled "America, Europe and the Pacific", referring to NATO as part of a 'global network': "Global threats like terrorism, piracy and missile attacks cross borders. They are too big for any one country to tackle alone. We can only deal with them together. Not just as an Atlantic Alliance. But as a global network. Our security does not stop at the East Coast."

11 I. Daalder and J. Goldgeier's 2006 article in the September-October issue of *Foreign Affairs* entitled "Global NATO" concludes that "Creating a global NATO is not about saving the alliance from obsolescence. The issue is not whether NATO goes out of area or out of business. The issue is how the world's premier international military organization should adapt to the demands of the times in a way that advances the interests not just of the transatlantic community but of a global community of democracies dependent on global stability. Global threats cannot be tackled by a regional organization."

against a conventional attack. Now, more than at any time since the fall of the Berlin wall, the crisis in Ukraine has put NATO under pressure to dispense with distractions and focus on territorial defence.

In the lead up to the Summit a narrow “back to basics” narrative dominated, to the extent that arguments about how NATO should pursue its objectives within a broader geographic framework were hardly debated. This approach exhibits three points of weakness that deserve to be challenged head on.

The ‘neighbourhood’ fallacy

Nowhere is it written in stone that NATO’s interest is limited to its neighbourhood, and it is facile to cite Articles 5 and 6 of the NATO Charter as proof that the Alliance’s sphere of action is limited in some *de jure* sense. The logic behind a *de facto* geographic focus on Europe during the Cold War, when the threat to NATO Allies was a direct conventional and nuclear attack expected to start there, was self-evident. But as it turned out the first and only time Article 5 has been invoked (on 2 September 2001) was in response to an attack on America. The deployment of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft to the United States (US) and Operation Active Endeavour in the/ Mediterranean to which it gave rise were later accompanied by, which led to a NATO crisis management operation in the heart of Asia.¹² The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) went on to become NATO’s longest and most demanding operation. While the success of the operation will long be debated, there are no grounds for assuming that the cause that took NATO forces to Central Asia has been eliminated for good. Whatever the outcome of the efforts in Afghanistan including the ongoing Resolute Support mission, it cannot change the logic that threats to the Alliance may arise outside the North Atlantic Area, and some of them can only be effectively dealt with

12 Statement by then NATO Secretary General Lord Roberts, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011002a.htm> (accessed 29 November 2014).

by tackling them at the root.

Those who argue that Alliance action is limited to the Euro-Atlantic area should consider all the things that cross these neat lines. For instance, reputation knows no bounds. NATO Allies have to understand that America will be influenced in its actions by concern about perceptions in Asia.¹³ The credibility of America's commitment to its Asian allies Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), as well as to the Philippines and Taiwan, is measured in part by how it supports its allies and partners in Europe. The cyber and outer space theatres of war are truly global, as is the arena of proliferation.

Today, North Korea can point its ballistic missiles against North America. Does a narrow interpretation of the NATO Charter mean the Alliance can't respond at all? In his valedictory speech "Renewed Ambitions for NATO", former US Ambassador to NATO (2009-2013) Ivo Daalder offered this reminder that Article 5 also extends to Asia:

*...we also see threats looming on the horizon—including from far beyond Europe. North Korean missiles are an Article 5 threat to the United States and Canada just as Syrian missiles are an Article 5 threat to Turkey and Europe. And we want to make sure that we face these threats collectively, as true partners. So the question is not whether Washington will choose Asia or Europe. As my former boss, Secretary Hillary Clinton, used to say ... we Americans know how to walk and chew gum at the same time. The question is whether our NATO Allies will make the commitments necessary to face 21st century dangers together. Our Alliance depends on our collective ability to stand up to threats against any member state—no matter what their geographic origin.*¹⁴

13 D. Trenin, "West's antics pushing China closer to Russia," *China Daily*, 12 September 2014, <http://carnegie.ru/2014/09/12/west-s-antics-pushing-russia-closer-to-china/hoy4>.

14 I. Daalder, Remarks at Carnegie Europe, Brussels, 17 June 2013, <http://nato.usmission.gov/sp-06172013.html> (accessed 16 September 2014).

The 'division of labour' fallacy

Economics and Alliance politics make it unrealistic to expect that a "division of labour" where Europeans take care of their neighbourhood and let the US take care of Asia can be agreed, much less sustained into the future.

First, it runs counter to Europeans' strategic interests to exclude themselves from such an important aspect of world affairs. Why would the rise of Asia be the exception to the historical norm that economic relations are connected to security partnerships? European industry is already a significant supplier of military technology and exports to Asia, and joint research and development activities are increasing too. However much they may neglect security and defence issues "at home," Europeans are not about to pass up on the economic opportunities (direct and indirect) that come hand in hand with a role in Asian security.¹⁵

Second, for most Europeans, there is no organizational alternative to NATO. Even if (a big "if") the European Union (EU) Common Foreign and Security Policy attempted to coordinate an Asia strategy, it would have great difficulty structuring combined military, political and economic cooperation on a strategic level. The only Asian security institution of which the EU is a member is the semi-dormant ASEAN Regional Forum. Only a few European nations are involved in other structures such as the Manila Pact, the UN Armistice Commission and Advisory Group for Korea and the Five Power Defence Agreement (under which the UK cooperates in the defence of Singapore and Malaysia with Australia and New Zealand). Leaving aside the opportunities these offer to France and especially the UK, for other European Allies only NATO offers a platform for continuous situational awareness, consultation, joint exercises, intelligence sharing and standards of interoperability between European and Asian nations.

Third, it would be dangerous to differentiate in this way between

15 "...by not playing a more active security role in the Asia-Pacific, Europe may forego major commercial opportunities to those countries that do, particularly the US" P. Stares and N. Regaud "Europe's role in Asia-Pacific Security," *Survival*, 39:4, 1997 p. 118.

Washington's responsibilities and those of its European Allies. The hasty re-naming of the "pivot" to the "rebalance" was caused in part by the recognition of Europeans' sensitivity to the possibility of abandonment by the US. Pivoting alone undermines Alliance solidarity. Equally, should events in Asia test that trans-Atlantic solidarity, Washington would come to regret leaving Europeans out of the loop – and off the hook. America would automatically be asking for all kinds of help, but years of telling its allies "Leave it to me" will only make it harder to enlist that support when the pressure is on. For reasons expressed above, a trans-Atlantic division of labour would not only be unlikely to work, it would also erode the principle of solidarity thereby undermining NATO itself.

But if NATO is the default forum for trans-Atlantic strategic coordination, leaving Asia off the agenda sends a signal that Washington prefers to go it alone. Former Secretary of State Clinton said that "our pivot to Asia is not a pivot away from Europe. On the contrary, we want Europe to engage more in Asia along with us, to see the region not only as a market, but as a focus of common strategic engagement."¹⁶ The sentiment was echoed in a speech by then US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta at King's College London in 2013;¹⁷ but, judging from the lack of follow-up, European Allies might be forgiven for wondering whether the invitation remains open. Is this a case of negligence or a deliberate signal that Europeans should leave Asia to the US? If the latter, it would be a mistake. If the former is true, it would be helpful for the sake of Alliance solidarity to clear this up, and to use Alliance structures (such as Article 4) as a forum to discuss how to coordinate a strategic approach.

16 H. R. Clinton, Speech at the Brookings Institution, 29 November 2012, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/events/2012/11/29%20clinton/20121129_transatlantic_clinton.pdf (accessed 1 January 2014).

17 "The bottom line is that Europe should not fear our rebalance to Asia; Europe should join it." L. Panetta, Remarks Secretary Panetta at Kings College London, 13 January 2013, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2013/01/20130119141246.html?CP.rss=true#axzz2lofqMpV1> (accessed 19 September 2014).

The capabilities fallacy

It would be poor strategic thinking to assume that Europeans' lack of certain military capabilities means NATO will not participate in an Asian conflict. True, few Europeans can deploy or sustain a lot of ships or other platforms in the Asian theatre, but the assumption that this disqualifies the Alliance from playing a role reflects an over-simplistic and outdated mindset.

Perhaps the best guide we have to understand the character of conflict involving one or more great powers is playing out now through the response to Vladimir Putin's aggression against Ukraine. This contest is highly unlikely to be settled by ships, planes and missiles. Like an increasing number of states today, the adversary is well armed enough to make such a strategy self-defeating. Instead, the West is banking on the tools of economic pressure and diplomatic isolation to deliver its political objectives.

Assuming the Alliance's courses of action are defined in terms of military hardware reflects a flawed perception of NATO as merely a "military alliance", when in fact it has always been a political alliance with military capabilities. NATO is actually rather well equipped for 21st century conflict, with its solidarity based on common values and battle-tested machinery for structuring shared understanding and cooperation among its members and a network of global partners.

Preparing for the future

To fully appreciate the importance of NATO's Asian partnerships for achieving the Alliance's objectives, it is necessary to consider the form and character of possible conflict in Asia. Such conflict may take many forms, but the priority for NATO Allies is the scenario of conflict involving one or more NATO Allies directly, probably the United States. Before most of us had heard of the Senkaku Islands (or Diaoyu Islands in China or Diaoyutai Islands in Taiwan), Robert Kaplan wrote:

The Middle East is just a blip. The American military contest with China

in the Pacific will define the twenty-first century. And China will be a more formidable adversary than Russia ever was.

Nearly a decade ago, Kaplan predicted NATO would be unable to stand apart from such a conflict:

*...ironically, the vitality of NATO itself, the Atlantic alliance, could be revived by the Cold War in the Pacific—and indeed the re-emergence of NATO as an indispensable war-fighting instrument should be America’s unswerving aim. In its posture toward China the United States will look to Europe and NATO, whose help it will need as a strategic counterweight and, by the way, as a force to patrol seas more distant than the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic.*¹⁸

Just as Russia’s actions in Ukraine forced Europeans to confront the possibility of great power war in Europe, the rise of China has prompted scholars (mostly in the United States) to overcome diplomatic inhibitions and think in practical terms about how a Sino-American war would be fought.¹⁹ They assert that the “direct” response was signified by the creation in 2011 of the Air Sea Battle Office, but since then, an “indirect” strategy of “economic strangulation” by means of offshore control,²⁰ or distant blockade,²¹ and protracted blockade has gained favor.²²

Making strangulation work in a global economy requires a broad enough coalition to choke off all the main arteries. Sanctions adopted only by one or two countries would be ineffective. As economic power becomes more widely distributed in the international system, a broader coalition is

18 R. Kaplan, “How we would fight China,” *The Atlantic*, June 2005, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2005/06/how-we-would-fight-china/303959/> (accessed 19 September 2014).

19 J. R. Holmes and T. Yoshihara “Asymmetric Warfare American Style,” *Proceedings Magazine*, April Vol. 138/4/1, 2012, p. 310.

20 T.X. Hammes, “Offshore Control: A Proposed Strategy for an Unlikely Conflict,” *Strategic Forum*, No. 258, 2012; Hammes and Hooker “America’s ultimate strategy in a clash with China,” *The National Interest*, 10 June 2014.

21 B. Friedman, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The debate over US Military Strategy in Asia*, IISS Routledge, 2014, p. 73.

22 V T. Gunzinger, Krepinevich and Thomas, *Air-Sea Battle: A Point-of-Departure Operational Concept*, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, Washington D.C., 2010.

required to leverage access to the global markets in goods, technologies, finance and arms. European economies arguably need to be prepared to absorb collateral damage, but also ready to be enlisted into the campaign.

Coalitions need connective tissue, and that is something NATO has been good at developing through its “partnerships” policy. But partnership has to work both ways. How can NATO expect to maintain support from its Asian Partners without taking a close interest in their security concerns? How do Asian Partners regard a role for NATO in their region?

Japan – the oldest Asian Partner

There are several reasons to start with Japan, which is NATO’s longest-standing Global Partner in Asia. Even during the Cold War, some saw Tokyo as a kind of unofficial NATO member due to its close military alliance with the United States and the degree to which its capabilities (especially in the maritime sphere) were integrated in the military strategy of containment against the Soviet Union. It is also notable that, excepting former Commonwealth states, Japan is unique among Asian nations in terms of its experience with European alliances. Japan’s membership of the Axis in Second World War has to be recalled, along with the much longer and more successful Anglo-Japan Alliance (1902-1923).

Japan-NATO cooperation continued after the 1990s, but picked up in the post-9/11 era. Former Japanese Prime Minister Aso Taro visited NATO Headquarters as Foreign Minister in 2006, and in 2007 Shinzo Abe became the first Japanese Prime Minister to address the North Atlantic Council. Now in his second period of office, Abe is in the process of removing the legal constraints that would prevent the Japanese military from fighting as part of a coalition alongside NATO Allies. When the NATO Secretary General visited Tokyo on 15 April 2013, both sides signed a joint political declaration, followed a year later by an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) roadmap.

Why is Japan so interested in NATO? According to Michito Tsuruoka,

“NATO is of value to Japan in four key ways – as a political partner, operational partner, another means of co-operation with the US and as a multilateral school.”²³ In Tsuruoka’s view, NATO needs to be less concerned about managing partnerships, and clearer about what it wants them to deliver. Also, NATO should approach serious partners on a more equal level and involve them more closely in planning and assessments.²⁴

The new NATO Secretary General should follow up on these commitments – not just for the sake of continuity, but because Japan, along with Australia, combines excellent partner material in the form of shared values, top tier capabilities and a global security perspective.²⁵

Australia – building on strong foundations

If Japan is NATO’s oldest Asian partner then, measured by its deployment of forces to fight alongside NATO Allies in Afghanistan, Australia must be among its most active. Extending “enhanced opportunities” to Australia stands out as perhaps the Wales Summit’s single substantive acknowledgment of an Asian partner’s value.

Like Japan, Australia has a long track record of military commitments in support of “Western” objectives, dating from the age of Empire. Membership of the exclusive “Five Eyes” intelligence sharing club (with the UK, US, Canada and New Zealand) and the Five Powers Defence Agreement provide a reminder of how Commonwealth legacies continue to provide useful connections between Britain and the region. However, this history also causes some to ask if Australia can really be thought of as “Asian”. A sense of cultural isolation is added to the huge physical distance between it and, with the exception of New Zealand, the rest of the Anglo-

23 M. Tsuruoka “NATO and Japan,” *The RUSI Journal*, 156:6, 2011, pp. 62-69.

24 M. Tsuruoka “NATO and Japan as Multifaceted Partners,” *NATO Defense College Research Division Research Paper* No. 91, NATO Defense College, Rome, April 2013.

25 M. Hribernik *Toward a global perspective: NATO’s growing engagement with Japan and South Korea*, European Institute for Asian Studies, 2013, <http://www.eias.org/sites/default/files/EU-Asia-at-a-glance-Hribernik-NATO-Japan-Korea.pdf> (accessed 20 September 2014). M. Hribernik “The Path Ahead for NATO Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific,” *Atlantic Voices*, Volume 3, Issue 8, August 2013.

Saxon world. There is awareness that past and present assertions of pan-Asianism (Japan's co-Prosperity Sphere, ASEAN, a potential China-centred bloc) exclude Australia. The main policy to mitigate this vulnerability is to reinforce a close Alliance with the US, which also raises the need for a hedging strategy to ensure against America's periods of isolationism. Today's nightmare scenario would be post-Iraq/Afghanistan war weariness, combined with relative economic decline, as the background to continued defence cuts (including sequestration) and a "G2" notion of bipolarity in which the US cedes Asia to China.

One option for hedging against abandonment is to approach another Asian nation that is isolated by virtue of its colonial past: Japan. Relations developed under the Abbott and Abe governments have prompted references to a "quasi alliance".²⁶ NATO too offers both a means of demonstrating Australia's value as an ally of the United States, as well as a platform with which Australia can pursue a more diverse range of alliance relationships.

Global Korea

The Republic of Korea (ROK) addresses its main national security threat from North Korea with a "carrot and stick" approach, using two strategic instruments: an increasingly warm diplomatic relationship with China (the state widely acknowledged as having the greatest influence on Pyongyang), and an alliance with the US, including the presence of tens of thousands of American troops on Korean soil. The obvious risks if this balancing act goes wrong are abandonment by Washington and capture by China. By expanding the scope of policy areas for the ROK to be of service to US policy (e.g. in Afghanistan), and by diversifying the range of cooperation for Korean security policy, association with NATO offers two varieties of risk mitigation. The ROK and NATO forged a bilateral partnership in 2006, and ties are strengthened through high-level exchanges and the

26 J. Garnaut, "Australia-Japan military ties are a 'quasi-alliance,' say officials," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 October 2014.

ROK's participation in NATO summits.

Since 2008, evidence has accumulated, suggesting that Korea is looking beyond such transactional calculations (participation in Afghanistan as a “down payment” for the presence of US troops in Korea),²⁷ and intends to re-frame its foreign policy and status by means of a new “Global Korea” concept:

*A bold test of broadening the ROK's horizons ... began with the launch of the Lee Myung-bak administration in February 2008. The ROK chose the path of not local Korea but Global Korea in the face of the global economic crisis triggered by the fall of the Lehman Brothers. This thinking derived from one simple wish: to return Korea's kindness to the international community.*²⁸

Global Korea represents the graduation of the ROK's status in the world from being a recipient of outside support to becoming a provider of security and development assistance. It is prompted by a realization of the country's growing relative strength and the fact that globalization and the rise of middle powers require a more pluralistic approach to engaging with the outside world.

One aspect of this is to look beyond the US Alliance for other fora through which to project a more independent and mature international identity.²⁹ Relations with NATO deepened with the signature of an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme in September 2012, followed by the first ever visit of the NATO Secretary General to the ROK in April 2013. The issues highlighted for cooperation during that visit were maritime security, cybersecurity and nuclear proliferation.

27 S. Snyder, “Global Korea,” *Overview Report for the Council on Foreign Relations*, 2012, p. 3, <http://www.cfr.org/south-korea/global-korea/p29048> (accessed 28 December 2014).

28 S. Kim, *Global Korea: Broadening Korea's Diplomatic Horizons* Dr. Kim Sung-han was Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This quote comes from a CSIS website publication of 27 July 2012, p. 2, [csis.org/files/publication/120727_KimSunghan_GlobalKorea.pdf](http://www.csis.org/files/publication/120727_KimSunghan_GlobalKorea.pdf) (accessed 28 December 2014).

29 S. Snyder, “Global Korea,” *Overview Report for the Council on Foreign Relations*, 2012, p. 7, <http://www.cfr.org/south-korea/global-korea/p29048> (accessed 28 December 2014). “The obligation to support the United States because of the US-ROK alliance is no longer the dominant South Korean interest in contributing to international security.”

The transition from the Lee to Park administrations in 2013 has so far shown a high degree of continuity in the ROK's foreign policy. "Middle power" diplomacy is still listed as one of the three key themes, and the ambition to make a contribution has taken shape in the form of the Seoul Defence Dialogue and the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), under which Seoul attempts to lead Japan and China towards a better balance between their economic and security relations. NAPCI was one of the areas of ROK-NATO cooperation identified in the recent visit by Deputy Secretary General (and former US ambassador to the ROK) Alexander Vershbow:

*I commend the Republic of Korea for leading the discussion on Northeast Asian strategic issues in fora such as the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative Forum (NAPCI) and the Seoul Defense Dialogue. I believe that NATO, with its long experience and record of success in multinational defense and security cooperation, can add clear value to these discussions, and help promote the development of multinational security cooperation in this part of the world.*³⁰

India – new prospects for maritime partnership

Although India is progressively becoming a pivotal power in Asian security, the progress of the NATO-India partnership has been comparatively difficult. Since its independence, India has preferred non-aligned status and until quite recently there were few areas of common interest with NATO.

The prospects for partnership brightened as a consequence of NATO's involvement in Afghanistan, the outcomes of which were related to India's concerns with Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism and stock of nuclear weapons. In September 2011, NATO proposed that India cooperate in the

30 "Multilateral security cooperation: From conflict to cooperation," Opening remarks by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow at the Seoul Defense Dialogue, 30 October 2014, Seoul, ROK, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_114268.htm (accessed 1 January 2015).

pursuit of “technology of discovering and intercepting missiles”,³¹ yet these talks came to nothing and a year later the parties were judged to be “just as far from cooperating ... as they were a year ago”.³²

Now, however, the rise of China is prompting India to turn its attention towards potential challenges to its maritime security in the Indian Ocean area as well as its economic interests east of the Malacca straits: for example, the exploration for hydrocarbons in the seas off Vietnam, which are contested by Beijing. NATO-India cooperation in counter-piracy operations off the horn of Africa could serve as a foundation for a stronger partnership in the maritime domain.

NATO as a virtual Asian collective security forum

One final reason for Asians to partner with NATO is that, however much they might like to create their own NATO-like regional alliance, various factors (intra-Asian tensions like those between Japan and ROK, fear of provoking China, ASEAN’s tradition of non-alignment...) make that impractical for the foreseeable future. Paradoxically, this situation also accounts for the attractions of stronger NATO involvement in Asia: being a partner with NATO is the next best thing to having an Asian collective security platform. Like their bilateral agreements with the US, NATO can act as a useful platform to achieve strategic and operational interoperability, as well as links to a wider range of potential coalition partners through Article 4 discussions and intelligence sharing arrangements.

So, what – in practical terms - *should* NATO do about Asia?

Recommendations

Considering the immediacy of the problems with Russia and the Middle

31 “NATO offers missile defence cooperation to India,” *The Hindu*, 22 March 2012, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2424128.ece> (accessed 22 December 2014).

32 R. Helbig, “NATO-India: Prospects of a Partnership,” *Research Paper* No. 73, NATO Defense College, Rome, February 2012.

East, it would be quixotic to expect NATO's role in Asia to be given the highest priority. However, a more serious consideration of how to secure NATO's Asian interests is needed, and NATO's partnerships with Asian nations and organizations should be managed on a more strategic basis. This means, first, applying NATO's interests and values to the way these partnerships are structured. Second, the content of the partnership activity must be reviewed to make sure it takes account of real and emerging developments in Asian security, rather than just being about how Asian Partners can support NATO. Third, commitment to long-term strategic objectives for these partnerships is needed, if NATO wants to inspire confidence in its commitment to Asian affairs.

A new trans-Atlantic bargain – US supports European Allies' efforts to deter Russia, and in return European Allies support American efforts to deter conflict in Asia – is probably unrealistic. And given the pressures on public spending, there is no point in pushing costly initiatives. So rather than one big thing, it might be better to go for a lot of little moves that shift the centre of gravity in the right direction:

- ❖ Differentiate NATO's Partners in Asia, according to whether they show commitment to the organization's founding principles (democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law). Those who do include Australia, New Zealand, Japan, ROK, and Mongolia. They get the full package including consultation on NATO activity, intelligence sharing, joint exercises and other close partnership activity. Those who fail to show such commitment are engaged to build confidence and mutual understanding, but also become the target of an advocacy effort in order to further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty.
- ❖ Approach India with ideas on maritime cooperation as a basis for a new (post-Afghanistan) partnership.
- ❖ Make Asian security issues a regular topic of consultations under Article 4, and invite the top tier of Asian partners.
- ❖ Beef up aspects of NATO interoperability relevant for Asian security, such as maritime cooperation, joint amphibious

operations and military support to civil emergency planning for disaster response.

- ❖ Be sure to conduct at least one exercise in Asia or the areas in between (Arctic and Indian Oceans) per year, inviting the close Asian partners.
- ❖ Extend cooperation to close Asian Partners on doctrine and tactics in fields like cybersecurity, SOF, “grey area” operations and information warfare.
- ❖ Extend cooperation on Security Sector Reform and civil-military relations to Asian nations such as Myanmar, that are oriented towards closer adherence to NATO principles.
- ❖ Forge a partnership with ASEAN, as suggested by US Secretary of Defense Panetta in 2013.³³
- ❖ Establish at least one NATO Asia liaison office, similar to the Central Asia liaison office in Tashkent, to liaise in the region and enhance NATO Allies’ understanding of Asian security, and to maximize NATO’s partnership instruments in support of the goals set out in their cooperation programmes. Japan may offer the best location.

If NATO takes these small steps now, then in a few years it will be in a better position to judge whether the protection of its core interests requires it to engage more directly in Asian security.

Conclusion

A narrow view of getting NATO “back to basics” that disregards an Alliance role in Asia reflects a short-sighted view of what the Alliance is for, and the wider strategic environment. Those who oppose the notion that

33 “It is in the interests of both the United States and Europe for the NATO alliance to become more outwardly focused and engaged in helping to strengthen security institutions in Asia, like ASEAN”, Remarks Secretary Panetta at King’s College London, speech given on 13 January 2013, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2013/01/20130119141246.html?CP.rss=true#axzz2IofqMpV1> (accessed 19 September 2014).

NATO should attend to its Partners' security interests in Asia, on the basis that it has to focus on its territorial borders, are presenting a false choice. History is clear on the strategic value of partnering with the far to defeat the near. The globalized nature of the economy makes a geographic division of labour unrealistic, and the character of contemporary conflicts exposes the fallacy of measuring strategic capability in units of military hardware. Asian Partners increasingly grasp the value of NATO partnerships, and it is time the Alliance organized and committed to a coherent response.

In the lead-up to the Wales Summit, then Secretary General Fogh Rasmussen described NATO as “an insurance policy against instability.”³⁴ Now is the time for NATO to pay a proportionate dividend by investing in its Asia partnerships. The Alliance should steadily strengthen its low profile role with more networking, developing understanding, ensuring crisis early warning,³⁵ maintaining and growing partnerships for future operations, and exerting quiet influence. It is only prudent to take such modest steps so as to keep Asia in mind, and to keep NATO in the minds of Asians.

34 A. Fogh Rasmussen, A Strong Transatlantic Bond for an Unpredictable World, Speech by NATO Secretary General at the Atlantic Council of the United States in Washington DC, 8 July 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_111614.htm (accessed 16 September 2014).

35 Identified by NATO as an objective of its partnerships in 2011, *Active Engagement in Cooperative Security: A More Efficient and Flexible Partnership Policy*, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/20110415_110415-Partnership-Policy.pdf (accessed 16 September 2014).

The Perils of a NATO Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific

Mark Webber

At its Summit in Wales in September 2014, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) issued a declaration of unparalleled length. Consisting of 113 paragraphs, the document was expansive in its geographic scope – covering topics as diverse as the Russia-Ukraine crisis; the inter-linked conflicts in Syria and Iraq; enlargement in the Balkans; partnerships in Africa, the Mediterranean and the Gulf; and NATO’s ongoing engagement in Afghanistan.¹ Yet apart from a brief reference to concerns over North Korea and fleeting acknowledgement of partnerships with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea (relegated to footnotes) no place was found for any considered consideration of the Asia-Pacific; and this despite Washington’s intention, well-known since 2012, to execute a foreign policy “rebalance” toward the region.²

A year or so before the Wales Summit, such a rebalance on NATO’s part (following the American lead) appeared to be the principal candidate for a major Alliance initiative. Writing in May 2013, Jamie Shea (NATO’s Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges) suggested that the “order of magnitude” of the challenges posed by developments in the Asia-Pacific (China’s rise to military pre-eminence, the behaviour of nuclear North Korea, “intractable territorial disputes” that could be “catastrophic for global security and economic, trading, and investment relationships”) meant NATO (and its European members especially) would

1 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Wales Summit Declaration,” NATO Press Release (2014) 120, issued 5 September 2014, paragraphs.6-20, 23-25, 31-34, 73-77, 82, 85-88, 98, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm (accessed 9 December 2014).

2 US Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defence* (January 2012), p. 2, http://www.defense.gov/news/defense_strategic_guidance.pdf (accessed 9 December 2014).

“have to come to terms with these strategic game changes.”³ Others noted similarly that a crisis in the Asia-Pacific would impact upon Europe as well as the US – impinging upon its vital economic interests and raising the question of how NATO might assist the US as “the Asia-Pacific ‘power of order’.”⁴ No-one was arguing at this juncture that NATO would take up permanent station in the Asia-Pacific, but what the debate on the rebalance made evident was that the Alliance could still have global pretensions, that the strategic and economic interest of Europe in the region might be as compelling as NATO’s two Pacific powers – the US and Canada – and that NATO’s value remained dependent upon steering toward the strategic priorities of its most powerful member.

These arguments seemed all the more persuasive as NATO wound down its commitment in Afghanistan. It had been formal policy since the 2012 Chicago Summit that NATO’s combat mission in the country would conclude at the end of 2014. The follow-on mission would be of “a different nature,” smaller, geared toward supporting the Afghan National Security Forces and, crucially, without a counter-insurgency remit.⁵ NATO’s “long and daunting fight against the Taliban,” it was suggested, had helped to determine “the strategic thinking, military planning, organisation of force structures and procurement decisions” of the Allies for more than a decade; it had also ensured that the Europeans had elevated their strategic perspectives beyond their own continent and had perforce “encompass[ed] a global, 21st century perspective.” As the Afghan mission slipped down NATO’s order of priorities, supporting the US rebalance to Asia thus seemed a sensible means by which the Alliance could retain this global perspective.⁶

3 J. Shea, “NATO and the US Pivot to Asia: To Follow or Not to Follow?” *Policy Brief*, German Marshall Fund of the United States), May 2013, pp. 1-2.

4 K-H. Kamp, “NATO’s European Members, Too, Should Pivot to Asia,” *Europe’s World*, 24 February 2014, <http://europeworld.org/2014/02/24/natos-european-members-too-should-pivot-to-asia/#.VHBYEsIkaO4> (accessed 9 December 2014).

5 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Chicago Summit Declaration,” NATO Press Release (2012) 062, issued 20 May 2012, paragraphs.5-6, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_87593.htm (accessed 9 December 2014).

6 K-H. Kamp, “NATO’s 2014 Summit Agenda,” *Research Paper*, No.97, September 2013, NATO Defense College, pp. 1-2, 6, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/research/series.php?icode=1> (accessed 9 December 2014).

That an Asian orientation was absent in the Wales Declaration despite these arguments is easily explicable. As Summit preparations proceeded during 2014, NATO was initially blindsided and then forced to respond to Russia's intervention, first in Crimea and then in Eastern Ukraine. The headline measures it took at Wales (a Readiness Action Plan and an agreement to raise defence expenditure) have meant NATO has, in effect, "come home" to Europe⁷ – to the task of collective defence, the reassurance of its eastern members and the deterrence of its erstwhile partner, the Russian Federation. Since the Ukraine crisis, little has been heard of a NATO role east of Afghanistan.

The reaffirmation of NATO's core mission, while borne of pragmatic necessity, is a blessing in disguise. It would be wrong to deny that NATO can (and sometime should) have an out-of-area role beyond Europe in the "post-Afghanistan age;"⁸ however, the argument that NATO should play a greater role in the Asia-Pacific was always a weak one. And lest support for it be reprised in light of any possible improvement in relations with Russia, the argument of this chapter is that the case will remain unpersuasive for the foreseeable future. In short, NATO will not, cannot and should not engage in a pivot to the Asia-Pacific. In what follows, each of these assertions will be articulated.

The chapter will conclude with some thoughts on a much more modest role for NATO in the region.

NATO will not pivot to the Asia-Pacific

The intention of the US to "pivot" or "rebalance" to the Asia-Pacific region has been clear since 2011. What has driven this foreign policy strategy is the exponential rise of China as an economic and military power

7 A phrase derived from J. Ringsmose and S. Rynning, "Come Home NATO? The Atlantic Alliance's New Strategic Concept," *DIIS Report* 2009: 04, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, 2009.

8 Michael Fallon (UK Secretary of State for Defense), "NATO: Coming Home?," speech at the Royal United Services Institute, London, 3 September 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nato-coming-home> (accessed 9 December 2014).

(and, with it, a nervousness among America's key allies in the region), political uncertainty over North Korea, and an appreciation that the region has become the powerhouse of the global economy (bringing with it a felt need on America's part to ensure open passage of maritime routes and to dampen territorial disputes that would curtail access to energy and maritime resources). Writing as the pivot was freshly minted, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made clear that the US would enhance the "forward deployment" of its diplomatic, economic and military assets to the Asia-Pacific in order to "adapt [...] to the rapid and dramatic shifts playing out" there.⁹ Regarding the military component, the 2012 US *Defense Strategic Guidance* (DSG), reaffirmed US commitments to its treaty allies in the region and an expansion of the "networks of cooperation with emerging partners [...] to ensure collective capability and capacity for securing common interests."¹⁰ The 2014 US *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) noted similarly that an enhancement of "security alliances with Australia, Japan, the ROK [South Korea], the Philippines and Thailand" as well as a "deepening [of] our defense relationships with key partners in the region, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and many others," was the "centerpiece" of the US "rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region."¹¹

In service of this position, the US has undertaken a number of initiatives: a new defence agreement with the Philippines (signed in April 2014), increased air, naval and marine rotations through Australia, an across-the-board strengthening of defence cooperation with Japan, an augmentation of the US troop presence in South Korea, and the building of defence ties with Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore.¹² It has also supported bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation among these partners. This includes

9 H. Clinton (then US Secretary of State), "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy*, 11 October 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century (accessed 9 December 2014).

10 US Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership*, p. 2.

11 US Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, Washington D.C.: the Pentagon, 2014, pp. 16-17, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf (accessed 9 December 2014).

12 R. Taylor, "Australia Embraces Marine Presence in Darwin," *Wall Street Journal*, 14 August 2014; "America in Asia," *The Economist*, 3 May 2014; X. Dormandy with R. Kinane, "Asia-Pacific Security: A Changing Role for the United States," *Chatham House Report*, April 2014, London, Chatham House, pp.4-13; J. Perlez, "In China's Shadow, US Pursues Closer Ties to Vietnam," *International New York Times*, 18 August 2014.

Australia's burgeoning defence ties with Japan (and, by extension, the Trilateral Security Dialogue involving the US), as well as the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting "Plus" (launched at the initiative of Vietnam in 2010, the meeting comprises the defence ministers of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations [ASEAN] plus non-ASEAN states including Russia and China as well as the US).

The enhancement of the US military position in the Asia-Pacific certainly has its limits, not least the pressures brought about by reductions in US defence spending. Following a steep rise between 2001 and 2010, American defence spending began to fall from 2011. This recent trend is, in part, accounted for by the drawdown of large overseas operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the central driver has been the need to rein in the federal budget and so tackle the US deficit. The long-term outlook, consequently, is an end to privileged treatment for the US military. The then Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, in testimony in June 2014, suggested that the US defence budget was likely to face cuts of \$50bn per annum up to 2021.¹³ The US defence establishment, not surprisingly, has suggested that this will impinge upon US national security and America's ability to maintain the necessary capabilities for the execution of its global strategic priorities.¹⁴ While some of these claims may seem self-serving, what is not at issue is that the US will have to face tough choices even in areas of strategic priority. Interviewed in April 2014, Katrina McFarland, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, suggested that a planned reduction in the 2015 defence budget meant that the "pivot" would need to be "looked at again, because candidly it can't happen" under existing constraints.¹⁵ While McFarland subsequently retracted this claim, the implication was clear – the US faced a resource crunch and help was needed. The logic of

13 Cited in N. Simeone, "Hagel: Proposed Defense Budget Tailored to Meet Future Threats," American Forces Press Service, 18 June 2014, *DoD News*, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=122497> (accessed 9 December 2014).

14 C. Roulo, "Asia-Pacific Rebalance Remains Central to Strategy, Spokesman Says," *DoD News*, 14 August 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=122932> (accessed 9 December 2014).

15 Cited in D.E. Sanger and M. Landler, "Myriad Pressures Hobble Obama's Strategic Shift to Asia," *International New York Times*, 23 April 2014.

this challenge has been crisply outlined by Xania Dormandy: the US “is increasing its presence in Asia [but] its global footprint is shrinking: Asia’s slice is getting bigger, but the pie is getting smaller. Over time, it is likely that America’s allies and friends will need to compensate for the diminution of US assets in the region.”¹⁶

This requirement does not, however, presage a role for NATO. Simply put, the Alliance does not figure in US considerations of how the rebalance to Asia can be sustained. This can be deduced from two positions central to US policy.

The first relates to NATO itself. At the time the Asian rebalance was made explicit, some anxiety was expressed among supporters of the trans-Atlantic relationship that NATO was being downgraded and “that the US commitment to the security of its European [a]llies could be waning.”¹⁷ These concerns are misplaced; NATO has not been written off by Washington. While it is clear from the 2012 DSG that the rebalance to Asia would be accompanied by a re-evaluation of the American posture in Europe, this was never meant to signal a fundamental change of commitment to the Alliance. The DSG reaffirmed America’s Article 5 collective defence commitment to its European Allies and its interest in “bolstering the strength and vitality of NATO.”¹⁸ The QDR, in a similar vein, notes America’s “steadfast and resolute support” of NATO and outlines a series of measures the US would take to ensure NATO “remains a modern and capable alliance.”¹⁹ True, these statements have to be seen in a context of a long-term decline in the US military footprint in Europe, but the fundamentals remain. Commitments to NATO mean the US remains Europe’s defender of last resort through extended nuclear deterrence and (as NATO’s policy of reassurance has shown in response to the Ukraine crisis) its ally of choice in a crisis. NATO-Europe, further, also holds a

16 Dormandy with Kinane, “Asia-Pacific Security: A Changing Role for the United States,” p. 2.

17 A. Agov (rapporteur), “The Growing Strategic Relevance of Asia: Implications for NATO,” draft general report, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Political Committee, 15 April 2013, p. 2, <http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=3212#PC>

18 US Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership*, pp. 2-3.

19 US Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, p. 18.

singularly important position in US global strategy. A continuing forward presence on the continent (for instance, the US Navy Sixth Fleet based in Naples, Italy; US Air Forces Europe in Ramstein, Germany; and US Africa Command located in Stuttgart-Moehringen, Germany) is deemed essential both for European contingencies and to support US operations further afield in the Middle East and Africa.²⁰

America's ongoing dedication to NATO does not extend, however, to an assumption that the Alliance is material to the Asian rebalance. The Alliance is not immune to operating beyond Europe alongside the US (witness the International Security Assistance Force [ISAF] in Afghanistan), but this is not a role the US is seeking for NATO in the Asia-Pacific. Local allies are its preference (this being the second of the two policy positions of note). The US has had to be necessarily cagey in stating this explicitly for fear of antagonising Beijing (a theme I shall return to below), but the development of America's military relationships in the region along with satisfaction at the recent and steady build-up of the national military capabilities of Japan, South Korea and the Philippines is in line with one of the central purposes of the rebalance – to counter Chinese regional assertiveness.²¹ In this context, NATO is largely irrelevant. US officials have on occasion noted the complementary role NATO might play in the American rebalance, but this is at a relatively unambitious level (joint consultations between US and European officials, and “defence dialogue and exchanges” between NATO and Asian partners).²² More typically, the Alliance has been notable by its absence from the various policy statements, documents and speeches the Obama administration has issued on the rebalance, and on US and allied force postures in the Asia-Pacific.²³ And it is not hard to see why – NATO

20 On the continuing importance of NATO to the US, see: M. Webber, E. Hallams and M.A. Smith, “Repairing NATO's Motors,” *International Affairs*, 90(4), 2014, pp. 783–784.

21 M.R. Ausling, Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Hearing on “Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific Region and Implications for US National Strategy,” 24 July 2013, p. 6, <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20130724/101183/HMTG-113-AS00-Wstate-AuslinM-20130724.pdf>

22 L. Panetta (US Secretary of Defense), speech at King's College London, 18 January 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5180>

23 For overviews see: D.J. Berteau and M.J. Green (directors), *US Force Posture Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment*, Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012; and

has very little to offer.

NATO cannot pivot to the Asia-Pacific

NATO has a long tradition of following the geostrategic priorities of the US: evident in the policies of enlargement, enforcement operations in the Balkans, engagement in Afghanistan and now, seemingly, the Asian rebalance. This “followership” does not simply represent the power of US leadership; it is a consequence, equally, of the desire of the NATO bureaucracy (centred on the office of the Secretary General) and of the more trans-atlanticist member countries to reaffirm NATO’s relevance. It is no coincidence, in this light, that talk of a NATO orientation toward Asia has occurred in parallel with its articulation in the US. Little was heard of such a policy for the Alliance before Obama, Hillary Clinton and others began to push it as a new US priority.

NATO’s desire to move in this direction has been most enthusiastically put by its former Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. In a 2013 speech in Japan he noted NATO’s “global perspective,” the “security challenges” it shared with states in the Asia-Pacific and the willingness of the Alliance to flesh out partnerships in the region.²⁴ True to that objective, NATO has put some effort into developing relations with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea. All four states are designated “Partners Across the Globe,” and (along with Mongolia) enjoy Individual Partnership Cooperation Programmes. What is notable here is that these arrangements were worked out with an eye to partner involvement in NATO missions – ISAF most obviously²⁵ and, to a lesser extent, NATO’s counter-piracy efforts. In effect, this has meant Asian-Pacific partners coming to NATO rather than NATO going to the Asia-Pacific. And, as NATO’s role in Afghanistan

“The United States: Asia-Pacific Rebalancing Put to the Test,” *East Asian Strategic Review* 2014, pp. 257-282.

24 Speech at the Japan National Press Club, Tokyo, 15 April 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_99634.htm

25 As an example, Australian engagement with ISAF is listed as the first priority area for cooperation in the Australia-NATO Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme. See: <http://www.defence.gov.au/publications/Australia-NATO-Individual-Partnership-Cooperation-Programme.pdf>

diminishes, even that plank of the relationship will be curtailed.²⁶ Further, NATO has been unable to bring these various bilateral relations into any broader multilateral framework. Its partnerships in the Asia-Pacific occur on a hub-and-spoke basis, with no systematic means of pulling the various strands together. Informally, ISAF had served as a means of doing this, but the termination of the mission closes off that avenue.²⁷

None of this is to say that Europe lacks strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific. Many of the factors which have driven the US rebalance also pertain to Europe (and, perhaps to an even greater degree, Canada). However, as Nicola Casarini has noted, “[t]he focus of the European “pivot” is primarily on economic, monetary, technological and soft-power issues, and much less on increasing a military presence and forming security alliances.”²⁸ Consequently, the European effort has been funnelled through the European Union (EU) and not NATO, involving an expanding trade and investment relationship, technological cooperation (Galileo, the EU global navigation system, is being developed with China, India and South Korea), multilateral partnerships (the EU takes part in the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Korea Energy Development Organisation, which oversees denuclearisation in the Korean peninsula) and the provision of development aid.²⁹ Military relations that do exist are largely limited to just two European states: the United Kingdom (UK) and France. The former is part of the Five Power Defence Arrangement (along with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia), maintains a garrison in Brunei, a small naval installation in Singapore, and has recently commenced strategic dialogues with Vietnam and China. In 2013, the UK signed defence and security cooperation treaties with both Australia and Japan.³⁰ France, meanwhile, has some

26 Australia and New Zealand play a role alongside the UK in the Afghan army national training academy as part of NATO's post-ISAF Operation Resolute Support, but this is a much reduced involvement from that undertaken in the ISAF format.

27 R. R. Moore, “Partners, the Pivot, and Liberal Order,” in T. Flockhart (ed), *Cooperative Security: NATO's Partnership Policy in a Changing World*, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2014, p. 78.

28 N. Casarini, “The European ‘Pivot,’” *Issue Alert*, March 2013, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/alerts/>

29 Casarini, “The European ‘Pivot.’”

30 For details of these UK relationships see: R. Korteweg, “A Presence Further East: Can Europe Play a

claim to be “a regional Pacific power,” in that it possesses territories in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans, maintains a permanent military presence for their protection and enjoys an extensive network of bilateral ties with countries throughout the region as well as involvement in a number of regional multilateral defence fora.³¹ The UK and France (along with Germany, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands and Spain) have also been major suppliers of arms to the region, taking advantage of the significant rise in defence expenditures in *inter alia* Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia.³²

The French and British roles in the Asia-Pacific is of a piece with these states’ continuing claim to global influence. Yet their ambition and reach in the region is modest at best. This lack of capacity is one which afflicts NATO more broadly. Take the US out of consideration and NATO is increasingly inconsequential as a military hub owing to years of underinvestment in defence. While the US is now suffering cuts as well, it will in absolute terms remain the globe’s largest military power for many years to come, with the full-spectrum capabilities necessary to project and sustain force at distance. The UK and France, by contrast, are gradually being denuded of such capacity. The UK defence budget has been on a downward trajectory since 2009 and, according to a recent authoritative report, is projected to fall by 19 per cent in real terms between fiscal years 2010/11 and 2015/16. On the basis of assumptions linked to the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review and the Comprehensive Spending Review of the same year, it is probable that the UK will, in the period up to 2019/20, dip below the two per cent of GDP defence spending target set at NATO’s

Strategic Role in the Asia-Pacific Region?,” London: Centre for European Reform, July 2014, pp. 11-12, http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2014/cer_a_presence_further_east-9351.pdf

31 Ministère de la Défense, “France and Security in the Asia-Pacific” (2014), <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/base-de-medias/documents-telechargeables/das/documents-prospective-de-defense/asia-pacifique/france-and-security-in-the-asia-pacific?nav=web>

32 Korteweg, “A Presence Further East,” p.13; “Fear Us: Military Expenditures in Southeast Asia,” *The Indo-Pacific Review*, 11 September 2014, <http://www.indopacificreview.com/military-expenditures-southeast-asia/#sthash.BafPPcts.dpbs> (accessed 9 December 2014); J. Dowdy et al., “Southeast Asia: the Next Growth Opportunity in Defence,” Singapore: McKinsey and Company, February 2014, http://www.mckinsey.com/client_service/aerospace_and_defense/latest_thinking (accessed 9 December 2014).

2014 Wales Summit. By 2019/20, defence spending could be as low as 1.5 – 1.7 per cent of GDP, with continuing year-on-year real-terms cuts in the budget after 2015/16.³³ France has followed a similar trajectory. According to NATO data, French defence spending has been flat since 2009; since 2011 it has fallen beneath NATO's two per cent GDP target.³⁴ Under a six-year defence spending plan (the *Projet de Loi de Programmation Militaire*) released in 2013, only in 2019 is defence spending set to rise.³⁵

It is also worth noting the Canadian position, given its Pacific orientation. It too has been in the midst of a downward adjustment to its defence budget as part of a deficit reduction programme. The 2014 federal budget signalled the fourth annual real-terms cut in defence spending over a five-year period. In 2013, Canada spent just 1 per cent of GDP on defence and, although it signed up to NATO's two per cent target at Wales, the Harper government lobbied hard behind the scenes to remove the commitment from the Summit Declaration.³⁶ Not all NATO's members are part of this trend. Poland and Norway, for instance, are making major defence investments. Neither, however, is doing so because of developments in the Asia-Pacific (both are motivated by developments in Ukraine and NATO's Eastern neighbourhood).

In France and the UK (but not Canada) cuts to defence budgets have sought to spare equipment and procurement projects. Both countries also have a good record of meeting NATO's targets for equipment spending, and both retain the ambition of keeping full spectrum forces which (and this is explicit in UK military doctrine) make them interoperable with,

33 M. Chalmers, "The Financial Context for the 2015 SDSR: the End of UK Exceptionalism?," *Briefing Paper*, September 2014, London, Royal United Services Institute, <https://www.rusi.org/publications/other/ref:O5408889AEEFBC/> (accessed 9 December 2014).

34 NATO Public Diplomacy Division, *Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence*, communiqué PR/CP(2014)028, Table 3, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_topics/20140224_140224-PR2014-028-Defence-exp.pdf (accessed 9 December 2014).

35 G. Anderson, "France Announces Flat 2015 Defence Budget," *IHS Jane's Defence Industry*, 2 October 2014, <http://www.janes.com/article/44033/france-announces-flat-2015-defence-budget> (accessed 9 December 2014).

36 D. Perry, "The Growing Gap between Defence Ends and Means: the Disconnect between the Canada First Defence Strategy and the Current Defence Budget," *Vimy Paper*, No.19, June 2014, Ottawa: the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, <http://www.cdainstitute.ca/images/PerryBudgetJune2014.pdf> (accessed 9 December 2014).

and an ally of choice for, the US shrinking budgets, however, render this level of ambition increasingly challenging and, arguably, unsustainable. The UK and France may wish to field modern, capable and deployable forces, but neither is able to do this across the board and, where it is done, the capability is limited in size (giving rise to what Michael Clarke has referred to in the UK context as a “one-shot force”³⁷). The story of the post-Cold War period for both has thus been a series of painful adjustments in which certain headline or prestige capabilities are retained and developed (ballistic-missile submarines, aircraft carriers, strike fighters, unmanned aerial vehicles or drones), but is accompanied by a depletion of other equally necessary capabilities. The UK’s decision to build and deploy two aircraft carriers (the first intended to be operational from 2020, and the second shortly after), for instance, is neutered somewhat by ongoing cuts in naval personnel, shortages of carrier-capable planes and helicopters, and a lack of escort vessels, all of which may make it impossible to have both craft on active service simultaneously.³⁸

Similar problems face the French military. It has been determined to retain an interventionist profile – and, in the wake of leading an operation in Mali in 2013 and being a key player in NATO’s 2011 intervention in Libya, enjoyed a brief martial moment in the sun.³⁹ Yet, its forces, much like the British, have become increasingly stretched. France, under planning assumptions derived from the defence White Papers of 2008 and 2013, will go forward with the capabilities necessary, according to a RAND study, to “retain a meaningful power-projection capability for operations outside Europe.”⁴⁰ The problem, however, is that any such deployment is

37 M. Clarke (Director of the Royal United Services Institute, London) cited in C. Wyatt, “Has Britain’s Defence Budget been Cut too Much?,” BBC News, 24 February 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26271018> (accessed 9 December 2014).

38 R. Norton-Taylor, “UK Defence All at Sea as Hammond Moves to FO,” *The Guardian* Defence and Security Blog, 15 July 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/defence-and-security-blog/2014/jul/15/armed-forces-defence-budget-navy> (accessed 9 December 2014).

39 R. Cohen, “French Muscle, American Cheese,” *International New York Times*, 15 November 2013; F. Heisbourg, “Hollande’s Martial Prowess,” *International New York Times*, 10 February 2014.

40 F. Stephen Larrabee et al., *NATO and the Challenges of Austerity*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2012, p. 26.

unlikely to occur very far beyond Europe and will be subject to any ongoing commitment France may have in Africa or the Middle East.

The upshot of these various developments is clear. Diminishing resources will require what Camille Grand has referred to as a continuing “prioritization of strategic assets” and a “tighter geographical focus” for NATO’s European powers and Canada.⁴¹ For the UK and France, these calculations will be sharpened by the Ukraine and Syrian crises. This means that, whatever strategic importance is assigned to the Asia-Pacific at a rhetorical level, strategic planning and deployments will focus on Europe’s “near abroad” – the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Middle East, the Balkans and NATO’s Eastern neighbourhood bordering Russia and Ukraine. In other words, NATO’s two largest European powers which, together with Canada, comprise NATO’s three significant (non-US) maritime powers, will simply be unable to support the US rebalance to Asia in any meaningful military sense. Should things take a decisive turn for the worse there (a Sino-US crisis related to Taiwan or Japan, for instance), these countries might, at a stretch, be able to make a small contribution to assisting the US and its regional allies (in naval interdiction, for instance), but these would be marginal efforts and certainly ought not to be part and parcel of any new collective purpose for NATO.

NATO should not pivot to the Asia-Pacific

Limited resources suggest that a NATO role (as distinct from a US one) in the Asia-Pacific is at best going to be limited. To keep it such also makes sound strategic sense. At present, the US and China are coupled together in what James Steinberg and Michael O’Hanlon have referred to as “the most consequential bilateral relationship of our time.”⁴² This relationship, encapsulates what is (and will remain for a number of decades) the most im-

41 C. Grand, “France,” in C.M. O’Donnell (ed), “The Implications of Military Spending Cuts for NATO’s Largest Members,” *Analysis Paper*, Washington D.C., The Brookings Institution, July 2012, p. 22.

42 J. Steinberg and M.E. O’Hanlon, *Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: US-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2014, p. 1.

portant geopolitical development since the demise of Soviet power and the end of the Cold War – namely, China’s inexorable economic and military rise, and the parallel attempt on the part of the US to stave off hegemonic decline.⁴³ These twin dynamics intersect in the Asia-Pacific region, where the US has pursued military primacy since 1945 but where, in recent years, China also has sought to assert its influence (both latent and real) through the acquisition of significant power projection capabilities especially in the naval domain. The relationship between China and the US is thus fraught with danger.

The problem with a NATO pivot to the Asia-Pacific is that it adds to a competitive (rather than a cooperative) dynamic between China and the US. Chinese officials have already expressed scepticism at the US rebalance; it is indicative, so the 2013 Chinese Defence White Paper states, of “increasing hegemonism, power politics and neo-interventionism.”⁴⁴ A NATO presence (or even the declared intention to deliver such presence) would only fuel suspicions that the US was deliberately seeking to contain China and would provide affirmation for the Chinese leadership of an American strategic mindset that is “militaristic, offence-minded, expansionist and selfish.”⁴⁵ It might also add weight to the arguments of those within the Chinese military who wish to take a more confrontational position on the US military presence and, in turn, accelerate still further the strengthening of the Chinese armed forces.⁴⁶

To be aware of Chinese concerns is not to concede that Beijing has a right to pursue its own primacy in the region and that the US should stand aside and accept the inevitable. That too would have destabilising consequences, as regional powers (Japan and South Korea most obviously) would be required to take military counter-measures, thereby

43 This is the central theme of S. Reich and R. Ned Lebow, *Good-Bye Hegemony: Power and Influence in the Global System*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014.

44 Cited in A.H. Cordesman, A. Hess and N.S. Yarosh, *Chinese Military Modernization and Force Development*, Washington D.C.: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2013, p. 21.

45 A.J. Nathan and A. Scobell, “How China Sees America: the Sum of Beijing’s Fears,” *Foreign Affairs*, 91(5), 2012, p.35.

46 Nathan and Scobell, “How China Sees America,” p. 37.

accelerating an already nascent regional arms race. It is thus wise for the US to maintain a significant military presence in the Asia-Pacific in order to restrain China from impinging upon the vital security interests of America's regional allies. Deterring China and reassuring allies is a strategy that requires careful calibration, however. The US must maintain sufficient force and demonstrate a credible commitment to defend its allies, while also avoiding a ramping up of regional militarisation that would find it, and China, in a spiral of military action and reaction. Should such a dangerous state of affairs materialise, it would raise mutual mistrust and exacerbate a sense of insecurity – all in an environment in which the destructive consequences of conflagration would have significantly increased. In this light, a prudent strategy for the US ought to involve the deployment of force that is sufficient to deter, but restrictive enough not to provoke the peer competitor into taking compensatory counter-measures that might trigger an arms race logic.⁴⁷ In that light, two further considerations follow. First, it could be suggested that the NATO contribution to the Asia-Pacific military balance is likely to be so marginal that it has no strategic consequence. It can, therefore, be encouraged, because it has positive benefits for NATO (demonstrating purpose) and no negative ones for the US-China relationship. The logic of such a position is, however, flawed. NATO, as we have seen, can offer little in a material sense, but equally consequential is how *any* NATO turn to the region would be perceived in China. A NATO committed to the US rebalance, and willing (even rhetorically) to garner collective force to demonstrate that commitment, has a political cum strategic significance; from a Chinese perspective, it is demonstrative of a change of intent on NATO (i.e. America's) part and so could be construed as offensive in nature. In rational terms, such a view might be readily dismissed but (to cite Jervis again) what matters here is perception (or,

47 The argument here is derived from Robert Jervis who distinguishes between the “spiral” and “deterrence” models of security interaction. See his “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics*, 30(2), 1978 as summarised in K. Booth and N.J. Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics*, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 45-50.

indeed, misperception) of intent;⁴⁸ and China's perception of NATO is generally that of a tool of American foreign policy. NATO's increased presence in the Asia-Pacific (however small) would, therefore, only be viewed with suspicion.

Second, it could be argued that NATO and the US should be prepared to court the risk of Chinese suspicion if a NATO contribution to American objectives was truly essential. But essential it is not. The Chinese leadership is already firmly persuaded of American resolve to defend its regional allies, and the American military presence in the Asia-Pacific remains adequate to fulfil the tasks of extended deterrence and reassurance. Writing in 2010, Robert Kaplan described the US as enjoying a "still extraordinarily paramount position" in the region, one that could be preserved even at lower levels of force quite simply because US supremacy (particularly in naval forces) was so extensive. The US, Kaplan concluded, was more than capable of "preserv[ing] stability in Asia, protect[ing] its allies there, and limit[ing] the emergence of a Greater China while avoiding a conflict with Beijing."⁴⁹ The marked increase of Chinese military expenditure and the pace of its military modernisation in the intervening years have qualified, but not fundamentally altered, this situation. True, the tasks of Asia-Pacific security for the US have become more urgent and the fiscal challenges facing the US defence budget more constraining. In this context, for the US to balance effectively against rising Chinese power, a far-reaching reconfiguration of its force posture will be required – one that emphasises air, naval and sub-maritime force projection alongside policies to boost the capabilities of local allies. This is not an easy task, but it is precisely what the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific seeks to achieve and is realistic within US defence spending projections, insofar as the task is pursued with a sufficient long-term sense of strategic priority (hence, trimming back on major commitments in other theatres and avoiding prolonged and exhausting

48 R. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977, chapters 2–3.

49 R.D. Kaplan, "The Geography of Chinese Power: How Far Can Beijing Reach on Land and at Sea?" *Foreign Affairs*, 89(3), 2010, p. 39.

land operations such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan).⁵⁰

Conclusion: What role for NATO in the Asia-Pacific?

The argument of this chapter is that NATO should tread carefully in the Asia-Pacific region. The European allies and Canada lack the resources to make any significant contribution to the security of the region, and there is no demand on the part of either the US or its regional allies that they make the effort. Even if NATO did attempt to do more, such a policy would backfire, as China would view NATO's encroachment with considerable scepticism. A NATO role in the Asia-Pacific would be inconsequential for the military balance, but would do disproportionate harm in terms of generating mistrust and suspicion.

That NATO has been touted as a nascent actor in the region probably says more about the Alliance than it does about the security of the Asia-Pacific. As the ISAF mission in Afghanistan was drawn down from 2012, there was much talk of NATO becoming post-operational – facing “a declining market for its principal post-Cold War service: conducting multinational interventions.”⁵¹ Keeping the Alliance relevant (and, most importantly, relevant to the US) thus became NATO's latest existential issue.⁵² As this coincided with the American rebalance, it was entirely logical that the question of relevance would become linked to servicing the geopolitical turn in US foreign policy. However, not only was NATO's own mooted reorientation in this direction flawed from the outset (as argued above), it was also premised on an assumption that NATO's own neighbourhood would remain secure. That assumption has now been upended – by Russian actions in Ukraine and, to a lesser degree, by the seemingly unending crises in Syria and Iraq (in direct proximity to NATO member Turkey). Thus,

50 See: A.J. Tellis, *Balancing without Containment: an American Strategy for Containing China*, Washington D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2014, pp. 54–66.

51 J. Shea (NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges), “Keeping NATO Relevant,” *Policy Outlook*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 2012, p. 2.

52 See: Shea “Keeping NATO Relevant.”

not only does NATO lack the ability to project to the Asia-Pacific region; it also has no compelling reason to do so, for its more urgent priorities are much closer to home. Indeed, in view of the Ukraine crisis, the biggest service NATO can do the US is to shoulder a reasonable part of Europe's defence burden, thus freeing up American resources "to be deployed further afield."⁵³

In light of these various factors, a NATO role in the Asia-Pacific is, of necessity, only ever likely to be a modest one. This is not to say that the Alliance should be invisible. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly has argued, for instance, that in a region in desperate need of confidence-building measures one small, but important, step would be for the Alliance to breathe life into the nascent NATO-Chinese dialogue in order to facilitate information exchange, and so facilitate mutual trust and transparency.⁵⁴ There is also scope to develop NATO's existing partnerships in the region, notwithstanding their limitations noted above. The 2013 NATO-Japan Joint Political Declaration, for instance, provides for cooperation in the areas of civil emergencies, disaster relief, counter-piracy and counter-terrorism; similar relationships with New Zealand, Australia and South Korea offer promise in these areas also.⁵⁵ In each case, the recipient partner sees the relationship with NATO as complementary to the much more substantive one with the US. NATO, as such, brings little added value in this context, but it does at least provide political ballast to the foreign and security policy orientations of these important American allies.

53 K-H. Kamp, "From Wales to Warsaw: A German View on NATO's Relaunch," paper presented to a seminar on "NATO after the Wales Summit," Royal Holloway, University of London, 3 December 2014, p. 5.

54 A. Agov (rapporteur), "The Rise of China and Possible Implications for NATO," NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Political Committee, Report 183 PC 11 E REV.1 Final, 2011, paragraph.36, <http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=2544>

55 For details see: O.E. Kalnins (rapporteur), "The Growing Strategic Relevance of Asia: Implications for NATO," NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Political Committee, 154 PC 13 E bis, 2013, paragraphs 33-37, <http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=3212>

Asian Roles for NATO: Ideas of Force or the Force of Ideas?

Robert Ayson

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the world's most successful plurilateral alliance. Asia faces a series of security challenges where greater regional cooperation, including a collective military response to common problems, would make a real difference. At the same time the distribution of world power is heading in Asia's direction, implying that for NATO to remain relevant, it needs to be visible in an Asia-Pacific context. In theory at least, there are valid reasons for NATO to be seeking a larger role in Asia and for the countries of Asia to work with the North Atlantic Alliance as they seek to manage their interests.

But in practice, as this chapter will argue, the situation is not nearly as straightforward as these initial comments might suggest. NATO has long experience in dealing with interstate rivalries and a changing distribution of military power. These are just the types of security challenges which are evident in today's Asia where there may be a need for an increased capacity to respond to crises at sea, on land and in cyberspace. But this does not translate into an automatic role for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its 28 members.

The obstacles are primarily political ones. Some reflect a divergence of opinion in Asia on whether stronger links with NATO are in the national interest of the countries of the region. But there is also a wariness more generally about the reintroduction of a greater Western involvement in the security affairs of a post-colonial region. Moreover, it is hardly the case that NATO's members are unified in the quest for a stronger Asian profile for the Alliance, or that there is as much spare capacity to play

such as role even if it was universally regarded as desirable. Yet, as the following analysis will suggest, it is unlikely that what NATO can offer in a material military sense constitutes the main contribution that the Alliance might make. Instead, NATO's role in Asia, such as it develops, may be more about expertise and ideas.

NATO and Asia's Strategic Balance

NATO embodies the American security commitment to the North Atlantic area, and specifically the security of America's European allies. From its establishment in the early years of the post-Second World War era, NATO was at the heart of Washington's attempts to contain the westward spread of Soviet influence. It was partly through NATO that the countries of Western Europe could enjoy the fruits of the balance of power between the Soviet Union and the United States. NATO's survival since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, nearly two and a half decades ago, is itself a remarkable example of alliance persistence. But Russia's recent takeover of Crimea and its military support for the weakening of what remains of Ukraine, is a reminder to those same European states of their dependence on an ongoing power equilibrium, and therefore on their close connection to the United States. For the NATO member countries adjacent to Russia, including the Baltic states, membership in this Alliance (and the security obligations it involves) is crucial to their sense of security as some old geopolitical factors return.

The first potential role for NATO in Asia, that flows from this European experience, is a contribution to the Asia-Pacific regional balance of power. There is no question that the distribution of military power in Asia has been changing, especially as China has been translating at least some of its rapidly growing economic strength into a greater capacity to project force into the region. This has been one of the reasons for an unsettling period in the East China Sea (with China's tense relations with Japan) and in the South China Sea (where a number of Southeast Asian

maritime states are claimants alongside China). Many of these states have an interest in encouraging a range of strong actors to be part of the region's strategic equilibrium so as to ensure that no local power can dominate Asia. Especially concerned on this front is Japan, which in May 2014 signed a new partnership agreement with NATO.¹

But quite what a stronger NATO connection would bring in terms of additional ballast in Asia is unclear. The main advantage of NATO in geopolitical terms stems from the strength of its leading member, the United States, which already has a series of bilateral alliances in Asia (with Japan, Korea, Thailand, the Philippines and Australia) and which has been developing security partnerships with a range of Asia-Pacific countries as part of its rebalancing strategy. Perhaps most significantly of all, the United States has a long-standing forward military presence in the region. Regional involvement from NATO would not necessarily add to this very important American contribution to the regional balance – which in fact remains something of an imbalance of power, given the gap between American and Chinese military power. Whether a NATO connection would add materially to the limited contribution that Britain and France might offer in the event of a serious interstate crisis in Asia is an interesting question. But given their experience of the decline in European power projection to Asia over several decades, the states of Asia would probably be less inclined to assume the major European members of NATO as significant parts of the evolving regional strategic equilibrium.

This is not to overlook the significance of Britain's ongoing links through the Five Power Defence Arrangements (with Australia and New Zealand), established in 1971 for the external defence of Singapore and Malaysia. Nor does it ignore France's ongoing presence in the South Pacific. But one needs to be realistic about the extent to which European powers are influential parts of Asia's strategic balance. America's continuing presence

¹ See: "Japan, worried about China, strengthens ties with NATO," *Reuters*, 6 May 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/06/us-nato-japan-idUSBREA450RT20140506> (accessed 1 December 2014).

may therefore be the last gasp of the Vasco da Gama era² which for several centuries has seen Western dominance of Asia's maritime theatre. A greater role for NATO is unlikely to do anything to reverse this trend away from Western power in Asia.

The costs of a NATO connection in this regard would also need to be weighed. The view that some of the members of NATO see the Alliance as a direct and active contributor to the Asian strategic balance would easily be taken as a sign of an attempt to contain China. It would make it much more difficult for Washington to deny that this was indeed its intention. This would add more to the nervousness than to the reassurance of many Asian states whose quest for a regional equilibrium includes China. At least because of China's economic importance to their future, there is no Asian analogue to the old view that alliances are needed to keep the Americans in and the Russians out, because China is so central to the regional integration efforts from which the wider region benefits. A stronger NATO involvement of this first sort might not, therefore, contribute a great deal in the way of additional military heft but ironically would increase the chances of serious political divisions. It might actually make Washington's regional engagement less successful, complicating rather than strengthening the aims of the strategic rebalance.

NATO and Asia's Security Dialogue

One extra argument against a balance of power role for NATO in Asia is the claim that this would misrepresent so much of the Alliance's post-Cold War efforts to encourage properly multilateral security dialogue, building trust including with former adversaries. These efforts with Russia have been dealt a signal blow in the Ukraine. Yet NATO remains one of Europe's primary forums for security dialogue, not least because the European Union (EU) has not matched all of the hopes once envisioned for a common

2 See: C. Bell, *The End of the Vasco da Gama Era: The Next Landscape of World Politics*, Sydney, Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2007, http://www.lowyinstitute.org/files/pubfiles/LIP21_BellWEB.pdf (accessed 1 December 2014).

European security and foreign policy. NATO's enlarged membership, while causing great consternation for Russia, has increased its political diversity and geographical scope, and its involvement in peacekeeping and stabilization operations (to be discussed in the next section of this chapter) have given it a much wider security focus than the traditional interstate military challenges for which it was originally founded.

It might be thought that NATO would be an ideal partner for Asian countries given the experience the members of the Alliance have as partners in an enlarging security community whose members have come to expect peaceful relations with one another. In view of the tensions that Asia is experiencing, especially in major power relations between China and Japan and China and the United States, the idea of an Asian security community has obvious appeal. In particular, NATO's experience and practices as an actually existing security community might have much to offer to efforts by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to foster the security side of its various community-building efforts. Might not there be some value in having the 28 members of NATO sit down with the 27 members of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)? Parallel security communities (in practice in NATO, and in theory in Asia) on this basis would represent about one third of the world's sovereign states and most of its major powers, including China, Russia and India who are ARF members alongside the ten ASEAN countries and a host of others such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the EU.

But what Asia probably needs least is another forum to add to what has become an increasingly crowded agenda. In the years since the ARF was established in 1994, a veritable profusion of regional organizations have grown up, including at least two which are pertinent to this chapter. The first of these is the East Asia Summit (EAS), which covers diplomatic, economic and security issues in its brief annual meetings. The second is the ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus (ADMM+) grouping which has a series of working groups on issues such as maritime security, peacekeeping, disaster relief and military medicine. Both of these have more restrictive memberships than the ARF, consisting of the same 18 participants; the ten

ASEAN states, the three main North Asian countries (China, Japan and South Korea), Australia, New Zealand, India and, most recently Russia and the United States (the last being the only NATO member included).

The building of what is commonly referred to as Asia's regional security architecture³ has four implications for the possibility of a role for NATO in the region's security dialogue. The first is that whatever we may think of the effectiveness of these new forums, they put serious questions around the old argument (often heard in comparison in Europe) that Asia suffers from a severe shortage of regional institutional machinery. The fact that neither the EAS nor the ADMM+ are part of an institutional bureaucracy on the scale of NATO (or the EU) is not necessarily viewed as a disadvantage to Asia, not least because of the region's emphasis on informality.

The second issue is that the EAS and ADMM+ reflect a more concentrated and Asia-centred membership than the more inclusive (and some would say less effective) ARF. For now at least, the door on additional members is shut, reducing the chances of a stronger North Atlantic connection. The United States has been welcomed as a member for some of the reasons discussed in the previous section, including concerns among some states in Southeast Asia that China was growing a little strong and that America's absence from some of the new multilateral machinery was therefore a disadvantage. But this sentiment does not necessarily extend to a wider desire to have a stronger North Atlantic connection: America is welcomed primarily as a Pacific power, and it is not clear that Washington's place in NATO has any real bearing on its inclusion. Even the Pacific argument has limits. Canada has a significant Pacific Ocean coastline and focus, and geographical proximity, in a way that few others in NATO can match. But this has not been enough to open the membership door for Ottawa.

The third issue is that the prerequisite for membership in the EAS speaks to a long-standing local effort to recognize a local norm-building exercise. The United States and others were required to sign ASEAN's 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) as an entry ticket. Many

3 For a guide, see: Nick Bisley, *Building Asia's Security*, Abingdon, Routledge for IISS, 2009.

of the principles of this Treaty are very familiar to NATO's members. They include the peaceful resolution of disputes and the avoidance of conflict. The signatures of China, the United States, Japan and India do not of course mean that a wider security community built on the ASEAN experience has come into being. Moreover, the outbreak of minor cross-border military action between Cambodia and Thailand in recent years is a reminder that the normative commitments under the TAC are not uniformly observed within the ASEAN ten. There is some way to travel before an ASEAN security community is itself realized, let alone a wider community involving additional states from the region.⁴ In any case it is not clear how a connection with NATO would actually assist in this regard, or that NATO's experience is repeatable in an Asian context. Indeed, given that one of the founding principles of ASEAN is the enjoyment of political independence after the era of European colonial dominance, there might be significant resistance (at least in public discussions) to the notion that there was a North Atlantic model for Asia to emulate.

A similar theme is reflected in the fourth implication. The ADMM+ is still a work in progress. While it reflects important progress in terms of the regularization of contact between the militaries of its 18 members, it is not an alliance in waiting. A strong formal connection with NATO, which very clearly is an alliance, could be seen as an unhelpful mixing of apples and oranges. That said, while the ADMM+ has conducted exercises which aim to build the potential for multilateral efforts in response to common security problems, including in disaster relief, it is still some way from responding to a live crisis. This is as much an issue of political will (and foreign policy conservatism) as it is of capacity. But it is not clear that this gap in regional responses can easily be filled by a whole-of-NATO and whole-of-ADMM+ combination. There are doubts about how many of the NATO members see Asia as an area of focus for their alliance. And there will certainly be resistance among some of the East Asian members of ADMM+ (to say nothing of Russian views) to a specific North Atlantic connection. This

4 For an important early study on this question, see: Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the problem of regional order*, London, Routledge, 2001.

leaves open the possibility of more select cooperation between subgroups from the two regions, but whether this would really reflect a proper NATO connection is difficult to surmise.

NATO as an Out of Area Stabilizer

There is already some precedent for individual members (and even subgroups) of Asia-Pacific countries working with NATO in common responses to security challenges. The most obvious of these connections in the past decade has been in Afghanistan, where a number of Asia-Pacific countries deployed forces as a contribution to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) which remained active for at least a decade after the 9/11 attacks. In New Zealand's case, the Afghanistan mission was significantly responsible for the improvement in once strained security relations with the United States. It also resulted in the signing of a New Zealand-NATO agreement signalling "a functional, flexible and mutually-reinforcing partnership that recognizes and builds on NATO's strategic concept, and New Zealand's national interests, taking into account the growing economic and strategic relevance of the Asia-Pacific region."⁵ New Zealand's long-standing Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamiyan also provided an opportunity for Singapore and Malaysia (two of New Zealand's traditional defence partners in Southeast Asia) to deploy non-combat forces in Afghanistan, adding to the sense of a NATO-Asia connection in Afghanistan.

But with a significant reduction in the international military presence in Afghanistan, including the drawing down of NATO's role there, this important connection point has been disappearing. New Zealand's Reconstruction Team left Bamiyan in early 2013, and its main Special Forces deployment ended even earlier. A small New Zealand detachment remains with the Afghan National Army Officer Academy in Kabul, but if an

5 NATO, "Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme between New Zealand and NATO," June 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_88720.htm (accessed 1 December 2014).

ongoing New Zealand-NATO connection is to be maintained in a military operational sense, it will need to happen outside of the Afghanistan context.

Not many alternative opportunities present themselves for New Zealand or other Asia-Pacific countries, although in making an early military contribution to the battle against ISIS in Iraq, Australia has a fresh opportunity to maintain links with a number of NATO countries which are also part of the US-led anti-ISIS coalition. After a long period of consideration following a rare Prime Ministerial address on security issues,⁶ New Zealand decided in 2015 to join Australia in a training mission for Iraqi forces. But unlike Australia (which has been involved in airstrikes against ISIS) John Key's government has at the time of writing decided against making a specific combat contribution. In the lead up to that decision, the New Zealand Cabinet appears to have been advised that some of New Zealand's "key regional partners" had "significant domestic security concerns" about ISIS.⁷ As well as Australia, this may well have included some of New Zealand's leading Southeast Asian partners. But on the whole (and partly for those very domestic concerns) Asian governments have not been publically prominent in the international response to ISIS, although some material and diplomatic support has been forthcoming from the Republic of Korea and Japan, close allies of the United States.

Moreover, the prospect of NATO as an alliance leading a military effort for stabilization purposes closer to East Asia seems remote. There is at least one example over the last two decades where individual NATO members have contributed forces to a regional intervention. At the same time as NATO had its hands full over Kosovo, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal (the former colonial power) and the United Kingdom played supporting roles in the Australian-led International Force East Timor (INTERFET) mission which began in 1999, as did the United States, a

6 See: John Key, Speech to NZ Institute of International Affairs, 5 November 2014, <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/speech-nz-institute-international-affairs-0> (accessed 1 December 2014).

7 See: Office of the Ministry of Defence, Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "International Response to the Threat of ISIL: Possible New Zealand Contribution," CAB (15) 71, Submission considered by Cabinet, 23 February 2015, p. 5, <http://www.defence.govt.nz/pdfs/iraq/cab-15-71-international-response-to-the-threat-of-isil-possible-nz-contribution.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2015).

leading provider of logistical assistance. But this intervention has proven to be an exception to the rule in East Asia where there are strong traditions of non-interference. It would be surprising to see an Asian state, let alone the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, lead a coalition of countries in response to security problems within another country in the region. And there would be stiff diplomatic resistance in East Asia to the idea that a Western alliance might seek to lead such a mission. Another exception to that rule would take some very unique circumstances. Even the UN's role in East Asia remains a limited one in terms of conflict resolution: the 1991 mission, which began in a broken Cambodia at the end of the Cold War demonstrates the rarity rather than the frequency of East Asian stabilization missions. So whether under UN or NATO auspices, or both, what has occurred with the ISAF mission in Central Asia is unlikely to be seen further east, where the interests of the major powers are more directly involved.

This does not rule out the possibility of future connections between the armed forces of some Asia-Pacific countries and NATO in stabilization missions which may be around the corner (despite the lack of a Western appetite for long and complex affairs for the foreseeable future). But this is more likely to occur closer to NATO's normal area of operations, as opposed to anywhere near to the heart of Asia. Should it occur, for example, a serious NATO intervention in North Africa or the Middle East might attract the participation of some of the same countries from the Asia-Pacific which have been willing to commit forces in Afghanistan. A country like New Zealand would be unlikely to take that step in the absence of United Nations Security Council support for such a mission (and New Zealand is a non-permanent member of the Council from 2015-16). Should that happen, New Zealand's armed forces would likely welcome the chance to maintain interoperability with advanced Western armed forces. Indeed that quest for ongoing interoperability, not an easy thing for a small and modestly equipped defence force to maintain, is one of the central goals for New Zealand in its partnership with NATO. Whether that is directly transferrable to an Asia-Pacific context for New Zealand's future operations is questionable given the differences between the maritime environment there and the emphasis

on land forces that cooperation with NATO has tended to entail. In that regard, opportunities to work with NATO countries in a maritime setting, including in the anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden (which have featured a New Zealand presence) may prove more useful.

NATO as a Supplier of Security Expertise

Indeed, NATO's value to its Asian partners, and to any wider partnerships in Asia, may come more from its concentration of expertise than from a concentration of military power *per se*. In principle at least, this logic might be applied to an array of wider security challenges which many Asia-Pacific countries have been encountering. If one considers NATO's areas of advantage in terms of specific expertise in security cooperation on emerging issues, one such possibility lies in cybersecurity cooperation. In particular, since the cyberattacks that affected Estonia's networks in 2007, NATO's members have devoted considerable attention to the development of an Alliance-wide cybersecurity strategy. At least in theory, this could be of interest to those countries in the Asia-Pacific region whose economic prosperity and national infrastructure depend heavily on a resilient digital commons which can withstand and prevent malicious cyber activities. This group would amount to nearly all states in the region, including the rapidly growing major economies of China and India. But in practice, political considerations and different approaches to the use of cyberspace would make a strong NATO-Asia connection in this regard difficult to obtain.

If wider Asian cooperation with NATO relied on a consensus agreement to develop such a partnership (including through one of the ASEAN-centred forums), it would be unlikely to happen because of the likely opposition from one or more of Asia's main players. NATO's approach to cyberspace regulation, for example, reflects the interest that liberal democracies have in avoiding the restrictions on private cyber activities which authoritarian governments are keen to retain. This puts an obvious spanner in the works in terms of China's likely view, which would extend perhaps to the views of such other countries as Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar. Moreover, given that

China has worked closely with Russia in developing authoritarian-friendly norms for cyberspace regulation, there is a further obstacle evident to the idea of closer connections with NATO. Indeed, to the extent that China (and Russia) are seen as being some of the major sources of malicious cyber activities which NATO cooperation is designed to forestall or withstand, the obstacles grow further.

This is not to suggest, of course, that all NATO-Asia cybersecurity cooperation is politically impractical. A number of China's neighbours in Asia, for example, will have common interests in this regard with NATO. And like Australia, New Zealand is part of a community of Western-oriented countries, including many of the members of NATO, which have common views on the need for a secure but open digital commons.⁸ But it would be strategically unwise for New Zealand to signal that these Western links were the start and end of its approach to cybersecurity.

There are other areas of NATO's security expertise which might be less politically sensitive to those countries in Asia which are cautious about the pace of security cooperation and to links beyond the region. One of these is disaster relief. NATO has an active Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) which coordinated the response by no less than 20 NATO member countries to assist Bosnia-Herzegovina in dealing with a major flood in the north during the summer of 2014.⁹ And 22 of NATO's partners, including a number from the Asia-Pacific region, have associations with the EADRCC, whose experience in conducting disaster relief exercises could well be of interest to Asia-Pacific regional organizations as they seek to establish similar capabilities (if not the formal structure to guide them). NATO already has a track record of providing disaster relief assistance in Asia, following the devastating Pakistan earthquake in 2005. Yet, even here there are sensitivities. As already noted in this chapter, at

⁸ A cyber dimension of New Zealand's partnership with NATO and its relationship with close security partners is noted in J. Burton, "Small States and Cyber Security: The Case of New Zealand," *Political Science*, 65:2, 2013, p. 230.

⁹ See: NATO Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre, EADRCC Situation Report No. 10, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 22 July 2014, <http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2014/05-bih-floods/docs/ops-eadrcc-2014-0033.pdf> (accessed 1 December 2014).

least some of the members of the ADMM+ seem reluctant to move from exercises to action, a situation confirmed by the lack of a regional response to the Philippines typhoon in 2014. An especially visible and official NATO role might easily come across as an attempt to overshadow this very embryonic and somewhat fragile Asian capability. This may mean that much will continue to rest on the links that individual countries in the Asia-Pacific region have been developing with NATO on disaster relief.

That principle is also likely to apply to the event that disaster and humanitarian relief cooperation takes on a maritime dimension. It is very much the case that inclusive maritime military cooperation in Asia has a greater chance of occurring when a humanitarian dimension is evident. Some of the cooperation involving Chinese personnel and aircraft in the hunt for the missing MH370 aircraft, for example, went beyond what many might have normally expected.¹⁰ And there is no doubting that NATO represents one of the world's leading concentrations of expertise on a range of maritime security tasks including disasters at sea, submarine safety and counter-piracy. But it is important to be cautious about expecting this potential coincidence between Asia's needs and NATO's skills. Given the regional tensions over maritime territorial disputes (including in the South China Sea and East China Sea in which China is a major claimant), hopes for introducing a significant NATO presence in wider regional efforts should be kept very modest. Some East Asian countries, Japan in particular, but also possibly the Philippines, would almost undoubtedly welcome that role. But China would be sure to take issue. And depending on the way it was interpreted, even an identifiable NATO role in even the most humanitarian (and seemingly altruistic) of maritime causes might still be seen by some states as the first step towards a role which is reassuring for some but equally worrying for others.¹¹

10 See: "Chinese president vows enhanced cooperation with Australia on MH370 search," *Xinhua*, 11 April 2014, <http://english.cntv.cn/2014/04/12/ART11397286442822737.shtml> (accessed 4 September 2015).

11 That deeper strategic spin-offs are available in Asia from humanitarian assistance missions has already been noted in the case of America's efforts in the rebalancing era. See: David Capie, "The United States and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in East Asia: Connecting Coercive and Non-Coercive Uses of Military Power," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:3, 2015, pp. 309-331.

A third area of NATO's expertise which could – at least in theory – assist Asia regional responses comes in the area of the management of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. Again, this is not so much about the deployment of NATO's physical capabilities¹² at the invitation of one of Asia's regional groupings. It is not altogether easy to see a situation where NATO's CBRN battalion would be deployed in the Asia-Pacific region, even though this is an internationally rare example of a multinational capability of this sort. An Asia-Pacific multinational version of this capability is probably decades away, given the reluctance among Asian states to develop anything in the way of a combined military capability, even in non-combat contexts. But NATO's wider CBRN expertise is something that could offer a lot to an Asian region which is not only home to some of the most recently developed nuclear weapons programmes but is also likely to feature some of the world's newer civilian nuclear ones. The evident enthusiasm within a number of Southeast Asian countries to develop their own civilian nuclear power generation plants may offer one such point of connection. But as the CBRN field is one of particular sensitivity, how far such cooperation might go is also open to question.

NATO as a Source of Security Norms

There are likely to be other areas of functional expertise which NATO may be in a position to offer, including in preparation for early responses to pandemic disease and terrorist incidents. But the Alliance also reflects deeper philosophical approaches to security cooperation, which may be held in common with at least some of its partners in the Asia-Pacific. To the extent that they operate as a security community, NATO's members are not only guided by expectations of peaceful change between themselves as members of the Alliance, but also by other common values which shape NATO's external objectives. Some of these values are referred to specifically in the partnership agreements between NATO and a number of its Asia-

12 See: Renée de Nevers, "NATO's international security role in the terrorist era," *International Security* 31:4, 2007, p. 56.

Pacific partners. For example, New Zealand's partnership arrangement with NATO refers to:

*a foundation of shared principles: common democratic values; international security and stability based on the rule of law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and respect for fundamental freedoms; and a commitment to those principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.*¹³

These principles also appeal to some Western-oriented Asian countries. Similar ideas were cited when Prime Minister Abe signed Japan's partnership arrangement with NATO in 2014, and are found in the text of that agreement.¹⁴ And there is some overlap with ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in terms of the principles of the United Nations Charter. But the explicitly liberal democratic values referred to in NATO's partnership agreements with New Zealand, Australia and Japan are not shared by Asia's most important power – China, nor are they shared by the governments of some other mainland Asian countries, including Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Their hold in Thailand, Myanmar and some other parts of the region is tenuous. This is not to overlook the fact that Asia boasts two of the world's largest and most vibrant democracies, in India and Indonesia. Yet these two rising powers have foreign policy traditions that are antagonistic to formal military alliances, reducing the extent to which they can be close regional partners for NATO.

If handled poorly, an emphasis on some of these democratic norms could do more to divide than unite Asia in regional security management. There are still memories of the debate between Asian and Western values, where the governments of Singapore and Malaysia found themselves criticizing Western powers with whom they wished to maintain close security links. On this basis alone, NATO should walk cautiously. Yet some of the core political values which NATO represents are more welcome than they might

¹³ NATO, "Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme between New Zealand and NATO."

¹⁴ See: NATO, "Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme Between Japan and NATO," 6 May 2014, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_05/20140507_140507-IPCP_Japan.pdf (accessed 1 December 2014).

at first appear. At least privately, for example, many Asian governments welcome a stronger emphasis on international law (including in regard to the freedom of navigation) if this can help reverse the rise in coercive pressure that has been evident in the disputes over the South China Sea. In public commentary the situation may be a little different. Indeed, even the government of the very obviously liberal democratic New Zealand, which has a strong commitment to rules-based order, has been reluctant to go public with concerns about developments in the South China Sea.¹⁵

This sort of reluctance in the wider region, which comes partly from the desire to maintain good relations with China, is likely to stand in the way of official NATO-Asia statements on common values. It is unlikely, for example, that this will be found in the pronouncements of any of Asia's multilateral security forums which have already been depicted in this chapter. What is more likely to occur is an intensification of the individual links that a number of Asia-Pacific countries have been keen to develop with NATO. And, for reasons already indicated, these links are not necessarily unwelcome to some of the other states of Asia which are themselves unwilling to be viewed as political partners of NATO. Even so, if one of the fears for Asia's future is a region divided between a largely maritime group of democratic states and a largely continental group of autocracies, stronger links emphasizing common political values could give the clear impression that NATO has lined up, with the United States at the forefront, what amounts to an anti-China coalition. This is despite the fact that some of these political values, including the peaceful resolution of disputes, offer a point of commonality across the wider region.

15 See: R. Ayson, "Asia's Maritime Order and New Zealand's Response," *New Zealand International Review*, 39:5, 2014, pp. 2-6.

Conclusion

While the terminology may not be especially helpful, it might be useful to consider the future of NATO-Asia relations in terms of the intersection of two smaller coalitions of the willing. By this is meant that for a range of reasons, including significant differences of view on alliances within Asia, and on the importance of an Asia-Pacific focus within NATO, sub-groups from both regions are more likely to develop closer connections than the two groups as a whole. To the extent that they form, these informal groupings would remain less tight of course than some of the stronger bilateral connections between some NATO members and their respective individual Asia-Pacific partners. And even then it is quite possible that NATO's expertise – as a source of advanced military competency, as a source of detailed experience in dealing collaboratively with new security challenges, and as a reservoir of liberal democratic political values – may be more significant than any more direct military contribution that the Alliance or its members can make in the Asia-Pacific region.

This raises at least two important concerns. The first is the extent to which these links between smaller groups can actually be considered as real signs of a NATO role. Or to put it slightly differently, there may be questions about how much NATO itself can act as a vehicle for a select group of its members to develop these links. The second is whether the willingness of some of the Asia-Pacific countries to develop closer links with NATO (both with the wider grouping and with select NATO countries) at the same time boosts national capacities and creates further potential divisions in this growing region. This leads to a further question which deserves greater attention: to what extent are there ideas and values that can be shared in a wider Asian setting, in common with the NATO countries, that might actually bring this dynamic region together?

Allies by Association? The Significance of America's Asian Alliances for NATO

*Stéfanie von Hlatky*¹

After almost thirteen years of military cooperation during the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, NATO allies and partner nations are at a strategic inflection point. While the intervention itself was not hailed as a wholehearted success, given the persisting political and security challenges, a significant achievement has been the scope and depth of multinational military cooperation. NATO allies and their partners managed to enhance military cooperation through more than a decade of coordination.

During the NATO Summit in Wales, in September of 2014, Western leaders paid homage to the sacrifice made by the servicemen and servicewomen who fought in Afghanistan, as well as the Afghan people, who supported their efforts. The Wales Summit also featured discussions about Russia's annexation of Crimea. The crisis in Ukraine, which started in 2013, has certainly captivated NATO's attention, despite continued engagement in Afghanistan with Operation Resolute Support. A longer-term view, however, should focus on NATO's ability to keep its allies close and its Asian partners closer. ISAF contributed to closer cooperation between NATO states and countries in the Asia-Pacific. Indeed, countries like Australia, Japan, South Korea and Singapore have deepened their ties with NATO, through their significant military and financial contributions to ISAF operations.

Given this context, it is reasonable to ask if the commitments made by Asian partners during the war in Afghanistan might imply a *quid pro*

1 Special thanks to David Walsh-Pickering for his research assistance.

quo: meaning greater attention and involvement on the part of NATO in the Asia-Pacific. In other words, since the rise of China has the potential to alter the international order, disadvantaging its new partners in the process, should NATO think about greater engagement in the Asia-Pacific, building on its emerging partnership network in the region? Do global crisis management tasks include a commitment to the international status quo, including the regional status quo in East Asia? In other words, is the security of NATO member states tied to stability in the Asia-Pacific?

This chapter examines NATO's engagement with its Asian partners in a post-Afghanistan era. It argues that while the crisis in Ukraine has stalled deeper engagement in the short term, over time there is likely to be greater NATO involvement in the Asia-Pacific region—this being a function of first, the aforementioned support of Asian allies during the war in Afghanistan and resulting partnerships between NATO and a number of key Asian states; and second, because individual NATO allies are taking a keener interest in the region with the United States (US) “pivot” or “rebalance” there. Indeed, the more the United States deepens its involvement in Asia, the more NATO and its member states may find themselves exposed to the power play between Washington and Beijing. If tensions rise in East Asia, the United States will inevitably turn to its traditional allies, both through its bilateral alliance ties in the region and NATO and its member states, to bolster its political and military credibility as a regional balancer and stabilizing influence.² These potential entanglement dynamics could have important implications for NATO and its existing partnerships with Asian allies.

This chapter is organized into three parts: the first examines the United States' Asian rebalance strategy since 2011 and shows that, though modest, alliance ties have been strengthened. The rebalance is not rhetorical. The

2 Timothy Adamson, Michael Brown, Robert Sutter, “Rebooting the US Rebalance to Asia,” *Elliot School of International Affairs* (May 2014): 2-3; William T. Tow, “The ‘East Wind’ and Australia’s Alliance Politics,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 2, Australia’s Strategic Dilemma (March/April 2014): 288-290; Euan Graham, “Southeast Asia in the US Rebalance: Perceptions from a Divided Region,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2013): 305-332.

second part focuses on the potential for conflict in the region, but also, on the potential for positive diplomatic engagement through existing regional institutions. The third part investigates how the US “pivot” to the Asia-Pacific translates into Allied interest and involvement by association.

Pivot, Rebalance or Status Quo?

Is there evidence of a rebalance, beyond the political rhetoric used by both the US State Department (pivot) and the Department of Defense (rebalance)? To answer this question, it is necessary to evaluate the extent of US alliance commitments in Asia and whether or not these have been bolstered since 2011. Absent a “pivot,” it might be expected that the economic downturn and ensuing defence budget cuts would lead the US to generally decrease the scope and depth of its commitments abroad, independent of geographical location.

More specifically, this exercise leads to an assessment of the security and defence relationship between the US and countries where ties have been institutionalized by way of an actual defence treaty. These treaties provide a baseline commitment and a reference point for future assurances, such as security guarantees (including nuclear guarantees), basing arrangements, recurring training and military exercises, as well as timely demonstrations of support when disputes or crises arise. This section demonstrates that the US has focused on external balancing, meaning strengthening its bilateral alliance ties, as a means to increase its visibility in East Asia since 2011.³ This contrasts with China’s regional strategy of internal balancing, namely efforts to consolidate its power position in East Asia through building up its military capabilities, as discussed in the following section.⁴

To understand the importance of Asia in American foreign policy, it is useful to assess the significance of the US military footprint in the region. As

3 Committee on Foreign Relations, “Re-Balancing the Rebalance: Resourcing US Diplomatic Strategy in the Asia-Pacific” *US Government Printing Office*, 113th Congress, 2nd Session (17 April 2014).

4 Baogang He, “Collaborative and Conflictive Trilateralism: Perspectives from Australia, China, and America” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (March/April 2014): 249-250.

previously mentioned, the US has institutionalized its security commitments by way of long-standing defence treaties, which were created during the Cold War and still exist today. However, interpreting the significance of these treaties in the context of ongoing regional transformation in East Asia is not straightforward because the original texts are not explicit about the types of security assurances that should be provided to allies. To assess how the US military presence in Asia has changed since the 2011 rebalance, it is necessary to focus on specific diplomatic and political actions taken in this short timeframe.

A number of recent developments provide indications that the US is deepening its security commitments to the region. The first major development has been the deployment of US marines in Darwin, Australia. In 2011, US President Barack Obama and Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced that US Marines would be based in Darwin as part of six-month rotations to conduct exercises and training with the Australian Defence Force (ADF). There are currently over 1,000 US Marines there and this number should grow to a target of 2,500. Yet, Australia has stated in its defence policy documents that it is vital for the country to balance its alliance relationship with Washington, with its equally important economic relationship with China.⁵ Australia is supportive of a strong American footprint in the Asia-Pacific and has welcomed US rebalancing efforts while keeping constructive and mutual diplomatic engagement with China.⁶ Australia's hedging strategy, meaning that is not decisively choosing one side over the other, is a delicate balancing act that other allies have resorted to.⁷ South Korea, for example, has been a staunch American ally and has supported US military interventions around the world, as well

5 Nick Bisley, "Australia and Asia's Trilateral Dilemmas: Between Beijing and Washington?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (March/April 2014): 307-310; Baogang He, "Collaborative and Conflictive Trilateralism;" Rory Medcalf, "In Defence of the Indo-Pacific: Australia's New Strategic Map," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 4, 2014, pp. 470-479.

6 Weihua Liu, Yufan Hao, "Australia in China's Grand Strategy," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (March/April 2014): 374-376, 381-383.

7 Stéfanie von Hlatky, *American Allies in Times of War: The Great Asymmetry*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013; Euan Graham, "Southeast Asia in the US Rebalance: Perceptions from a Divided Region," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2013, pp. 305-314.

as its presence in East Asia, but also recognizes that positive engagement with China will help contain North Korea.⁸ Canberra, thus, is not isolated in pursuing a prudent foreign and defence policy stance. Encouraging American military cooperation while simultaneously reassuring China on the nature of ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty) efforts will be a key focus of Australia defence policy for the foreseeable future.⁹ One analyst has referred to this strategy as an effort to attempt both soft balancing and accommodation vis-à-vis China.¹⁰

In addition, US President Obama's 2014 Asian Tour reinforced America's commitment to the Philippines. On 29 April of that year, Filipino President Aquino III reaffirmed his support for a strong bilateral relationship with the United States, stating that he would expand access for American troops, ships and planes in bases throughout the country. This commitment was made official by way of a defence agreement, valid for the next ten years. The Philippines' closer alignment with the US stands in contrast with Taiwan, which has up to the 2016 election opted for a more conciliatory approach toward Mainland China, given the economic dividends that this strategy yields.¹¹

As regards Japan, Tokyo's rising concerns over the Senkaku islands in the East China Sea are preventing deeper diplomatic engagement with China. On 24 April 2014, Obama declared that its defence treaty with Japan meant an obligation on the part of the US to protect Japan if a conflict erupts in the East China Sea. There was no further comment on the dispute itself, but this declaration is significant because it enhances the general commitments made in the original defence treaty between the two allies. The timing was not accidental, given that Japan's concerns have increased

8 Hyon Joo Yoo, "The China Factor in the US-South Korea Alliance: the Perceived Usefulness of China in the Korean Peninsula," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 1, 2014.

9 Mark Beeson, Yong Wong, "Australia, China, and the US in an Era of Interdependence: Irreconcilable Interests, Inadequate Institutions?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 3, May/June 2014, pp. 572-574, 578-581.

10 Derek McDougall, "Australian Strategies in Response to China's Rise: The Relevance of the United States," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 2, March/April 2014, pp. 334-340.

11 Dennis Hickey, "Taiwan and the Rising Tensions in the East China Sea: A Mouse That Roared," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 3, May/June 2014, pp.508-511.

since China declared an air defence identification zone over these waters in a move to bolster its sovereignty in the region and over the disputed islands (Senkaku/Diaoyu).¹² President Obama stated that: “Historically, they [the islands] have been administered by Japan, and we do not believe that they should be subject to change unilaterally. What is a consistent part of the alliance is that the treaty covers all territories administered by Japan.”¹³ This is undoubtedly an expanded definition of the United States’ bilateral security arrangements with Japan and reinforces the statements that had previously been made by then Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Secretary of State John Kerry. In April 2015, Japanese Prime Minister Abe’s visit to the United States, the first since 2006, led to new defence guidelines for US-Japan security cooperation, effectively enlarging the scope of the bilateral alliance. Under Abe, Japan has been revisiting the strict constitutional prohibitions on the use of force and redefining the role that the Self-Defence Forces could have both regionally and globally.

Based on enhanced American security assurances to Australia, Japan and the Philippines since the “pivot” was announced, it appears that the US has indeed begun to implement the rebalance policy and has done so as perceptions of threat have remained relatively constant in the region (i.e. disputes which are managed, with spikes in tensions not escalating to full-blown conflict).¹⁴ This is a noticeable strategic realignment, which was not motivated by any single crisis or destabilizing event.

Finally, it should be noted that the rebalance strategy has also changed during this short period of time. US policymakers have adjusted the “pivot” narrative, in response to concerns expressed both by allies and China. The solution to making its intentions clear has been to list its rebalance goals in

12 Toshi Yoshihara, “Troubled Waters: China and Japan Face Off at Sea” *World Affairs*, January/February 2014, pp. 25-27; Tow, “The United States and Asia in 2013.”

13 Mark Landler, “Obama Says Pact Obliges US to Protect Japan in Islands Fight,” *The New York Times*, 24 April 2014 (online).

14 Based on the ICB definition: foreign policy crisis as a situation in which three conditions, deriving from a change in a state’s external or internal environment, are perceived by the highest-level decision-makers of the state: (a) a threat to basic values, (b) an awareness of finite time for response to the external threat to basic values, and (c) a high probability of involvement in military hostilities.

speeches and publically available policy documents [Table 2].

Goals	Description
Developing a comprehensive approach to the rebalance	Coordinate policies across government departments and agencies with regards to the Asia-Pacific
Improve communication	Clearly articulate the goals of the rebalance strategy to the public and to government
Provide updates	Review China-US relationship periodically and communicate assessment to relevant government actors for concerted action
Reassurance	Strengthen regional alliance network
Diplomatic engagement	Strengthen bilateral relationships
Public diplomacy	Promote mutual understanding between Chinese and American citizens
Economic cooperation	Deepen bilateral economic ties
Further development	Pursue development initiatives with partners
Support regional institutions	Increase US support to multinational institutions
Capacity building	Support the capacity of partners to encourage multilateralism
Improve human rights	Provide support to civil society for the protection of human rights
Solicit feedback from Congress	Increase legislative input about the effectiveness of the rebalance

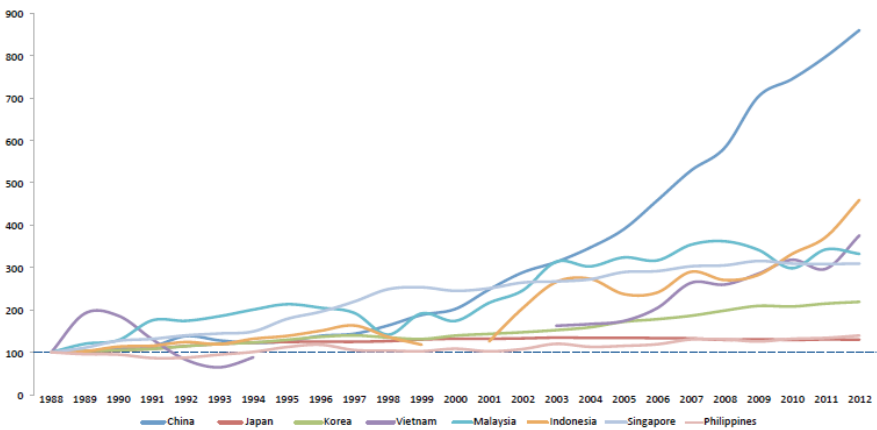
Table 2. The “New” Rebalance Strategy in the Asia-Pacific (2014).

Source: Author’s summary from the US Congressional Committee on Foreign Relations (2014)¹⁵

15 Committee on Foreign Relations, “Re-Balancing the Rebalance: Resourcing US Diplomatic Strategy in the Asia-Pacific” *US Government Printing Office*, 113th Congress, 2nd Session, 17 April 2014, pp. 1-6.

Regional Transformation in the Asia-Pacific

While threat perceptions have remained relatively constant, defence spending in the Asia-Pacific has not. The emphasis is typically placed on China, which has increased its military capabilities steadily. However, it is important to note that this increase in Chinese defence spending has been countered by other regional powers. In fact, what we are observing is the modernization of Asian militaries more generally speaking [Figure 3].¹⁶



Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database (2012).

Figure 3. Real Military Expenditures in Selected Asian Countries
(Inflation-adjusted index 1988=100)

When comparing the Asian region with the transatlantic region, the opposite directions of military spending trends are startling. Since the end of the Cold War, European powers have slashed their defence budgets, a trend that has accelerated with the onset of the 2008 economic crisis. There were minor increases and adjustments between 2001 and 2008 as many

¹⁶ This figure is reproduced from the CIGI Special Report on East Asia (2014), which can be found online: https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/special_report_2.pdf.

NATO states experienced higher operational tempos with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but the great majority of US allies in Europe do not meet their commitment of spending at least 2% of their Gross Domestic Product on defence.

In Asia, not only has the region seen greater military spending, but China has displayed a more assertive stance in its immediate maritime environment. The notion of China's peaceful rise still holds at the international level, as well as with its bilateral interactions with the US in East Asia, but Beijing's interactions with other regional powers in the East and South China Seas have been tense.¹⁷ While increased military spending in the region (what is typically called internal balancing) is transforming the Asia-Pacific region, institutionalized cooperative arrangements are also being pursued. Indeed, there is cause for optimism when considering the diplomatic forums and existing regional institutions that are facilitating interactions on sensitive security and defence issues, as well as supporting deeper economic ties. The discussion that follows highlights the potential for deeper regionalization on its own merit and also underscores the possibility of greater engagement on the part of NATO allies, through these existing regional institutional channels.

Regional Institutions and Multilateral Cooperation

Despite the US rebalance, a shift toward greater cooperation amongst Asian powers, including China, is emerging. A few recent examples deserve mention, especially in the realm of conflict prevention. In 2014, the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea, which includes the US, China and Japan (more than 20 nations are party to the Code) was approved as a way to reduce the risk of accidental conflict in the Asia-Pacific naval environment. While this does not resolve the overlapping claims in the East and South China Seas, it is a promising sign of dialogue to collectively address security

17 Mark Beeson, Yong Wong, "Australia, China, and the US in an Era of Interdependence: Irreconcilable Interests, Inadequate Institutions?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 3, May/June 2014, pp. 569-578.

issues in the region, amidst frequent and worrisome clashes between China and Japan.¹⁸

In addition, the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) military exercises are building momentum as a biennial hub for inter-allied and partner cooperation. These military exercises are hosted by the US Pacific Command in Hawaii and foster deeper security cooperation between Asian states in diverse areas. Especially promising is military cooperation focusing on non-offensive capability building, such as emergency disaster relief and humanitarian interventions. Moreover, the stated goal of promoting freedom of the seas and shipping lanes is an objective that even China is willing to support through collective efforts, as shown by its participation in the 2014 RIMPAC exercises. These military exercises, in addition to military exchanges and defence diplomacy, have the potential to create a culture of transparency across allied and partnered militaries.

Since only six NATO countries are participating (out of the 23 RIMPAC nations), perhaps there is room for greater European involvement on this front. Such possibilities can also be explored in the context of other multinational military exercises taking part in the Asia-Pacific, such as Cobra Gold (the US, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, as well as China for a special civic assistance project), FRANZ (military agreement between France, Australia and New Zealand), the Five Power Defence Arrangements (Australia, Singapore, the United Kingdom (UK), Malaysia, New Zealand), and the annual Maple Flag exercise (in Canada, which involves 7 NATO countries, as well as Australia, New Zealand and Singapore).

This section highlighted that institutional security linkages in the Asia-Pacific are growing deeper and more ambitious. Moreover, organizations and meetings like the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting – Plus (ADMM +) forum

18 Yoshinara, "Troubled Waters."

are showing slow but steady progress toward institutionalized cooperation between regional rivals.

Implications for NATO

The previous sections have assessed the significance of the American rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. The next question is to determine whether the rebalance to Asia presents any opportunities for further NATO engagement in the region. While initially there were concerns from European observers that the “pivot” would mean that the US was turning its back on its transatlantic allies, American politicians have gone out of their way to convince Brussels that this is not the case. While it would be difficult to demonstrate a causal link between greater ties in the Asia-Pacific and retrenchment from Europe, the crisis in Crimea and Ukraine has put these fears to rest. To be sure, the only evidence of a decreased NATO commitment on the part of the US is the withdrawal of forward-deployed troops from Germany and repeated speeches by US officials criticizing their NATO allies for falling behind on their defence spending commitments. However, many other NATO allies, like the UK and Canada, have implemented similar drawbacks since the end of the Cold War. All things considered, it does not appear that the Asia rebalance has been pursued at the expense of NATO.

The rebalance nonetheless bears potentially significant implications for NATO, both as an organization and as the sum of individual allies’ security interests. If the US were to be involved in a conflict to protect Japan, South Korea or Taiwan (two of which are official NATO partners), would this issue not be brought to Brussels for discussion? Officially, there are no provisions tying NATO to US actions in Asia, but if Washington needed allied support in the context of a high-stakes war in East Asia, individually European and Canadian allies could conceivably become involved. The outcome of any military conflict in the Asian-Pacific would be perceived as game changing for the regional order and international status quo and definitely have an impact on NATO’s self-assessment in

global security management. In this context, NATO has a stake in deeper engagement in the Asia-Pacific to prevent miscalculation, to foster more multilateral dialogue, transparency and to help in the implementation of confidence-building measures in areas that appear more benign from a security standpoint and, more importantly, provided that China can also be included as a partner on equal footing.

Because of the United States' network of alliances in the Asia-Pacific, individual NATO allies have also deepened their engagement thereby defining a stake for NATO by association. In addition, NATO has formal partnerships with a number of regional states that have made significant contributions to assist the transatlantic alliance during the War in Afghanistan.

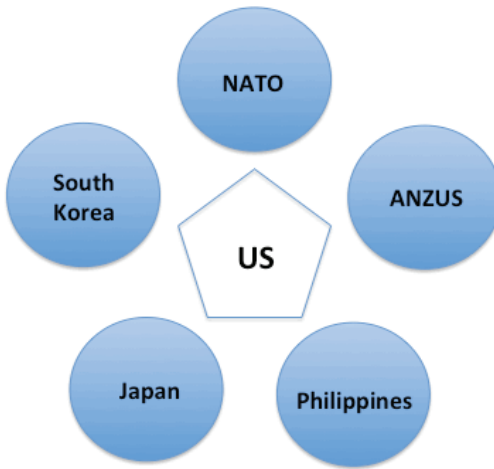


Figure 4. US Mutual and Collective Defense Arrangements

The bottom line is that given the number of treaty ties that the US has in the world to maintain European and Asian regional stability, it may look to NATO as a collection of states that, despite not spending enough on

defence (from an American viewpoint), can perhaps engage in more global risk and burden-sharing. In 2014, the US Ambassador to NATO, Douglas Lute, made a comment on the rebalance during a video teleconference with North American universities to that effect. Using a basketball analogy, he argued that you pivot with one foot stable on the ground. That pivoting foot, in his analogy, is the NATO alliance because of the almost 65 years of institutionalized military cooperation it has achieved.

Going beyond Lute's analogy, there are a number of strategies that NATO could pursue as the US further implements the rebalance. Three options appear as most likely:

1. An attempt to further globalize its partnership network, following the US lead deeper into Asia. Indeed, post-Afghanistan, the level of engagement that Brussels will continue to have with its Asian partners, such as Australia and Japan, is unclear. Using the rebalance as an opportunity to define a clear strategy to work on shared security concerns to maintain the political and military momentum that was achieved in the context of ISAF would be manageable, even with the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.
2. Engaging in a counter-pivot in a different region: this option would favor a division of labor approach between the United States and its NATO allies, where the US would focus more deeply on the Asia-Pacific region, to foster greater political and military engagement with its existing allies, while NATO, collectively and through the initiatives of European allies, would place a greater focus on another region, such as sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Initiating closer contacts with other regional organizations and engaging in multinational activities that provide more face time opportunities with Asian nations. Some examples of this type of engagement have already been discussed in this chapter, like RIMPAC and ASEAN. Promoting deeper engagement between regional organizations could foster mutual understanding and diplomatic socialization.

These three strategies are by no means mutually exclusive. Moreover, if pursued, these three options should be implemented through the prism of benign security cooperation, meaning deeper engagement which would be inclusive of all major regional powers. If NATO is to be engaged in the Asia-Pacific, its actions have to be articulated clearly and supported through public diplomacy efforts. In essence, if NATO is to participate in regional confidence building exercises in the realm of security and defence, either through existing initiatives or by introducing new mechanisms for cooperation, it should aim to engage Asian partners without antagonizing China. Whatever approach the Alliance decides on, the bottom line is that doing nothing is not an option. NATO is implicated in the US rebalance by association with its indispensable member state.

PART 3

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON NATO POLICY CHOICES

Australia and NATO: Six Decades of Cooperation

Stephan Frühling

In the nineteenth century, British and other European migrants transformed Australia, Canada and New Zealand into major pillars of the late British Empire. The societies of all three Dominions were culturally, politically and economically linked to Britain and Europe. All three Dominions provided large contributions to the British war effort in Europe in the First and Second World Wars. And, in a significant shift in traditional alliance structures, all three entered new defence treaties with the United States (US) after the Second World War that ultimately eclipsed their old Commonwealth links with Britain.

Here, however, the similarities end. Canada, with coasts on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, became a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with a continued focus on the common defence of Europe. Australia and New Zealand, however, increasingly became preoccupied with strategic developments in Asia and Oceania, and their defence policy and priorities diverged substantially from those of Britain and Canada. Given the strong historic, cultural and political links between Australia and NATO countries, the paucity of links between NATO and Australia, throughout much of the Cold War and beyond, remains somewhat surprising – not least since this relationship rapidly changed in the second half of the 2000s.

In the context of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operation in Afghanistan, to which Australia contributed significant forces, Australia went from having no permanent presence at NATO, to being officially represented by an accredited ambassador, along with a senior two-star military representative, and officers attached to all major NATO

headquarters involved in the Afghanistan operation. From no political relationship, Australia went on to become a contact country, then a “global partner” with a formal partnership agreement, and regular attendance of Australian prime ministers and foreign and defence ministers at NATO council meetings. From very limited technical exchanges, a formal cooperation programme developed, that now includes participation in many NATO conferences and seminars, separate information exchange and logistics agreements, and even NATO research and development activities hosted in Australia.¹

What does this mean for Australia’s relations with NATO after the Afghanistan commitment? Sections one to four of this chapter analyse the main periods in the history of Australia-NATO relations, discussing why it took so long for the Australia-NATO partnership to arrive at where it is today. From the insights gathered through this historical analysis, section five discusses what the history of Australia-NATO relations can tell us about the future of the relationship after Afghanistan. This chapter argues that Australia’s future engagement with NATO will not drop to the near-absence of links before the 2000s. Nor, however, is it likely that the rapid intensification of the relationship in recent years will continue. Politically, the significance of the relationship is likely to diminish (although not disappear) with the end of operations in Afghanistan. In relation to practical exchanges, however, the cooperation that exists today is more reflective of Australia’s enduring strategic priorities than was its absence in earlier decades. Politically, both Australia and NATO will continue to have a more global perspective on security than they did in previous decades, which will sustain the value of high-level exchanges. Cooperation in Afghanistan has been a catalyst for enduring change, and the current relationship between Australia and NATO is likely to represent a “new normal,” which will endure past the end of that particular operation.

1 Warren Snowdon, “Australia hosts NATO camouflage trial,” *Media Release*, 13 April 2012, <http://www.dsto.defence.gov.au/news/6872/> (4 June 2014).

Australasian Britain and the Common Defence of Europe, 1914-1954

Before and after Federation in 1901, the Australian colonies saw their security as inseparable from that of the wider British Empire. Hence, when Britain declared war on Germany over the attack on Belgium in 1914, Australians rallied to the flag and sent overseas the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) for service in the Middle East and at the Western Front. And when Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Prime Minister Robert Menzies informed Australians that “Great Britain has declared war upon [Germany] and that as a result, Australia is also at war.”² Australian crews and bomber units were an integral part of the British Royal Air Force throughout the European war. Following the fall of France, however, the “Second AIF” only made it to the Middle East, where it participated in the Greece, North Africa and Syria campaigns. Following the fall of Singapore, Australia recalled its land forces home to defend Papua and New Guinea against the Japanese. For the remainder of the war, most Australian forces fought in the Pacific under US strategic command, with little relation to the British war effort in Europe or East Asia (Burma).

After the Second World War, as the United States demobilized and seemed to withdraw once more into relative isolation, Australia renewed its defence planning as part of the British Commonwealth. Commonwealth strategy agreed upon at the post-war Prime Ministers’ conferences placed far greater priority on the Dominions’ responsibility for their own, local defence, in addition to contributions to the global war effort. Stopping a Soviet advance on the European continent was then beyond the power of the Empire. For Australia, local defence in South East Asia, and deployments to the British Far East or Middle East were the main contributions it planned for in case of war against the Soviet Union.³ Following the fall of mainland China to the Communists, South East Asia and the Middle East

2 Quoted in LC Key, “Australia in Commonwealth and World Affairs 1939-1944,” *International Affairs* 21:1, 1945, p. 67.

3 See: Stephan Frühling, *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*, Canberra, Defence Publishing Service, 2009.

became the main areas for an Australian contribution to the security of the Commonwealth.

At the same time, however, Britain itself began to commit once again to the common defence of the mainland of Europe, through the Dunkirk Treaty of 1947, the Brussels Treaty of 1948 and the Washington Treaty of 1949. Australia was not part of these treaties or commitments, but retained its links and cooperation with Britain through the Commonwealth framework. And it was by virtue of this separate relationship with Britain, one of NATO's main member countries, that Australian forces first came to operate under NATO command in 1952.

In early 1951, Britain was in a diplomatic tug-of-war with the United States over the establishment of the NATO command system in the Mediterranean. The British sought a Middle Eastern command under a British officer, preferably with command over the US Sixth Fleet and directly responsible to the Standing Group (the predecessor of today's Military Committee). In contrast, the US view was that Mediterranean operations should come under the responsibility of US-led Allied Command South.⁴ It was in this context that Britain asked for an Australian contribution to the Commonwealth's position in the Middle East, and two (under-strength) Australian fighter squadrons and associated base units arrived in Malta in mid-1952, so that they could reinforce British units for service in the Middle East.

By this time, however, NATO had established the new Allied Forces Mediterranean Command, which assumed command over British forces in Malta. As a result, the Royal Australian Air Force's 78 Wing participated in many NATO exercises in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Europe. Of particular note was its participation in NATO's Exercise "Coronet," a large 1953 air force exercise in Germany, during which it operated from an Australian-manned improvised airfield outside Cologne. After the exercise, "senior NATO air officers" were quoted in the

⁴ Dionysios Chourchoulis, "High Hopes, Bold Aims, Limited Results: Britain and the Establishment of the NATO Mediterranean Command, 1950–1953," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 20:3, 2009, pp. 434–452.

Australian press as saying that the Wing would be “far better off based in West Germany than in Malta.”⁵

This was not to be. 78 Wing returned home in 1954, after Australia had decided to give priority to the security of South East Asia in both Cold War and global war situations. Instead of the Mediterranean, the new Far East Strategic Reserve in Malaya, consisting of British, Australian and New Zealand forces, became the new focus of Australia’s cooperation within the Commonwealth. But although 78 Wing’s accidental NATO role remained an episode that is now largely forgotten, it holds an important lesson for the future of Australia-NATO relations: Australia has always shared NATO’s values and interests; it has a treaty commitment with the United States and historical political links with several NATO members; and Australia’s participation in military operations as part of the Anglo-Saxon and broader Western community is an integral part of its history, policy and even national identity. But despite all this, the fundamentally different geographic locations of Australia and NATO have meant that for a long time the activities of each had very little relevance for the other – and, ultimately, these same geostrategic differences still exert a strong influence on the strategic priorities of both NATO and Australia today.

A Different Experience of Alliance: Australia’s Defence Policy, 1954-1990

As Australia withdrew 78 Wing from its inadvertent NATO role, it was at the same time building its own alliance links with another NATO member, the United States. One of Australia’s motivations for pursuing the trilateral Australia, New Zealand and United States (ANZUS) treaty in 1952 was the hope that it could gain insight and input into US operational planning in the Pacific, akin to the arrangements then developing in NATO. This was, however, strongly resisted by the Pentagon. Following the creation of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954,

5 “R.A.A.F. Wing in Arduous, Revealing Ruhr Exercises,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 August 1953, p. 2.

Australia sought the same objective through this new framework – with similarly disappointing results, as the United States remained reluctant, for political, practical and security reasons, to conduct meaningful planning in SEATO. Nonetheless, allied war plans for the defence of South East Asia during the 1950s – like those of NATO – were based on the doctrine of “massive retaliation” against a feared Communist invasion. As part of its commitment to SEATO and to strengthen Western deterrence, Australia from 1962 to 1968 placed a forward-based fighter squadron in Thailand.

Despite these superficial similarities between Australia’s and NATO’s posture, however, Australia’s experience of alliance with the United States differed significantly from that of the European NATO members. Doubts about the credibility of US guarantees in the 1960s were also shared in Australia, especially under Prime Minister John Gorton (1968-1971). But Australia had never received explicit US extended deterrence guarantees, because it was never under direct threat from nuclear weapons or even conventional attack, other than as a consequence of a conflict already involving the United States. Hence, it never had to work through the difficult strategic dilemmas facing NATO during that time, that arose from the increasing vulnerability of the US homeland to a retaliatory Soviet strike. The strategy of “flexible response” that the United States and later NATO adopted to deal with this problem had no equivalent in Australia’s strategic experience. Instead, the alliance with the United States during the 1960s rested on joint deployments in South East Asia, especially in Thailand and the War in Vietnam. But although Australia supported and encouraged US engagement in the region, ANZUS itself never developed into an institution for the coordination of allies’ foreign policy, in the way that became ingrained in NATO’s engagement with the Eastern bloc after the 1967 Harmel Report.

For geographic reasons, Australia provided a highly valuable location for a range of US installations, including the submarine communications station at North West Cape, the Defense Support Programme satellite station in Nurrungar, and the large intelligence satellite control facility at Pine Gap. Through these “Joint Facilities,” Australia became important for

the command and control of US strategic nuclear forces. The Joint Facilities and close signals intelligence cooperation under the Five-Eyes framework between the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand remain by far the closest areas of cooperation in the Australia-US alliance, but most of these arrangements remained shrouded in strict secrecy for many years (and indeed many do to this day).

In the early 1970s, Australian strategic policy entered a new era. Britain withdrew from “East of Suez” and chose integration with Europe over links with the Commonwealth. The Defence Department and intelligence agencies finally moved from their colonial-era offices and mind-sets in Melbourne to Canberra, and the election of the Labor party government under Gough Whitlam ended 23 years of conservative rule. In Asia, the US-China rapprochement and the fall of Sukarno in Indonesia made Australia’s strategic environment far less threatening. Australian navy vessels and maritime patrol aircraft, operating from Butterworth air base in Malaysia, continued to shadow Soviet naval units passing through the region. As a central determinant of defence policy and force structure as a whole, however, the Cold War ended for Australia with the return of forces from Vietnam in 1972.

Australia’s defence policy and organization deliberately focused inwards when the country entered the “Defence of Australia” era in the 1970s. “Self-reliance” became the key strategic concept – the ability to defeat regional threats against Australia without having to rely on US combat or combat support forces. This new policy posed difficult new problems, in both practical and conceptual terms. The geography of northern Australia is inhospitable, and there are few settlements and even fewer units or installations of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) outside the Southeast and Southwest of this vast continent [**Map 3**]. Longstanding service traditions were challenged by the notion that they should now prepare to fight independently as a joint ADF, rather than as part of a larger allied sister-service. Indeed, some policy-makers at the time looked to neutrals like Sweden and Switzerland, with their militia-based defence organization, as the most appropriate European countries to learn from and emulate,

rather than to US allies in NATO.⁶

But whereas NATO and European neutrals during the 1970s and 1980s faced an increasingly sophisticated and heavy conventional and nuclear threat from the Soviet Union, Australia's relatively benign strategic environment meant that force development would focus on low-intensity threats, with years of warning assumed for more significant threats. As a result, the ADF's force structure, posture and capabilities began to diverge significantly from those of its traditional partners, the United Kingdom and United States, and from NATO.⁷ The Royal Australian Navy continued to exercise with the US Pacific Fleet, but many parts of the ADF during the 1970s and 1980s hardly ever saw, let alone operated alongside, US forces.



Map 3. Geographic size of Australia and Europe compared

⁶ See, for example, Alan Wrigley, *The Defence Force and the Community*, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1990.

⁷ Alan Thompson, *Defence Down Under: Evolution and Revolution 1971-88*, Working Paper 40, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London, 1988.

One important reason for Australia's relative disengagement from wider Western concerns in the northern hemisphere was the realization that regional threats in its own neighbourhood had little priority for its major ally. The United States had repeatedly proved reluctant to provide political support, let alone guarantees of military assistance, when Australia came into conflict with Indonesia. In the late 1950s, Australia supported the Netherlands against Indonesia over the future of Dutch West Papua, but failed to gain US support against Indonesia's claims over the territory. In the 1960s, Australian and Indonesian forces fought each other in Borneo when Australia, Britain and New Zealand supported Malaysia against Indonesia's "policy of 'Confrontation'" against that country.⁸

Even during the era of "forward defence" in South East Asia, Australia was quite aware that its alliance with the United States was less institutionalized, less comprehensive and arguably less reliable than was NATO. In the words of Australia's classified defence guidance from 1976, "the general proposition about Australia's security from major military threat, and the assurance of US combat support, need qualification in respect of Indonesia."⁹ NATO's concept of the "indivisibility of security in the Alliance" has no equivalent in ANZUS – quite the contrary, US officials repeatedly made the limits of US assistance against Indonesia quite explicit. And the suspension of the US treaty guarantee to New Zealand, after it refused port access to potentially nuclear-armed US Navy vessels in the mid-1980s, would arguably also have been unthinkable in the NATO context.

Hence, Australia's strategic and defence planning went its own way in the 1970s and 1980s. While Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser (1975-1983) was vocal in his support for the West against the Soviet Union, significantly increasing defence expenditure after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, even his government declined a US invitation to participate in the US

8 See: Peter Edwards, *Crises & Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965*, Allen & Unwin, 1992.

9 Defence Committee, *Australian Strategic Analysis and Defence Policy Objectives*, 2 September 1976, para 86, in Frühling (ed.), *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.

Rapid Deployment Force for the Persian Gulf in 1979. The cost of the Vietnam War, where 521 Australian regulars and national servicemen had died, remained a heavy burden on the domestic support for Australia's US alliance for many years. In addition, there was considerable antipathy on the left of the political spectrum to the "Joint Facilities" and their role in supporting US strategic nuclear forces.

In 1983, a new Labor government under Bob Hawke conducted a formal review of whether the alliance with the United States still served Australia's national interests. At the same time, NATO's mostly conservative governments demonstrated remarkable political cohesion when they implemented the "dual track" decision and deployed intermediate-range nuclear forces into Western Europe. In the end, reconciling the Australian Labor party with the US alliance was one of the great achievements of Hawke's prime ministership, but the political and strategic contrast between NATO's and Australia's situation could hardly have been greater.¹⁰

This did not, however, mean that European NATO allies were completely irrelevant to Australia. The ability of the ADF to operate self-reliantly increased the need to operate efficiently and effectively, and to maintain professional standards and expertise. Although many high-end warfighting capabilities were not required for Australia's direct defence in the 1970s to 1990s, the ADF sought to maintain relevant expertise through the posting of ADF officers on exchanges overseas. For historical reasons, the British armed forces remained particularly important in this regard, and many Australian officers during the Cold War served in the British Army of the Rhine, or on Royal Navy ships in European waters. Australia created targeted links with several other European countries around the purchase and sustainment of major platforms, including French fighter jets, German tanks and frigates, and Italian mine hunters. It participated in standardization activities with its traditional Anglo-Saxon partners (United States, Britain, Canada and New Zealand), including the ABCA armies' programme, AUSCANNZUKUS

10 See: Gregory Pemberton, "Australia and the United States," in *Diplomacy in the Marketplace: Australia in World Affairs, 1981-1990*, eds. P.J. Boyce and J.R. Angel, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1992, pp. 123-145.

naval cooperation, the Air Standardization Coordinating Committee, Combined Communications Electronics Board, and The Technical Cooperation Programme.¹¹ Insofar as many manuals resulting from these fora were based on NATO Standardization Agreements (STANAGs) and vice versa, a certain measure of commonality was maintained between NATO and Australia. Through officers on exchange to Britain, Australia participated in NATO ordnance committees, and it became a member of the NATO Sea Sparrow Consortium developing ship self-defence missiles. Aside from these limited activities, however, there was no contact between Australia and the North Atlantic Alliance – nor was there any perceived need for it.

Ships Passing in the Night: Australia and NATO, 1990-2005

Because of its geostrategic location, the end of the Cold War was far less consequential for Australia than it was for NATO. Nonetheless, the changing security environment and multinational operations of the 1990s and early 2000s meant that shared interests and the potential for cooperation between Australia and NATO began to increase again. Despite Australia's reputation today as a reliable contributor to international coalition operations, it took two decades for the country to shed its aversion to overseas deployments that arose from the Vietnam War. Decisions to deploy mine clearance divers to the Gulf in 1987,¹² and participation in the first Gulf War – limited to a naval task group that did not see combat – were quite controversial at the time.¹³ In the context of humanitarian interventions and United Nations (UN) blue helmet missions in Namibia (1989-90), in Somalia (1991-95),

11 ABCA (American, British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand); AUSCANNZUKUS (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States). See: Thomas-Durell Young, "Cooperative Diffusion through Cultural Similarity: The Postwar Anglo-Saxon Experience," in *The Diffusion of Military Technology and Ideas*, eds. Emily O. Goldman and Leslie C. Eliason, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2003, pp. 93-113.

12 Kim Beazley, "Operation Sandglass: Old History, Contemporary Lessons," *Security Challenges* 4:3, 2008, pp. 23-43.

13 Roger Bell, "Reassessed: Australia's Relationship with the United States," in *Seeking Asian Engagement: Australia In World Affairs, 1991-1995*, eds. James Cotton and John Ravenhill, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 211-212.

in Cambodia (1991-93) and Rwanda (1994-95), Australia thus underwent its own version of an “out of area” debate at the end of the Cold War.

This might have led to increased contact between Australia and NATO, had the ADF participated in the UN or NATO operations in the former Yugoslavia. New Zealand deployed a reinforced company to the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in an attempt to rebuild international defence links after the suspension of the ANZUS alliance by the United States. In contrast, Australia decided against any deployment because it considered the conflict a European responsibility, and sought to avoid further tensions between its Croat and Serbian migrant communities. Therefore it did not feature amongst the range of partner countries that operated alongside the North Atlantic Alliance in this series of conflicts that preoccupied NATO throughout the 1990s.¹⁴ Australia joined the National Reserve Forces Committee, which formally became a NATO committee in 1996, as a permanent observer, but otherwise contact between NATO and Australia remained as limited as it had been in earlier decades. In its defence policy statements the new conservative Coalition government under Prime Minister John Howard (1996-2007) gave somewhat greater prominence to coalition contributions, but Australia’s focus remained on its own region and the multinational fora emerging within it, especially the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum created in 1994.

The 1990s ended with a confirmation that the US alliance had very real limits, when Indonesian militias started a systematic campaign of wide-scale violence following the East Timorese referendum for independence. Only a few months after the United States had fought against Serbia as part of the NATO operation to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo, the Clinton administration declined direct participation in Australia’s International Force East Timor (INTERFET) operation, and limited itself to logistical support. Australia’s Prime Minister commented later that “we

¹⁴ A significant number of individual Australian officers on exchange to British and US units participated in these conflicts, and Australia also agreed to provide a few staff officers to the British Army.

all felt a bit sort of alone on it [sic].”¹⁵ Unlike the United States, many European NATO members – including Britain, Portugal, Italy and France – provided combat units, but again there was no role for NATO and, with the exception of former colonial power Portugal, other European forces did not remain beyond the initial phases of the operation. For Australia, however, this was but one of a series of operational commitments in its South Pacific neighbourhood.¹⁶ Australian combat forces remained in Timor until 2004. From 2003 to 2013, Australia led a regional intervention force to stabilize the Solomon Islands.¹⁷ In 2006, severe riots saw ADF units deployed back to East Timor’s capital Dili (where they remained until 2012), the Solomon’s capital Honiara, and also temporarily to Tonga. Maintaining stability in the South Pacific thus remains an important strategic priority and focus for Australia – but it is one where the European Union, with its significant aid programme, is far more relevant to Australia as a European partner than is NATO.

Another instance after the Balkan wars, where a slightly different turn of history may have led to an earlier NATO-Australia partnership, came with the 9/11 attacks on the United States in 2001. In the days after the attack, NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time in its history. Prime Minister Howard, who had been in Washington on the day of the attack, likewise invoked Article 4 of the ANZUS treaty for the first time.¹⁸ The door was open for the United States to use NATO to lead the international fight against Al-Qaeda, in which case Australia would almost certainly have built strong political and organizational links with the North Atlantic Alliance. The Bush administration, however, chose otherwise. Australia and European NATO members provided troop contributions on

15 Iain Henry, “Playing Second Fiddle on the Road to INTERFET: Australia’s East Timor Policy Throughout 1999,” *Security Challenges* 9:1, 2013, p. 105.

16 The largest deployment before 1999 was the (unarmed) Peace Monitoring Group on Bougainville from 1997-2003.

17 RAMSI – Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands.

18 Article 4 of the ANZUS treaty contains the equivalent to Article 5 in the Washington Treaty, although in a much weaker form. Its main clause is: “Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.”

a bilateral basis to the US Central Command (CENTCOM)-led invasion of Afghanistan, but there was no provision for a formalized political, organizational or planning role for NATO. With limited ownership in the operation, most allies withdrew their forces soon after the initial invasion, and Australian forces quit Afghanistan in December 2002.

Defence Minister Robert Hill's push to give the Middle East and "war on terror" greater priority in Australia's defence policy reportedly failed to find the support of Cabinet in Canberra in 2003.¹⁹ Australia participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, but on the condition that its forces would be withdrawn not long after the initial invasion. Australia's engagement in the Middle East remained guided by considerations of managing its own alliance with the United States, rather than by a fundamental reappraisal of Australia's strategic interests.

NATO-Australia Partnership since 2005

When Australia and NATO finally did cross paths in 2005, it was under quite different circumstances. The war in Iraq had been divisive, both within NATO and domestically within Australia. Hence, when Australia decided to return special forces to Afghanistan in 2005 it did so for similar reasons to NATO's engagement in that country from 2003 – to emphasize its contribution to the "good" war in Afghanistan, while seeking to deflect pressure from returning to a more substantial role to help manage the "bad" war in Iraq. Given the increased overlap of interests and activities in the region, greater interaction between NATO and Australia emerged. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer spoke to the North Atlantic Council in 2004, and Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer visited Australia in 2005, signing an information exchange agreement in the context of NATO's establishment of a new Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit. Australia also accredited its first defence attaché in Brussels in 2005.

19 Geoffrey Barker and Laura Tingle, "Canberra toughens pro-war stance despite protests," *Australian Financial Review*, 18 February 2003; Paul Dibb, "Is strategic geography relevant to Australia's current defence policy?" *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 60:2, 2006, pp. 247-264.

In many ways, however, it was the Afghanistan commitment that became the catalyst for Australia's relationship with NATO. Australia deployed a "Reconstruction Task Force" to Oruzgan province in 2006, which operated alongside Dutch forces. Then Defence Minister Brendan Nelson later reflected that:

I remember ... midway through 2006 saying to Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, the Chief of Defence, ... we'd better go to Brussels and have a talk to these NATO people. Now, at that stage we dealt with Washington, London, Kabul and, of course, The Hague because we were partnered with the Dutch. And Angus said to me, ... oh minister, there's a lot of red tape there, and I said, yeah I know, but they're running the war, I think we'd better go and have a look.²⁰

One outcome of that visit in 2006 was that Australia decided to become a "contact country." And yet, there remained a lot of apprehension about engagement with NATO. Australia began to participate in some Partnership for Peace (PfP) activities that suited its interests. At that stage, the very informal status as a contact country suited it well, as Australia was wary to commit to formalized arrangements with the Brussels bureaucracy, and apprehensive as to whether it would have to develop bilateral defence relationships with a whole range of additional NATO member countries.²¹ Moreover, Australia was conscious of its own strategic priorities, and there was little support for ideas of a "global NATO" as promoted at the time by former Spanish Prime Minister José Maria Aznar,²² and American commentators.²³

As the relationship developed, however, Australia (and NATO) also became aware of the downsides of a low-key relationship. For the new Labor government, elected in 2007, calling on NATO to lift its game in Afghanistan was a convenient way to publicly defend its commitment to an increasingly unpopular war, and to deflect demands for an increase in

20 Brendan Nelson, Address to the National Press Club, Canberra, 18 September 2013.

21 Interviews by author with Australian officials in Brussels and Canberra, November-December 2008.

22 José Maria Aznar, "NATO-An Alliance for Freedom," *RUSI Journal* 151:4, 2006, pp. 38-40.

23 Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier, "Global NATO," *Foreign Affairs* 85:5, 2006, pp. 105-113.

Australia's contribution. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, for example, stated that there was no "open cheque" from Australia,²⁴ and the new Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon said: "We can't be expected to do more when so many under-performing NATO countries are not prepared to do more."²⁵ In this context, it did not help that non-member contributing countries were excluded from some discussions on Afghanistan and, after returning from a NATO defense ministerial meeting in Lithuania in February 2008, Fitzgibbon was quoted in the Australian press as being "shocked," "amazed" and "astounded" that Australia did not have access to the relevant strategy documents and discussions.²⁶

Issues of access and participation were ultimately resolved by the NATO Secretary General. A range of high-level visits to Canberra and Brussels of senior public servants, politicians and parliamentary delegations followed in subsequent years.²⁷ The Rudd Government appointed Brendan Nelson as the first Ambassador to NATO in 2009, recognizing that a more prominent representation and engagement with the Alliance was required to sustain the operational cooperation in Afghanistan. The Australian military representative at NATO was significantly upgraded from Colonel to two-star level the following year, giving additional weight and prominence to the relationship. At the same time, the commencement of maritime security operations by NATO in 2008, responding to the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Aden, added to the range of common interests and operations. Exchanges of maritime awareness data between NATO's Allied Maritime Command and Australia became an additional valuable and enduring area of cooperation, albeit one that was (and remains) less publicly prominent than cooperation in Afghanistan.

Hence the late 2000s saw an increasing familiarity develop between

24 Dennis Shanahan, "Kevin Rudd in Bucharest for NATO summit on Afghanistan," *The Australian*, 3 April 2008.

25 ABC Lateline, 20 March 2008, transcript, 20 June 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2007/s2196334.htm>

26 Brendan Nicholson, "Australia kept in dark by NATO," *The Age*, 11 February 2008.

27 See: Nina Markovic, *NATO's new Strategic Concept and issues for Australia*, Background Note, Canberra, Parliamentary Library, 2010.

Australia and NATO, both at the political and working levels. This in turn facilitated increased cooperation as additional areas and activities of common interest were identified. Moreover, NATO itself became better organized and systematic in its approach to its partners through the new partnership policy developed after the 2010 Lisbon Summit, which formalized partner involvement in decision-making in NATO-led operations. Earlier Australian concerns about a more formalized relationship thus diminished, and Australia was the first partner country to sign a “Joint Political Declaration” in 2012 to provide a political framework for cooperation with the Alliance, followed by an “Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme” in 2013 – five months shy of the 60th anniversary of 78 Wing’s participation in NATO Exercise Coronet outside Cologne.

A New Normal in the NATO-Australia Partnership

In a sense, relations between NATO and Australia have thus come full circle. Increased, formalized cooperation with NATO is a significant change compared to the intervening low in relations experienced after the mid-1950s. The Afghanistan operation starting in 2005 was the bureaucratic and political catalyst for the development of the new NATO-Australia relationship. Australia’s ambitions for its future, however, which Australia’s former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd aptly described as “flexible and substance-driven cooperation,”²⁸ are also still a reflection of the same enduring defence policy priorities that had limited it in earlier decades.

Australia has always identified with NATO’s values, and will continue to do so. It feels a cultural and political affinity with the Alliance in general, and with its Anglo-Saxon members in particular. Like other Western countries, Australia remains concerned and engaged in developments in the Middle East and international jihadism. Partnership with NATO thus does not signal a political change for Australia in the way it does for Japan or the

28 Kevin Rudd, “NATO partners earn respect,” *The Australian*, 23 April 2011.

European neutrals, as it was always a US ally and, for most of its history, has seen contributions to global security as part of its defence policy.

Its most pressing strategic concerns, however, remain in its immediate neighbourhood and the wider Asia-Pacific, rather than the wider North Atlantic area. As such, operations alongside NATO remain an adjunct and a consequence of Australia's bilateral alliance with the United States, and the desire to demonstrate burden sharing within that alliance. There is no intrinsic value to Australia for operating alongside NATO, but it will want to avoid problems of access to strategic discussions like those which arose around 2008. As such, Australia's ambassador to NATO in 2013 described the future engagement in Brussels after Afghanistan as "a pilot light setting," to keep "the odd person or two that's plugged into the NATO system" and maintain "a position of at least reasonably familiarity" should the ADF operate alongside NATO again.²⁹

Australia's change in status from contact country to "Partner Across the Globe" and, since the 2014 Wales Summit, "enhanced opportunity partnership", indicates that both sides are getting increasingly comfortable with closer cooperation. But Australia has little desire for cooperation merely to support a broader political relationship, as is the case with many other NATO partners and the original PfP approach. Rather, it looks to NATO as a cost-effective way of cooperating with high-end military establishments in countries with which it shares its basic values and global interests. Any initiative that will help cost-effectively develop ADF capabilities, or facilitate Australian participation in future NATO-led operations – such as easing NATO's convoluted process for the accreditation of Australian forces – will be welcomed by Australia.

Bottom-up initiatives, where experts are talking to experts and professionals engage with fellow professionals on areas of common interest, will sustain new activities. Australia also has a fundamental interest in maritime awareness in the Indian Ocean, which will provide a measure of operational cooperation with NATO as long as the Alliance continues its

29 Quoted in Douglas Fry, "NATO's role in a shrinking world," *The Canberra Times*, 29 October 2013.

presence in that region. Scope for operational cooperation will thus remain even as ADF commitments in Afghanistan (and in Australia's immediate neighbourhood in the South Pacific) are wound down. Although many aspects of the information exchange and cooperation in this area are conducted out of the public eye, maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean may increase even further in importance as other regional countries, including India and China, become part of international naval efforts in the region.

Australia certainly welcomed European contributions to the Australian-led INTERFET operation in 1999. In the future, Australia and European allies may well find it easier to use the NATO framework to coordinate requests and generation of forces, should a similar situation arise once more in Australia's immediate neighbourhood. Including such an element of reciprocity into Australia's partnership with NATO could thus enhance the practical value of the organization for Australia as well as its European members.

It is also in Australia's interests for NATO's European members to be aware of the strategic tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, and to consider strategic implications of their relationships in Asia. But this does not mean that Australia will have a particular interest in NATO itself engaging in the Asia-Pacific region. Unlike NATO partners South Korea and Japan, Australia is not directly affected by tensions in Northeast Asia. Hence, whereas North Asian countries might see direct benefit in political support from the Alliance, Australia itself is trying to develop its own new defence relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, and is quite conscious that additional outside players in what is already a crowded diplomatic space may well drown out its own voice. This is particularly the case in South East Asia, which is geographically closest to Australia and which is an area where a large number of outside powers – including China, India, Japan and the United States – are already vying for new strategic and defence relations with regional countries.

Moreover, recent years have demonstrated that even practical cooperation

will remain vulnerable to cuts in overseas postings when defence budgets are lean. In coming years, however, the bipartisan commitment to increase defence spending to 2% of Gross Domestic Product, and a reduced tempo of operations for the ADF will enable participation in more exercises and training activities – as exemplified by the participation of Australian staff in a recent Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO) exercise.³⁰ Given cost and distance, such participation will largely be focused on staff officers rather than formed units or major platforms. Cyber, amphibious operations, and ballistic missile defence are three areas where the interests of the Alliance and of Australia in developing new capabilities are likely to overlap in particular, although many of the more mundane and traditional areas of NATO cooperation in logistics, air and maritime operations will also be of enduring relevance to the ADF. In that sense, the future of NATO-Australia relations has already begun.

30 Julian Hale, “NATO Conducts Exercise to Respond to Global Crises at Short Notice,” *Defense News*, 9 May 2014.

A NATO-Asia Partnership would Ease Japan's Regional Security Cooperation Dilemma

Tsuneo 'Nabe' Watanabe

In a personal conversation with a European diplomat who has been closely associated with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), I was told that what the Alliance looks for in partnering with Asian countries is legitimacy and capability.¹ These overlap with the expectations of the United States (US) in working with its NATO and other allies in counterinsurgency operations.² And they are also precisely what Japan hopes for in advancing its partnership with NATO, although in the short term, Japan is more interested in legitimacy than capability. In the long term, though, Japan-NATO cooperation could be mutually beneficial for developing capabilities in such areas as conflict management, reconstruction assistance, cybersecurity and other transnational threats, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR).

On 6 May 2014, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe gave his second speech at the North Atlantic Council, stating “Japan will commit even more strongly than ever before to fostering global peace and prosperity” and explaining that one objective of his “proactive contribution to peace” policy is for Japan to play a bigger role in defending the freedom of overflight, freedom of navigation, and other global commons.³ To this, then NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen remarked, “Our partnership is

1 The conversation with the former NATO official was held in September 2014.

2 US expectations of NATO and such other allies as Japan and South Korea in counterinsurgency operations are also legitimacy and capability, as noted in David C. Gompert and John Gordon IV, *War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capability for Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation, 2008, pp. 264–66.

3 Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the North Atlantic Council, “Japan and NATO as ‘Natural Partners,’” 6 May 2014, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000037774.pdf> (accessed 5 October 2014).

based on shared values, a shared commitment to international peace and security and to the principles of the United Nations and international law.”⁴ Abe echoed the sentiment, noting that Japan and NATO are natural partners who share such fundamental values as individual freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Abe concluded his speech at the North Atlantic Council by rhetorically asking, “Why Japan and NATO?” His answer was, “We are more than simply ‘natural partners’ that share fundamental values. We are also ‘reliable partners’ corroborated by concrete actions.”⁵ Why is sharing fundamental values with NATO important for Japan’s security policy? In short, it lends legitimacy to Japan’s efforts to play a larger role in regional and world security. In the same speech, Abe explained his intention to change the interpretation of the Constitution to enable Japan to exercise its right to collective self-defense and to contribute to regional stability. Why did this come about?

While the Obama administration has repeatedly reaffirmed America’s military commitment to the Asia-Pacific region as part of its rebalancing policy, the resources the United States can direct to the region are limited due to serious budgetary constraints and security commitments in the Middle East, North Africa, and elsewhere. US allies in Asia are well aware that they will need to take on a bigger share of the burden of protecting the global commons for the region’s security and stability—and Japan is no exception. Japan’s security community has thus been proposing that the government play a more active role in Asia-Pacific security. Even before the conservative Abe returned to office, an advisory panel for Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda of the Democratic Party of Japan proposed that Japan play a more active role in regional security.

Noda’s panel called on Japan to deepen security cooperation with the United States and other countries espousing common values and to

4 NATO Newsroom, “NATO and Japan Sign Cooperation Accord to Deepen Partnership, Discuss Ukraine Crisis,” 6 May 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_109508.htm (accessed 5 October 2014).

5 Abe’s speech at the North Atlantic Council, see note 3.

establish stronger networks with them. Enhancing security cooperation, though, first requires a fuller recognition of Japan as a valuable partner in Asia. The panel's report also recommended that Japan expand channels of security cooperation by revising outdated institutions and practices, including the interpretation of the right to collective self-defense. It stated that Japan should seek to fulfill a leading role in "international rule-making processes that involve developed and emerging countries," particularly in Asia and the Pacific, in such diverse fields as security, the environment, economics, space, and the sea.⁶ The document represents the consensus opinion of the Japanese foreign and security policy community, and its recommendations have much in common with those being made by the supporters and advisors of Abe's conservative cabinet. It should come as no surprise then that in May 2014, Japan and NATO agreed to an "Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme" covering seven areas of closer security cooperation, including cyber defense, HA/DR, maritime security and counter-piracy operations, and a comprehensive approach to conflict management.⁷ Japan hopes NATO will share its knowhow in tackling these policy agendas and is especially eager to learn from NATO's experience in implementing a comprehensive approach to conflict management.

The National Security Strategy issued by the Japanese government in December 2013 is centered on a policy of making a "proactive contribution to peace" based on the principle of international cooperation.⁸ This entails strengthening cooperation with countries sharing universal values to resolve global issues. One such potential area of cooperation would be participating in a multilateral nation-building effort for fragile or failed states, such as the role played by NATO in Iraq and Afghanistan under its comprehensive approach.

6 Frontier Subcommittee, "Toward a 'Country of Co-Creation' which Generates New Value by Manifesting and Creatively Linking Various Strengths" (tentative translation), 6 July 2012, p. 4, http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/npu/policy04/pdf/20120706/en_hokoku_gaiyo1.pdf (accessed 13 October 2014).

7 *Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme between Japan and NATO*, 6 May 2014, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_05/20140507_140507-IPCP_Japan.pdf (accessed 5 October 2014).

8 Government of Japan, *National Security Strategy* (provisional translation), 17 December 2013, <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/131217/anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf> (accessed 5 October 2014).

In this context, NATO is a great mentor and partner for Japan, which can learn much from the reconstruction assistance NATO has undertaken to date. NATO's cooperation with Asian partners, furthermore, could set the stage for the building of a regional security architecture in the future.

Managing Japan's proactive contribution to peace

Addressing Chinese and South Korean suspicions

Prime Minister Abe's vow to make proactive contributions to peace was welcomed by former NATO Secretary General Rasmussen, who stated, "In this time of crisis our dialogue with like-minded partners like Japan is key to address global security challenges" in both the Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific regions.⁹ US President Barack Obama also thanked Abe for his "exceptional commitment to our alliance," telling Abe, "Under your leadership, Japan is also looking to make even greater contributions to peace and security around the world, which the United States very much welcomes."¹⁰ And at the Japan-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Commemorative Summit on 14 December 2013, ASEAN leaders affirmed in their joint statement that they looked forward to Japan's "proactive contribution to peace" for the stability and development of the region.¹¹

This proactive posture may be welcomed by some countries, but Japan's neighbours have reacted quite differently. China still points to Japan's aggression in the 1930s, and Republic of Korea (ROK) has negative memories of Imperial Japan's colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945. China has questioned the new security policy. In its 18 December 2013 editorial, the *China Daily* warned against Abe's "proactive pacifism,"

9 NATO Newsroom, *op. cit.*

10 US White House Press Brief, "Joint Press Conference with President Obama and Prime Minister Abe of Japan," 24 April 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/24/joint-press-conference-president-obama-and-prime-minister-abe-japan> (accessed 5 October 2014).

11 Joint Statement of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit, "Hand in Hand, Facing Regional and Global Challenges," 14 December 2013, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000022451.pdf> (accessed 5 October 2014).

asserting that “the catchy but vague expression” is “Abe’s camouflage to woo international understanding of Japan’s move to become a military power.”¹² The *China Daily* also pointed out that Abe’s doctrine seeks to turn Japan’s Self-Defense Forces into “ordinary armed forces.”

In reality, though, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) are far from “ordinary armed forces” able to take the necessary action to counter potential aggressive military actions by its neighbours.

Nevertheless, China’s concerns are shared by South Korea, another major ally of the United States in East Asia, which openly expressed its misgivings about Japan’s possible return to pre-War militarism. The Abe cabinet’s decision to change the interpretation of the Constitution was controversial, since Article 9 explicitly states that the “Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.” The 1 July 2014 cabinet decision expanded the scope of Japan’s right to self-defense to incorporate actions often seen as an exercise of the right to collective self-defense, which has been the target of a self-imposed ban over the past four decades.

The decision worried the South Korean people, since the new interpretation could, theoretically, enable the Japanese government to send troops to the Korean Peninsula in a given contingency. The day following the cabinet’s decision, the *Korea Joongang Daily* published an editorial stating, “Neighbouring countries increasingly worry about the alarming development,” although it also noted, “Japan’s exercise of collective self-defense will raise the level of the Washington-Tokyo alliance further.”¹³

South Korean anxiety has already influenced the nature of Japan-US-ROK security cooperation. At a trilateral meeting of defense ministers on 31 May 2014, Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera and South Korean National Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin agreed with then US

12 “Abe’s Three Shots at Pacifism,” editorial, *China Daily*, 18 December 2013, http://www.chinadailyasia.com/opinion/2013-12/18/content_15106729.html (accessed 27 July 2014).

13 “Japan at a Crossroads,” editorial, *Korea Joongang Daily*, 2 July 2014, <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2991448> (accessed 12 October 2014).

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to cooperate in addressing the threat of North Korean missile and nuclear development. Out of consideration for South Korean anxieties about Japan's "proactive contribution to peace" and reinterpretation of the Constitution, Onodera explained to his South Korean counterpart before the meeting, that Japan's SDF will not operate in South Korean territory without Seoul's request or permission—even after Tokyo changes its constitutional interpretation.

While claims of Japan's "resurgent militarism" are exaggerated, Japan should not underestimate the influence of negative perceptions in neighbouring countries. In fact, if not properly managed, Japan's disconnect with its neighbours could become an obstacle to implementing its policy of making a "proactive contribution to peace," particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Abe's views of history and Second World War have been criticized not only by China and South Korea but also by the US and European media. In December 2013 Abe made a surprise visit to Yasukuni Shrine, where Japanese war dead, including Class-A war criminals, are enshrined, prompting the US embassy in Tokyo to immediately release an unusual statement calling the visit "disappointing."¹⁴ Even the conservative *Wall Street Journal* criticized Abe's visit in its editorial as an offense against East Asian history and a strategic liability, hurting the ability of like-minded states to promote a peaceful, liberal regional order and giving Chinese leaders an opportunity to use the supposed specter of Japanese military resurgence as an excuse to expand their own power.¹⁵

Despite the image encouraged by China and South Korea, the Abe administration is marked more by realism than nationalism. University of Tokyo Professor Emeritus Shinichi Kitaoka, who is deputy chairman of Prime Minister Abe's advisory panel on reconstructing the legal basis for national security, is a self-restrained realist, not a conservative nationalist.

¹⁴ US Department of State, "Statement on Prime Minister Abe's December 26 Visit to Yasukuni Shrine," 26 December 2013, <http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/tp-20131226-01.html> (accessed 13 October 2014).

¹⁵ "Shinzo Abe's Yasukuni Offense: Japan's Whitewashing of History Is a Strategic Liability," *Wall Street Journal*, 26 December 2013.

And as the leader of a Tokyo Foundation project that produced a policy proposal on “Redefining Japan’s Global Strategy,” Kitaoka recommended restraining emotionalism and taking pragmatic steps to find common ground with China and South Korea.¹⁶

The Abe administration’s current security policy initiatives are not the result of emotionally charged nationalism but represent a rational and incremental development of democratic governance in Japan’s postwar security and defense policy. That said, it would not be easy to wipe away anxieties about Japan’s proactive contributions to regional security unless it engages in actual peaceful practices. Japan, therefore, needs to tackle the dual challenges of playing a larger role in providing the international public good of regional security and reducing the anxiety of worried neighbours.

ASEAN’s reaction

Anxiety over Japan’s military resurgence was not widely shared by other Asian nations, however. As previously mentioned, ASEAN leaders welcomed Abe’s “proactive contribution to peace” in a Japan-ASEAN summit meeting in Tokyo in December 2013. Most Asian players were more worried about China’s recent assertiveness on territorial and security issues. This worry was compounded by the lack of certainty in US security commitments to, and presence in, the Asia-Pacific region. Despite Obama’s repeated assurances, regional players still harbor anxieties about American detachment from the region, especially in Southeast Asia.

The Obama administration has endeavored to reassure regional allies. The former National Security Advisor Tom Donilon reconfirmed the US rebalancing policy in an April 2014 op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* after the President’s visit to Asian countries. Donilon insisted that “the rebalancing of US priorities and resources toward Asia remains the right strategy” despite the costly cancellation of President Obama’s trip to the

16 Tokyo Foundation, *Abe gaiko e no 15 no shiten* (Redefining Japan’s Global Strategy), August 2013, pp. 4–5, <http://www.tkfd.or.jp/files/doc/2013-02.pdf> (accessed 12 October 2014).

region during the US government shutdown in 2013. He added that the rebalancing policy represents a shift of resources away from the war efforts in the Middle East and Afghanistan toward the Asia-Pacific.¹⁷

However, remarks made at Georgetown University by his successor, National Security Advisor Susan Rice, made some regional players nervous. The concern centered on the suggestion that Washington would accept the concept of a new type of major power relations as proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping. As Rice stated, “when it comes to China, we seek to operationalize a new model of major power relations.” For America’s regional allies, such acceptance of the Chinese concept implied that the United States and China would respect each other’s influence over neighbouring countries, rather than uphold the sovereignty of individual countries.¹⁸ After sending this misleading message, the Obama administration has been careful not to use the same terminology as China, but Asian allies remain somewhat skeptical about the US commitment to the region. That is one reason why ASEAN welcomes Japan’s larger security role. At the same time, Asian countries do not want to become embroiled in a conflict pitting China against the Japan-US alliance.

Managing China’s Rise

The challenge

The biggest challenge for players in the Asia-Pacific region is accommodating the rise of China in a peaceful and mutually beneficial manner. In the immediate future, there is a need to prevent competing territorial claims in the East and South China Seas from escalating into a military conflict between China and such neighbours as Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Prospects for a peaceful resolution are nowhere in sight, though, despite such regional efforts as the issuance of a declaration at the ASEAN Summit

¹⁷ Tom Donilon, “Obama Is on the Right Course with the Pivot to Asia,” *Washington Post*, 20 April 2014.

¹⁸ Remarks prepared for delivery by National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice, “America’s Future in Asia,” Georgetown University, 20 November 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/21/remarks-prepared-delivery-national-security-advisor-susan-e-rice> (accessed 13 October 2014).

in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, in May 2014, calling on China and Vietnam to end their confrontation in the South China Sea and resolve their dispute peacefully.¹⁹ China has not shown any serious interest in enacting a binding code of conduct for the South China Sea with ASEAN countries despite a verbal agreement to do so.

As matters stand, the US military presence and its alliances with such players as Australia, Japan, and South Korea are expected to provide stability for the region. No one wants a military confrontation, which would have serious repercussions for the regional and world economy, as the United States, Japan, and China together account for more than 40% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and have deeply intertwined ties in trade, investment, and finance.

Accordingly, avoiding a military showdown is of critical importance for the global political and economic order. It is easy to say, in theory, that the world should not contain but engage China. But in practice, encouraging China to respect international rules and laws as a responsible player in the regional order and sending China a message to avoid any accidental military skirmishes is not easy.

At the start of the Obama administration, Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg outlined a policy of “strategic reassurance” toward the rise of China. In a speech on 24 September 2009, he explained the concept as resting on a core bargain between the United States and China: The United States and its allies must make clear that they are prepared to welcome China's rise in the global economy, he wrote, while “China must reassure the rest of the world that its development and growing global role will not come at the expense of security and well-being of others. Bolstering that bargain,” he added, “must be a priority in the US-China relationship.”²⁰

19 Philip Heijmans, “South China Sea Dispute Overshadows ASEAN Summit,” *The Diplomat*, 12 May 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/south-china-sea-dispute-overshadows-asean-summit/> (accessed 13 October 2014).

20 James B. Steinberg, “Administration's Vision of the US-China Relationship,” Keynote Address at the Center for a New American Security, Washington, DC, 24 September 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/former/steinberg/remarks/2009/169332.htm> (accessed 14 October 2014).

This strategic initiative has in many respects failed to attain its policy goal. On the contrary, the policy merely encouraged a more assertive attitude in the East and South China Seas in 2010. For example, Chinese law-enforcement patrol ships arrested many Vietnamese fishermen in disputed waters in the South China Sea in 2009 and 2010.²¹ China arrested four Japanese businessmen in China and halted rare-earth sales to Japan. This, after the Japanese government arrested a Chinese fishing boat captain who rammed his trawler into two Japanese Coast Guard patrol boats in waters near the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea in September 2010.²²

The failure of the “strategic reassurance” policy hardened the Obama administration’s policy toward China. At the ASEAN Regional Forum meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam, on 23 July 2010, then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, “the United States has a national interest in freedom of navigation, open access to Asia’s maritime commons, and respect for international law in the South China Sea.” She also stated that the United States opposed the use or threat of force by any claimant in the South China Sea and supported multilateral talks on the issue.²³ The speech was regarded as the beginning of the Obama administration’s shift in 2011 from a “strategic reassurance” to a “rebalancing” policy toward the rise of China.

This policy still falls within the engagement paradigm and does not signal a shift to a potentially more hostile containment strategy. The more the Obama administration confirms its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, though, the more China senses the hostility of the US rebalancing policy and is inclined to regard the Japan-US alliance as an impediment to the pursuit of its national interests. The Communist Party of China draws its legitimacy from its victory against Japanese militarism in the 1940s, and as such, Chinese leaders simply cannot be seen to be publically

21 Vaudine England, “Why Are South China Sea Tensions Rising?” *BBC News*, 3 September 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11152948> (accessed 14 October 2014).

22 Ian Johnson, “China Arrests Four Japanese amid Tensions,” *New York Times*, 23 September 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/24/world/asia/24chinajapan.html> (accessed 14 October 2104).

23 Remarks by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Hanoi, Vietnam, 23 July 2010, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2010/07/20100723164658su0.4912989.html#axzz3G4qgQZuv> (accessed 14 Oct 2014).

compromising on Japan or on the Japan-US alliance. The rise of the country's economy and military is an energizing source of national pride for the Chinese population, often offsetting the frustration people feel over the socioeconomic contradictions inherent in their one-party political system.

In general, the Japan-US policymaking community's strategic consensus toward the rise of China is to use a combination of cooperative engagement, balancing, and hedging. "Cooperative engagement" means building and maintaining economic and diplomatic ties with China. "Balancing" means creating a favorable balance of power to influence Chinese behavior. "Hedging" means maintaining a regional military presence and close alliance management in case China emerges as a challenger to US leadership.²⁴

Engagement would weaken should the United States and Japan enhance their military capabilities as a hedge against the rapid modernization of Chinese forces in such areas as A2AD (anti-access and area-denial). In the past, "a cork in the bottle" theory was used as an effective tool to assure China that the Japan-US alliance framework would act to contain the resurgence of Japanese militarism. In October 1971, Henry Kissinger, then National Security Advisor to President Richard Nixon, persuaded Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai that US control of Japan within the alliance framework would be more in line with China's security interests than setting Japan free.²⁵ China could be persuaded with such logic at the time partly because it saw the Soviet Union as a more serious threat. Now, many East Asian security experts are predicting a rivalry between the United States and China for regional dominance.

China senses it can no longer count on the United States to suppress Japan's regional security role, as there has been an incremental expansion in areas of Japan-US cooperation, such as through the drafting of the

24 Tsuneo Watanabe, "US Engagement Policy toward China: Realism, Liberalism, and Pragmatism," *Journal of Contemporary China Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 31 January 2014, published by the Institute of Contemporary Chinese Studies, Waseda University. The article can be accessed on the Tokyo Foundation website, <http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/articles/2014/us-engagement-policy-toward-china> (accessed 14 October 2014).

25 Henry Kissinger, *White House Years*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1979, p. 1089.

Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation in 1997. This worried the Chinese leaders, who wondered whether the Guidelines might apply to contingencies across the Taiwan Strait. China is also concerned with the ongoing revisions to Japan-US security arrangements, which are expected to expand the areas and degrees of security cooperation following the 1 July 2014 Japanese cabinet decision outlining a new interpretation of the Constitution.

Using NATO to reassure China

In this context, Japan and the United States cannot stop working closely together, as they need to deter potential aggressions by an unstable North Korea and to keep China's assertiveness in check. A multilateral security architecture could potentially be built in the region obliging all players, including China, the United States, and Japan, to adhere to common rules and laws. ASEAN, the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+), the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the East Asia Summit are some of the potential forums for such a regional security mechanism. There are limitations, however; China's recent behavior suggests that it has little respect for multilateral frameworks. China is instead seeking a grand bargain: a power-sharing arrangement with the United States that would enable it to circumvent a full commitment to multilateral cooperation.

An imperative for the Asia-Pacific region and the world, then, would be not to just advance cooperative engagement with China but to induce the country to become a cooperative and rule-abiding player—to the benefit of economic ties and regional stability. NATO's European member states are already important players engaged in trade and other economic activities in the Asia-Pacific region. In this context, NATO could become a key factor in inducing China to cooperate within existing or new regional security frameworks drawing lessons from the European experience. Advancing security cooperation in the region with NATO would greatly contribute to building confidence among East Asia players, as NATO has a solid track record in improving the European security environment over many

decades. The fact that NATO's major European members have not been involved in a serious conflict with China or South Korea over the past half century would give greater legitimacy to Japan's security contributions. NATO also has an important lesson for Asia, having overcome historical animosities and negative war memories to create and manage a cooperative multilateral security architecture. The Chinese are additionally far less suspicious of NATO's European allies, who are also critically important economic partners for China.

That is why for Japan cooperating with NATO is a safer and more effective approach to making a proactive contribution to regional peace, as this would be less provocative for China and other neighbours. Security cooperation with NATO and, if possible, South Korea would greatly facilitate Japan's participation in a regional security initiative.

Japan and NATO: Managing expectations

Common Elements in Japan's Cooperation with NATO and ASEAN

In May 2014, Japan and NATO signed the "Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme" whose priority areas for cooperation include the following:

1. Cooperation and sharing lessons learned from cyber defense;
2. Cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR);
3. Counter terrorism;
4. Disarmament, in particular related to small arms and light weapons, arms control, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery;
5. Maritime security, especially counter piracy;
6. Comprehensive approach to conflict management;
7. Defense science and technology.

None of these items are highly sensitive for China or elicit anxiety over a resurgence of Japan's militarism. In addition, the Japan-NATO agenda

overlaps those of the Japan-ASEAN security cooperation agenda, outlined in the joint statement of Japanese and ASEAN leaders at the summit meeting in Tokyo on 14 December 2013, as follows:²⁶

1. Maritime security and cooperation;
2. Free and safe maritime navigation and aviation;
3. Korean Peninsula;
4. Global economy;
5. A society in which all women shine;
6. Societal issues;
7. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), post-2015 development agenda;
8. Climate change;
9. HA/DR;
10. Sustainable utilization and management of water and natural resources and environmental protection;
11. Transnational threats;
12. Middle East;
13. United Nations (UN) reform.

Japan and the two regional multilateral frameworks clearly seek to achieve similar policy goals. NATO and ASEAN thus have considerable room for cooperation in addressing such issues as maritime security, cybersecurity, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. They could very well create a cooperation framework addressing such urgent security issues without causing alarm to any regional actor.

HA/DR as an initial area of cooperation

Abe's "proactive contribution to peace" has been well received by

26 Joint Statement of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit, "Hand in Hand, Facing Regional and Global Challenges," 14 December 2014, <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-statement-communiques/item/hand-in-hand-facing-regional-and-global-challenges> (accessed 13 October 2014).

NATO, the United States, and ASEAN. The next step would be creating a framework for implementation by identifying priorities for effective cooperation. A prime candidate would be humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, an issue that has few obstacles and yet requires an urgent response. It is an area that lends itself naturally to a cooperative framework involving NATO and partner countries like Japan and South Korea.

The SDF have extensive expertise and capabilities in HA/DR owing to Japan's frequent earthquakes, typhoons, and other natural disasters. The joint operations with US forces in the wake of the March 2011 Great East Japan earthquake elevated HA/DR cooperation into a new mission for Japan and the United States. The Japan-US "two plus two" Security Consultative Committee agreed to promote multilateral cooperation in HA/DR through joint exercises and mutual logistics support. The two sides also concurred on the importance of establishing a regional HA/DR logistics hub in Japan.²⁷

HA/DR has two advantages over other issues. First, Japan can offer its experience and capabilities to NATO or the European Union (EU) in future joint operations. NATO in turn can offer to Japan and other regional states the strengths of its own HA/DR legacy, including the multinational cooperation facilitated through the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center (EADRCC). Second, HA/DR is an area in which cooperation with even China would be possible, unlike other traditional military missions. If China participates in the framework, it would promote confidence-building and provide reassurance to other players in the region. China has, in the past, accepted SDF rescue teams on Chinese soil, such as following the May 2008 Sichuan earthquake, although the rescue workers were dispatched using a private charter flight rather than SDF aircraft out of consideration for Chinese sensitivity to the deployment of Japan's

27 Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee by Secretary of State Clinton, Secretary of Defense Gates, Minister for Foreign Affairs Matsumoto, and Minister of Defense Kitazawa, "Toward a Deeper and Broader US-Japan Alliance: Building on 50 Years of Partnership," 21 June 2011, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/pdfs/joint1106_01.pdf (accessed 14 October 2014).

defense personnel.²⁸

In 2011, the Tokyo Foundation issued a policy proposal on “Japan’s Security Strategy toward China” calling for the formation of “a resilient habit of cooperation capability” in an effort to deepen interdependence.²⁹ Discussions on HA/DR cooperation have already been advanced in the ASEAN Regional Forum following the Sumatra earthquake and tsunami of 2004.

Comprehensive approach to crisis management

One thing that Japan hopes to learn from NATO through cooperation with the organization is its comprehensive approach to conflict management. For example, the National Security Strategy (NSS) issued by the Abe government in December 2013 proposed that Japan will develop a new system of seamless assistance to potential recipients in security-related areas through the strategic utilization of official development assistance and capacity building support, as well as coordination with nongovernmental organizations. In addition, the NSS announced Japan’s intentions to engage in the training of peacebuilding experts and peacekeeping operations personnel in various countries, adding that Japan will consult closely with countries and organizations that have experience in such engagement, including the United States, Australia, and European countries.³⁰

At the time of writing, the Abe administration is drafting a revision to the ODA Charter that outlines Japan’s desire to play a larger security assistance role with global actors in a comprehensive manner. It is not yet clear how much the ODA Charter will be revised, but there is no doubt that Japan will benefit through closer cooperation with NATO, which has been offering assistance in a comprehensive manner to both military

28 “Memories That Still Linger,” *Japan Times*, 1 June 2008.

29 Tokyo Foundation, “Japan’s Security Strategy toward China: Integration, Balancing, and Deterrence in the Era of Power Shift” (policy proposal), October 2011, p. 45.

30 Government of Japan, National Security Strategy, pp. 30–31.

and civilian organizations, such as in the western Balkans, Afghanistan, and Libya.

Conclusion

Discussions on a security cooperation framework between Japan and NATO began at the Track 2 (nongovernmental) level a few years before the Japanese government and NATO officially agreed on the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme in May 2014. The Tokyo Foundation and the German think tank, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung have been engaged in Track 1.5 dialogue over the past few years. Such discussions among Japanese and NATO security experts suggest that the above-mentioned security cooperation agenda would have great benefits for both sides. Participants in an open conference hosted by the Tokyo Foundation in July 2012, for example, agreed that common global challenges like terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and piracy should also be addressed by deepening the partnership between Japan and NATO.³¹

NATO would thus be a great partner for the Asia-Pacific region. NATO would provide legitimacy for Japan as a proactive contributor to peace. It would, likewise, help build confidence in the region owing to the Alliance's record of de-nationalizing and "de-emotionalizing" defense policy in Europe and surviving a difficult struggle with the Soviet Union through a combination of engagement and hedging. NATO's cooperation in building the Asian security architecture would not alarm China or other Asian countries. China would be less nervous about NATO's engagement, given its geographical and political distance from the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, major NATO members, such as Germany, France, Britain, and Canada, have close economic ties with China. Since NATO is a military alliance involving the United States, troubled Chinese neighbours like Japan and the Philippines would also be assured.

31 "NATO in a Changing World: Implications for Japan," experts' meeting and open forum co-organized by the Tokyo Foundation and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, <http://www.kas.de/japan/en/events/51899/> (accessed 13 October 2014).

NATO and Asian partners should seek to create a multilateral and multilayered Asian regional security architecture in which China could ultimately play an active role. China is not comfortable following the rules drafted by ASEAN countries, which are much smaller and weaker economically and militarily. Neither is China comfortable conceding to demands from the United States and Japan, which it regards as potential rivals. Although the United States is a NATO member, China is likely to respect NATO initiatives if they are well implemented and carefully coordinated with other members, the EU, ASEAN countries, and US allies in the region. Such a coordination process would be a big challenge for NATO, representing a new mission for the organization. But if successful, it would become another great achievement that serves the economic and security interests of all member and partner countries.

Understanding South Korea's Security Concerns: Analysis of NATO's Partnership with the Republic of Korea

Geunwook Lee

Introduction

The world entered a new era after the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union replaced the bipolar world with a unipolar American-led one. But peace did not last long, and the 9/11 attacks propelled the US invasions into Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). The Bush administration chose to hunt down terrorists in the Middle East. However, the administration of Barack Obama has shifted America's strategic focus to Asia.

Against this backdrop, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) engaged in a new mission. It deployed troops to Afghanistan – International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) – and continues to play a crucial role in attempting to stabilize the country as part of its Resolute Support Mission. All the while, the Atlantic Alliance has pursued cooperation with four like-minded Asia-Pacific Partners (Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Japan). Joint Political Declarations have been signed with Australia (2012) and Japan (2013), coupled with the establishment of Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programmes with New Zealand (2012) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in 2012.

Although the Republic of Korea (ROK) and NATO share the same values and are dedicated to producing – rather than consuming – security as demonstrated in Afghanistan, South Korea does not expect NATO to guarantee its own security. This raises the question of how NATO might contribute to addressing South Korea's main security concerns in the twenty-first century. To explore answers to this question, this chapter begins with a survey of the ROK's various regional security concerns, each of which gives

rise to complex policy dilemmas that impede an easily-identifiable formula for remedial action. It concludes with some thoughts on how NATO might fit into the equation from Seoul's perspective.

The ROK's Security Concerns: Threats and Uncertainty

China: Crucial Market, Bridge to Pyongyang, yet Potential Security Threat

For over three decades, the Chinese economy has advanced exceptionally rapidly. Some estimates predict that China will become the largest economy – soon surpassing that of the United States.¹ This economic growth is seen as a double-edged sword. Shanghai provides huge market opportunities for traders and bankers, while Beijing's political power presents serious challenges for diplomats and military strategists. This duality resonates especially within South Korea, which complicates Seoul's policy choices.

On the one hand, South Korea recognizes the advantage of China's rise in the pursuit of its own national interests – strategic stability in East Asia, economic prosperity in the future, denuclearization of North Korea, and an ultimate unification of the Korean peninsula. In terms of trade, China already is the ROK's largest partner. Recent statistics illustrate China's significance. In 2012, the ROK's total exports reached \$547,870 million (all figures measured in United States [US] Dollars and sourced below) and its imports were \$519,584 million. Exports to China amounted to \$134,323 million (24.5%), and imports to \$80,785 million (16%). By comparison, in the same year, South Korea exported \$58,525 million worth of goods to the United States (11%) and \$38,796 million to Japan (7%). It also imported goods estimated at \$43,341 million (8.3%) from the United States, and \$64,363 million (12.4%) from Japan. This trend was sustained in the following year. The ROK's exports totaled \$559,632 million, and imports \$515,586 million. Of this, exports to the Chinese

¹ C. Giles, "China Poised to Pass US as World's Leading Economic Power This Year," *The Financial Times*, 30 April 2014.

market were valued at \$145,869 million (26%), and imports at \$83,053 million (16%). **Table 3** summarizes these trends.

	Total Export	Total Import	Export to China	Import from China	Export to the US	Import from the US	Export to Japan	Import from Japan
2012	547,870	519,584	134,323	80,785	58,525	43,341	38,796	64,363
2013	559,632	515,586	145,869	83,053	62,053	41,512	34,662	60,029

Table 3. South Korea's Trade (in Millions of US Dollars)

Source: KITA (Korea International Trade Association)²

In November 2014, the ROK signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China, which strengthens trade and economic ties between Seoul and Beijing. This latest FTA with China means that South Korea has now signed a series of bilateral trade deals with the three major economies of the world – the United States, the European Union, and China. The newest FTA will further enhance trade interdependence with China and increase China's position in South Korea's business sector.

At the same time, in certain respects, South Korea values China as an important security partner. Beijing is not a political ally of Seoul, but rather a sponsor of Pyongyang. As such, China may be the only country with any strategic leverage over North Korea. China is also a signatory to the Armistice Agreement of the Korean War, along with North Korea and the United States.³ Given that the Korean War still demands a peace treaty to settle outstanding legal issues, China's agreement would be essential for the future of the Korean peninsula.

² KITA, *Korea International Trade Association*, http://stat.kita.net/top/state/main.jsp?lang_gbn=null&statid=mts (accessed 3 May 2014).

³ Surprisingly, the ROK is not a signatory to the 1953 cease-fire agreement. During the negotiating process, the ROK government demanded a strong defense commitment from the US. As such, Seoul withdrew its representatives and let the American, Chinese, and North Korean commanders sign the document.

Beijing is a permanent member of the United Nation (UN) Security Council with power of veto, which enables China to wield significant influence in the process of unification. No resolution is expected to be written against Chinese interests. Many South Koreans suspect that the bottom line for the Chinese is that a new regime in Pyongyang should not endanger the “interests of China in the Korean Peninsula” and that the ROK-US alliance ought not to extend to the northern half of the Peninsula.⁴

In this context, South Korea does not see China as an adversary, but as a potential partner for resolving the Korean question. This is not a case of jumping on the strategic bandwagon, but a decision to politically engage with a rising superpower. A strategy of military balancing against China is the last resort for South Korea.⁵

Despite the positive inclinations towards China as regards trade and Korean reunification, a rising China also presents Seoul with some concerns. This is the second part of the duality. China's weight presents an existential threat to South Korea. It was the People's Republic of China (PRC) soldiers who stopped the Allied troops from taking over North Korea in October/November 1950. China's military intervention turned the tide in the winter of 1950/51 and brought the Korean War to a stalemate. During the years of the Cold War, China provided political support to North Korea and protected Pyongyang's diplomatic interests. The Chinese provided weapons and energy for the North Koreans, competing with the Soviets for North Korea's favor. China was an ally of North Korea.

After the Cold War, Beijing was the biggest (indeed, the only) sponsor for Pyongyang; its diplomats shielded the North Koreans, who challenged the international community with nuclear provocations and ballistic missiles. In the series of talks among the six parties – China, Japan, Russia,

4 C. Harlan, “China Could Try to Block Eventual Korean Unification, Report Says,” *Washington Post*, 18 January 2013.

5 Byung-Kook Kim, “Between China, America, and North Korea: South Korea's Hedging,” in Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng (eds.) *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2008, pp. 191-217.

the United States, and two Koreas – Beijing has played a role of mediator and protected Pyongyang. It is still North Korea's ally. The friendship treaty between Beijing and Pyongyang is still alive and effective. Should things go ugly and hot on the Korean peninsula, China would likely intervene on the side of North Korea to protect the Pyongyang regime. In this regard, many South Koreans are concerned.

Japan: Potential Security Partner, albeit with Political Tensions

Seoul is ambivalent about Tokyo. Despite common interests between the two countries, South Korea and Japan have experienced heightened tension in recent years. Japan is seen as a country that should be a natural partner of South Korea, but Seoul's recent relations with Tokyo have been rocky, at best, and quite unfriendly at worst. Since 2012 in particular, South Korea's perception and criticisms of Japan's security policy demonstrate its lack of trust. On the surface, South Korea and Japan are ideally suited to be partners. They share a common cultural heritage and similar languages. Their trade relations are also solid; Japan has been one of the most important trade partners for South Korea. It was not until recently that China surfaced as the ROK's largest trading partner; prior to that, Japan had long been the second largest trading partner of South Korea after the United States. Politically, South Korea and Japan are democracies, while their neighbours such as China, North Korea, and Russia are not. South Korea and Japan both face a potentially enormous threat from a nuclear-armed North Korea as well as a rising China which, for more than a decade, has been investing in and building up its military muscle. Furthermore, Seoul and Tokyo share a common friend – Washington. With all of these relevant factors, one would expect them to be natural partners in security affairs.

Yet, the security partnership has been slow to materialize. Part of the reason is related to the ROK's perception of Japanese historical revisionism regarding Second World War and the recent reinterpretation of its constitution regarding the use of the Self Defense Forces (SDF).

The Yasukuni Shrine

The Yasukuni Shrine was founded in June 1869 in commemoration of those who had died in the service of Japan; it now lists the identities of 2.5 million people. After the Second World War, the Shrine did not include war criminals, but it began to accept them in the 1960s. It was in October 1978 that the Shrine chose to admit the highest ranking war criminals.⁶

The Yasukuni Shrine is a private place for commemorating the dead with no official links with the Japanese government. However, some Japanese Prime Ministers have paid visits and shown their respects to the fallen soldiers including Class A war criminals. Yasuhiro Nakasone visited in August 1985; Ryutaro Hashimoto paid a visit in July 1996. In August 2001, Junichiro Koizumi began his “private” annual visits to the Shrine: in April 2002, January 2003, January 2004, October 2005, and August 2006. It was Prime Minister Abe’s visit in December 2013 that sparked the current round of tensions.⁷

Comfort Women

A second bone of contention between Seoul and Tokyo is the issue of “comfort women.” Before and during the Second World War, Japan mobilized tens to hundreds of thousands of women as prostitutes, despite no official records of the Japanese government’s involvement. Most women were from occupied countries, including Korea, China, and the Philippines; many of them did not agree to “work” as prostitutes, but were coerced to do so.⁸

In August 1993, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono of the Japanese government made a statement (famously known as the Kono Statement),

6 There are 14 Class A war criminals in the Shrine.

7 H. Tabuchi, “With Shrine Visit, Leader Asserts Japan’s Track from Pacifism,” *The New York Times*, 26 December 2013.

8 Some victims were American, Dutch and Indonesian. M. Kotler, “The Comfort Women and Japan’s War on Truth,” *The New York Times*, 14 November 2014.

admitting that the Japanese Imperial Military was, “directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort states.”⁹ It stated that the Japanese Imperial Military had forced comfort women to work in military-run brothels during Second World War. Recently, the Japanese government has tried to “revise” the Kono Statement following a “more accurate investigation” reflecting the latest reports.¹⁰ In protest against Japan’s decision, Seoul recalled its ambassador from Tokyo.¹¹ In August 2015, Prime Minister Abe repeated the official repentance for the Second World War, but chose not to offer his own apology. Instead, Abe announced, “we must not let our children, grandchildren and even further generations to come, who have nothing to do with that war, be predestined to apologize,” which aggravated South Korea’s public attitude towards Tokyo.

The Right to Collective Self-Defense

A third issue arose to hinder security cooperation between South Korea and Japan – the right to collective self-defense. Japan, as a member of the UN, should be allowed to enjoy and exercise that right. However, Tokyo’s recent moves to extend its right to collective self-defense through a reinterpretation of Article 9 of the country’s constitution has raised concerns in Seoul, ever wary of a return to Japanese militarism given the experience of Second World War. Seoul’s public opinion has also been extremely “hostile” towards Tokyo’s decision to re-interpret its Constitution. All political parties, including the ruling conservatives and the opposition liberals, have criticized Japan’s action. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a public announcement, pledging to monitor the situation carefully

9 Y. Kono, *Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the Result of the Study on the Issue of “Comfort Women,”* Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 4 August 1993, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html> (accessed 28 October 2014).

10 A. Ramzy, “Japanese Newspaper Retracts Fukushima Disaster Report and Fires Editor,” *The New York Times*, 11 September 2014.

11 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Korea’s Position on Japan’s Review of the Details Leading to the Drafting of the Kono Statement*, Republic of Korea, 25 June 2014, http://www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/policy/military_prostitution_issue/government_position/res/Kono_FINAL.pdf (accessed 3 November 2014).

to ensure that Japan exercises collective self-defense while respecting Korea's sovereignty.¹² The Korean reaction stood in contrast to the US government, which welcomed Japan's new policy and estimated that it would make the US-Japan alliance ever more effective.

South Korea reaffirmed its stance when the ROK and US defense ministers met in October 2014. Seoul demanded that any military activities, including the use of the right to collective self-defense, should not be made if South Korea does not make a request or gives its consent with regard to issues affecting security on the peninsula or Seoul's national interests.¹³

* * *

Such tensions have acted as an inhibitor to robust Japanese-ROK security cooperation. In spring 2012, the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) was under negotiation between the ROK and Japan. When Seoul announced the signing of a "security information agreement" with Tokyo, the Korean public became furious over the possible "exchange of security information" with Japan. The deal was cancelled at the last moment, the South Korean Defense Minister publicly apologized, and the most powerful security advisor to the President resigned.¹⁴ As an alternative to direct bilateral cooperation, in December 2014, Seoul chose to sign a trilateral information-sharing arrangement with the United States and Japan in order to handle the evolving nuclear and missile threats from North Korea.¹⁵ The arrangement will allow South Korea and Japan to share military information, but only via the US and with Seoul's consent. Such an indirect method was intended to address the ROK's domestic resentment against direct bilateral defense collaboration with Japan.

12 S. Kim, "Seoul, Beijing Condemn Japan's Collective Defense," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, July 3, 2014.

13 Yonhap, "US-Japan's New Defense Plans Should Promote Peace in Northeast Asia: Seoul," *The Korea Herald*, 8 October 2014.

14 Y. Moon, "History Intrudes on Korea-Japan Security Cooperation," *The Stimson Center Spotlight*, July 2012, <http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/history-intrudes-on-korea-japan-security-cooperation/> (accessed 11 November 2014).

15 S.H. Song, "Korea, US, Japan Sign Military Info-Sharing Deal," *The Korea Herald*, 26 December 2014.

North Korea: An Archenemy with Nuclear Weapons and a Failed State

North Korea is the true archenemy of South Korea. It invaded the South in June 1950 and remains a fatal threat to the very existence of the ROK. For the last two decades, North Korea has been building nuclear weapons. Pyongyang's conventional strength is also superior to South Korea's. However, North Korea's overall military power has decayed significantly in recent years. The US Director of National Intelligence estimated in February 2010 that North Korea's military capability is "limited by an aging weapons inventory, reduced training, and increasing diversion of the military to infrastructure support. Inflexible leadership, corruption, low morale, and a weak logistical system also constrain the KPA [Korean People's Army] capabilities and readiness."¹⁶

Nevertheless – and notwithstanding its nuclear weapons – Pyongyang has shown its willingness and ability to use its conventional military power. In 2010, for example, North Korea demonstrated its presence twice with limited amounts of military power: in March, Pyongyang staged a sneak attack on a South Korean navy ship and killed 46 sailors; in November, North Korea bombarded a South Korean island and killed a total of 4 civilians and soldiers.

Moreover, North Korea is a failed state, presenting a different kind of threat to South Korea. At the time of writing, North Korea is ranked 29th in the index of fragile states.¹⁷ North Korea is unable to feed its people sufficiently, which could lead to the collapse of the regime and a power vacuum. In such a scenario, its weapons of mass destruction could conceivably end up in the hands of terrorists. A humanitarian disaster would inevitably arise from a lack of food and medical supplies, with uncontrolled population flows southward. Die-hard supporters of the Kim regime would likely attempt to establish regional control and start a civil war. Military

16 D. Blair, *Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence*, Office of National Intelligence, February 2010, p. 15.

17 Fragile States Index, <http://ffp.statesindex.org/> (accessed 18 December 2014).

conflicts could arise between the ROK-US Alliance and China.¹⁸

Therefore, North Korea is a classic example of a double threat. It presents a threat to South Korea with its nuclear weapons and armed forces. At the same time, North Korea is threatened with its own potential collapse with dire repercussions for the South.

The United States: Greatest Security Guarantor, yet Delicate Balance with China

Washington is Seoul's greatest ally. The military alliance has been reinforced by strong economic ties, as evidenced by the 2012 Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). Faced with the numerically superior North Korean army and its nuclear weapons, South Korea's alliance with the United States continues to be a priceless asset. Washington's military power has been Seoul's security anchor for the last six decades. The US democracy has been the beacon of the ROK's political democracy from the beginning, inspiring its political development for decades. Also, confronted by China's increasing purchasing power and economic leverage, the KORUS FTA will be a critical hedge for Seoul: South Korea balances dependence on an undemocratic and unpredictable China with secured access to the US market.

In recent years, on the other hand, South Korea and the United States have had a series of disagreements over how to deal with China. Seoul is said to "walk a delicate line between [the] US and China."¹⁹ South Korea's government believes that seeking avenues to avoid confrontation with China is imperative. The American military presence in the region deters North Korea and serves to check Chinese power, but it might also antagonize Beijing, whose market is essential for the ROK economy and whose consent is required for Korean unification.²⁰ Seoul does not want to

18 J. Dobbins, "War with China," *Survival* 54, No. 4, August/September 2012, pp. 7-24.

19 J.E. Seo, "Park Walks Delicate Line between US and China," *The Korean JoongAng Daily*, 13 November 2014.

20 S.H. Song, "Korea-US Alliance Faces Next Crucial Shift," *The Korea Herald*, 21 August 2013.

be caught in a US/Japan-China clash over territorial disputes in the East China Sea; nor does it wish to see the United States Forces Korea (USFK) mobilized to help fulfill Washington's alliance commitments to Tokyo. Many Korean analysts are concerned that Obama's commitment to the US security guarantee for Tokyo might embolden the Japanese to further challenge and provoke the Chinese, which would have counterproductive ramifications for East Asia.

Between its strategic and economic partner in Beijing and its security and political ally in Washington, Seoul has been walking a "very delicate line." A prime example is South Korea's position on missile defense (MD). For the past seven years – under conservative administrations – South Korea has stated that it would not take part in the US-led MD system. In October 2013, the Defense Minister said that the US MD system was not compatible with South Korea's security environment and that Seoul did not plan to participate in the system.²¹

Moreover, Seoul has been resisting American pressure to deploy Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) against ballistic missiles – possibly coming from China as well as from North Korea. Some Americans, such as the USFK commander, have explored possible ways to have the THAAD placed on the Korean Peninsula, but China requested South Korea to reject the system in July 2014, when Xi Jinping paid a visit to Seoul to meet President Park.²²

What Role for NATO? Past, Present, and Future

Given the complex contemporary security environment of South Korea, which is colored by its past as much as by emergent trends, it is fair to question what role NATO – the world's most powerful political-military alliance – could play in contributing to regional stability. To consider this question, it is useful first to recall the evolution of the South Korea-NATO

21 S.W. Kang, "We Don't Buy into US MD," *The Korea Times*, 16 October 2013..

22 S.W. Kang, "Summits Show Shifting ROK-US Alliance," *The Korea Times*, 12 November 2014.

relationship since the time of the Cold War.

Cold War to Present

During the Cold War, both the Atlantic Alliance and South Korea were, essentially, occupied with their own agendas and rarely interacted with each other. Some European countries participated in the Korean War, but not as part of NATO. While the US with the support of the United Kingdom had countenanced a role for NATO in the conflict, it came to nothing.²³ Furthermore, there was economic cooperation between many European countries and South Korea, but this relationship was not sanctioned by NATO.

The first real contact might be traced to Ban Ki-Moon's speech at the North Atlantic Council in December 2005.²⁴ Yoo Myeong-Whan delivered an address at the same venue in 2010. Both paid visits to the Council as ROK Foreign Minister. South Korea participated in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from 2002/03 onwards, and more recently in the Resolute Support Mission. In April 2011, Seoul announced that it would contribute \$500 million over five years in aid to Afghanistan. In September 2012, the ROK and NATO reached an agreement on an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP). It promoted political dialogue and practical cooperation in joint priority areas such as terrorism, multinational peace-support operations, and interoperability.

In November 2012, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy Dirk Brengelmann held the fifth round of annual high-level staff talks in Seoul. In April 2013, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen paid a visit to the ROK and had talks

23 Martin A. Smith, "At Arm's Length: NATO and the United Nations in the Cold War Era," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1995, pp. 56-73.

24 Ban Ki-Moon was a candidate for the UN Secretary-General and the speech was part of his campaign for the UN position. In October 2006, he was elected to the position of Secretary-General and succeeded Kofi Annan.

with the President.²⁵ In October 2014, NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow participated in the Seoul Defense Dialogue (SDD).²⁶

Beyond the Past and Present: A Future Role for NATO in the Asia-Pacific?

What does South Korea expect from the Atlantic Alliance, particularly as regards the Asia-Pacific region and the multifarious security challenges it faces there? As stated previously, Seoul does not see NATO as a direct security guarantor against external threats. The ROK does not believe that the Atlantic Alliance would come to its rescue in the case of another invasion by North Korea or if it were entangled in a conflict resulting from a Sino-US/Japanese clash over disputed islands. Instead, South Korea is interested in NATO for different reasons.

NATO as a Model of Multilateral Security Governance

First, the Atlantic Alliance might share its experience and expertise in building and managing a multilateral security institution where members assure each other and mitigate the security dilemma. NATO would need to be willing to provide assistance to East Asian nations to manage their own security concerns in a more collaborative and multilateral way.

NATO has secured peace and stability in Europe, despite pessimistic predictions during and at the end of the Cold War. Germany reunited, but its neighbours were not seriously worried. This was made possible because NATO helped the states in the region to build mutual trust by providing a forum for dialogue. In East Asia, a multilateral security institution might play the role that the Atlantic Alliance has played in Europe. It might enable Seoul to engage Tokyo; for example, a trilateral dialogue among NATO, South Korea, and Japan would be a wonderful venue to share the European

25 NATO, *NATO Cooperation with the Republic of Korea*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 22 April 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50098.htm (accessed 17 November 2014).

26 For the transcript see: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_114268.htm.

experience. Also, a multilateral institution in East Asia would facilitate a peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula. NATO's role in the German unification process is priceless in this regard. Nations in East Asia could, and should, leverage this expertise. The East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) should develop into security institutions in Asia.

Second, the ROK needs to learn from NATO's operations in Afghanistan. Some believe that a complete pacification and stability of that country would have required 263,000 to 405,000 soldiers, even under the most optimistic of circumstances.²⁷ In this respect, NATO's experience in Afghanistan would be precious for South Korea in order to avoid the same mistakes: in the case of "North Korean Contingency" (a collapse of North Korea's regime), South Korea would have a huge responsibility to handle the situation and pacify a failed state with 30 million people.

Conclusion: Brussels and Seoul – A Better Tomorrow

The ROK is a new partner for NATO and will be a valuable asset for the Atlantic Alliance. South Korea is a healthy democracy with a flourishing economy. However, its security concerns are complex and require careful understanding by all partners alike. China is a potential threat, but Beijing is a critical partner for Seoul's business interests and its prospects for national unification. Japan could be a natural partner. However, Seoul will not cooperate with Tokyo as long as the Japanese leadership continues to deny the country's Second World War legacy. North Korea continues to present a nuclear and conventional challenge, and its collapse would unleash untold security and humanitarian challenges. The United States provides the security guarantee that has been the geopolitical foundation for Seoul's economic growth and political development. A fear of South Korea's entrapment in a Sino-US/Japanese clash, however, remains real.

27 Br. Bennett and J. Lind, "The Collapse of North Korea: Military Missions and Requirements," *International Security* 36, No. 2, Fall 2011, pp. 84-119.

Short of a direct intervention in defense of South Korea, Seoul identifies a role for NATO in the region in different respects. It hopes that NATO can share its experience in building and managing multilateral security institutions for mitigating uncertainty and handling strategic risks associated with addressing unresolved legacies of the past. And it hopes that NATO can share its expertise and lessons learned from Afghanistan and elsewhere, in stabilizing and contributing to the rebuilding of failed and fragile states. To do so would be in the interests of both parties, as a lasting contribution to international peace and security.

NATO and the Asia-Pacific: Perspectives from Singapore

Yee-Kuang Heng

Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has maintained thus far a relatively low profile in the Asia-Pacific region. This means that it might not necessarily figure highly or be taken much into account by regional defence planners strategizing and making their best bets about security providers. It is a safe assumption that Allied Command Operations (ACO) is not particularly on the urgent to-call list when pressing security challenges flare up and have to be managed in the Asia-Pacific. Realistically, this is the base from which NATO has to depart if it is to seriously consider re-balancing towards a region that remains more accustomed to bilateral security arrangements or even non-alignment. The closest formal military arrangements in the region that are even remotely comparable to NATO would be the Five Power Defence Arrangements in South-East Asia, and other existing United States (US) bilateral treaty agreements with Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Thailand. Notwithstanding the lack of NATO visibility and comparable institutional structures, perhaps what is more pertinent about the ways in which NATO can contribute to Asia-Pacific security really depends on which NATO one is talking about: the Cold War NATO set up as a collective defence mechanism against a clearly defined external threat, or the post-Cold War NATO that is, as then Secretary General Anders Rasmussen said in 2009, about “managing risk.”¹

This chapter suggests that it is the latter version of NATO that has more to offer Asia, in terms of the focus on addressing shared trans-

1 A. Rasmussen, *Speech at Lloyds of London*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1 October 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_57785.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed 9 April 2014).

boundary security risks that have become more elusive and ambiguous such as cybersecurity, terrorism, and climate change. The original version of NATO, while less relevant to the disparate collective threat perceptions amongst Asian countries, does however still have benefits to offer, not least from shared common interests in functional defence cooperation as explained in the final section of this paper. Sharing a broad perspective on security, Singapore could potentially hold the key as a “connector hub” for NATO to plug more deeply into the region’s fluid and still-evolving security architecture.

Singapore’s Starting Assumption

In order to understand how Singapore might perceive any NATO re-balancing as part of the broader US/Western refocus on Asia, one needs to first understand the country’s basic foreign and security policy footing, vis-à-vis major powers and extra-regional actors. Any reading of Singapore’s security policies cannot avoid its acute sense of vulnerability, driven by various factors ranging from its small size, history and geopolitical context. For founding Prime Minister (PM) Lee Kuan Yew, the island’s vulnerability was not just an “obsession,” it was also synonymous with the “inescapable, permanent condition of Singapore as an independent republic.”² Third-generation PM Lee Hsien Loong reiterated the same points in 2011: “We will always be vulnerable, always a small country with an open economy, having to hold our own against larger countries, having to live by our hard work and our wits.”³ Such views are pervasively held, at least in the public statements in the discourse adopted by its leaders. Former Senior Minister Shunmugam Jayakumar reminded his diplomats that “for all our success and growth, we will always remain a small state, and vulnerability is an inherent condition of all small states.”⁴ Likening the arena of international relations to a “jungle with animals of different sizes,” Foreign Minister K.

2 F.K. Han et al., *Lee Kuan Yew: Hard Truths to Keep Singapore Going*, Singapore Straits Times Press, 2011, pp.9-10.

3 Speech at People’s Action Party Youth Wing 25th Anniversary Rally, Singapore, 17 April 2011.

4 S. Jayakumar, Speech at the launch of *Diplomacy: a Singapore Experience*, Singapore, 09 June 2011.

Shanmugam has stated: “The smaller you are, the more likely you’ll be eaten up. The bigger you are and the fiercer you are, more likely you will survive and the biggest and fiercest are usually the kings.”⁵

These concerns about Singapore’s vulnerability and maximising its chances of survival are not just rhetorical; they have also translated into a foreign policy outlook and initiatives broadly based on what theorists might term balance of power calculations. As Lee Kuan Yew again pointed out, “As a small country, we are mindful that we need a balance ... there should be as many powers with an interest in the region to maintain a balance and to make sure that no one power dominates the region.”⁶ This basic stance has manifested itself in several diplomatic engagements, such as support for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Plus (ASEAN+) framework to include major powers such as China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. In the military field, Singapore’s Changi Naval Base has welcomed not just US Navy aircraft carriers. It has also hosted Chinese People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) destroyers as the well as the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) destroyers en route to counter-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden. This history of welcoming as many major powers as possible to engage in the region suggests that in theory, Singapore could welcome a more visible and high-profile role for Euro-Atlantic partners like NATO in regional security matters. Singapore is already part of the Five Power Defence Agreement with the United Kingdom (UK) (also involving Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand). Thus far, however, Singapore’s main security partner has been the United States.

Formally, Singapore is not a treaty ally of the US. However, it is a “strategic partner” and some analysts might even go so far as to claim it is a “quasi-ally.”⁷ There is some justification for such claims. Singapore hosts

5 Cited in T. Fong, “Top Litigator, Now Top Diplomat,” *Today*, 21 May 2011, <http://www.todayonline.com/Singapore/EDC110521-0000312/Top-litigator-and-now-Spores-top-diplomat> (accessed 1 June 2011).

6 Cited in W.K Kwan, “Better To Have A Broader Balance of Power in Asia,” *Straits Times*, 21 May 2010.

7 W. Overholt, *Asia, America and the Transformation of Geopolitics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 265.

COMLOG WESTPAC (Commander Logistics Group Western Pacific), a logistics unit of the US 7th Fleet. The US-Singapore Strategic Partnership Dialogue, launched in 2012, is also a sign of the countries' close security and defence relationship. The Singapore Armed Forces also operates advanced US military hardware such as Boeing F-15SG warplanes and the venerable F-16, as well as Apache Longbow attack helicopters. Singapore's Changi Naval Base hosts the new US Navy Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) on rotation, the first of which was the USS Freedom in April 2013. USS Forth Worth arrived in 2014. In this regard, the island-nation has played an important role in the Obama administration's execution of the military aspects of the US rebalance to Asia. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said that: "We fundamentally think it's good that America is interested in Asia and in the Asia-Pacific region and that their presence since the Second World War has been a tremendous benign influence. It's generated peace, stability, predictability and enabled all the countries to prosper [sic]."⁸

At the same time, it is important to note that Singapore is often referred to as one of NATO's valued partners, having worked closely with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, contributing seven years of deployments in Afghanistan. The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) operated with Dutch forces in Uruzgan province and, since 2007, have deployed high-end sophisticated niche capabilities such as UAV imagery teams; artillery trainers; engineers and medics; and artillery hunting radar. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong accepted the invitation to attend the NATO Summit in Chicago in 2012, although Singaporean officials do not regularly attend Alliance meetings.

However, the Singapore government has also demonstrated some caution in its publicly stated position on the United States re-balance to Asia. Foreign Minister K. Shanmugam has warned against any zero-sum anti-China attitude in a region that is "big enough to accommodate a rising

8 H.L. Lee, "GPS with Fareed Zakaria," *CNN News*, 6 February 2012, <http://www.cnnasiapacific.com/press/en/content/768/>, accessed 9 April 2014.

China and a reinvigorated United States.”⁹ As a small state acutely conscious of its vulnerability, Singapore does not want to get “caught between the competing interests” of major powers.¹⁰ Tiny Singapore has to constantly be engaged in a balancing game to avoid its interests being compromised by the major powers striking deals and bargains over its head. Within South-East Asia, the Philippines and Thailand are designated Major Non-NATO Allies (MNNA) by the US. Singapore was reportedly approached in 2003 to welcome the same status yet declined, ostensibly out of concerns about alienating countries in the region, such as China, as well as neighbouring Indonesia and Malaysia. A 2009 report by a US think tank, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, again suggested including Singapore in this list of MNNA, yet at the time of writing so far it has declined any such invitation.

Limitations of Cold War NATO’s Relevance vis-à-vis the Asia-Pacific Region

While Singapore has clearly not been averse to cooperating with NATO, the Asia-Pacific region as a whole lacks the same level of formal institutional integration or core values such as democratic governance and shared cultural norms, compared to the Euro-Atlantic area. ASEAN, for instance, is far from being the region’s equivalent to the European Union (EU). Despite talk of an “ASEAN Way,” mechanisms to manage conflict and security in the region have some way to go before they reach EU and NATO levels of predictability and formal institutionalization. Several reasons for this include the greater diversity of cultures and histories, divergent strategic interests, as well as long maritime boundaries in Asia that supposedly hamper the development of shared norms, values, culture and interchange compared to more contiguous land borders in Europe. Whether bodies of water serve as a barrier or a medium for trade and interchange remains an

9 K. Shanmugam, Keynote Opening Speech at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Singapore conference, Washington DC, 08 February 2012, http://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/overseasmission/washington/newsroom/press_statements/2012/201202/press_20120208_04.html, accessed 08 April 2014.

10 Cited in M. Richardson, “US Lays out Asia-Pacific plans,” *Japan Times*, 24 November 2011.

open question. The alphabet soup of regional meetings and frameworks aside, perhaps even more significant is the diversity of threat perceptions in the region. This stands in contrast to the “NATO in the Cold War,” which was set up against a clearly defined external threat, the Soviet Union, the vestiges of which it has perhaps now rediscovered post-Crimea.

Much of the Asia-Pacific region by contrast does not want to be explicitly seen as “containing” or “balancing” against a rising China. This is clear from the statements put forth by Singapore and most, if not all, ASEAN states. Even the Philippines, which is most actively involved in disputes with China, tried to play down such concerns when it signed a 10-year defence agreement with the US in 2014. Lourdes Yparaguirre, Philippine ambassador to Austria and a member of the negotiating panel which worked on the deal for eight months, insisted that “China was never discussed in the negotiations. We don’t aim to contain or confront anyone.”¹¹ Likewise, in the tiny city-state of Singapore, acutely conscious of its strategic vulnerability since its independence, the reluctance to pinpoint a defined external threat is clearly reflected in the analogy often used by its Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong: “Everybody here would like to benefit from it [China’s rise] ... at the same time we would like to remain friends with all our other friends, including the US, India, and the EU. We would like to have our cake and eat it and be friends with everybody ... we want the US to have constructive and stable relations with China. That makes it easier for us. Then we don’t have to choose sides.”¹² This desire to sit on the fence is all the more striking, coming from a country commonly perceived, rightly or wrongly, to be pro-US, a quasi-US ally, and as stated earlier host of US Navy Littoral combat ships rotating through its Changi naval base: again, one of the most visible signs of the Obama rebalancing.

This strategic reticence is also why Asia-Pacific countries will essentially be careful about NATO involvement, just as they are about US rebalancing, for NATO is often seen as part of the US-led Western military order.

11 Cited in “Philippines, US Sign Landmark Defense Deal,” *The Philippine Star*, 28 April 2014.

12 H.L. Lee, “Interview,” *Washington Post*, 17 March 2013.

The worst possible outcome for many states in the region is to be seen as belonging to an anti-China Western posse, only for that posse not to come to their rescue in the event of conflict with China. In that sense, the NATO experience during the Cold War could be rather limited for the region as a defender against external threats, simply because Asian countries do not share the same level of threat perceptions that NATO countries had in the Cold War. In this regard, NATO's experience with military planning, exercises, and alliance coordination against "traditional" security challenges such as the threat of aggression from a clearly defined enemy state, might have little traction with Asia, not least because many Asian states do not want to specify this enemy in the first place. Few want to openly "balance" or keep China out. The region is historically more accustomed to bilateral security arrangements with the US (such as Thailand, Korea, Australia and Japan); the Five Powers Defence Arrangements (FPDA) with the UK (involving Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand and Great Britain); or non-aligned status like Indonesia. Previous attempts at a more expanded "formal" multilateral alliance arrangement such as the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) have failed in the past, partly due to lack of participation by regional states.

Post-Cold War NATO as Risk Manager with the Asia-Pacific Region

Rather than a collective defence mechanism vis-à-vis Russia, it is NATO's experiences in the 1990s, where it evolved into a more fluid collective security structure focused on managing risks, that can provide some useful and relevant lessons for the Asia-Pacific. Its Strategic Concepts of 1999 and 2010 have highlighted what it calls security "risks." Since the Strategic Concept is an official document that outlines NATO's enduring purpose and nature and its fundamental security tasks, it also provides an insight into how the Alliance perceives and defines its security challenges. The 1999 document in particular was "based on a broad definition of security which recognized the importance of political, economic, social

and environmental factors in addition to the defence dimension. It identified the new risks that had emerged since the end of the Cold War, which included terrorism, ethnic conflict, human rights abuses, political instability, economic fragility, and the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their means of delivery.”¹³

Describing the organization’s rationale and new mission, then NATO Secretary General Anders Rasmussen and Lloyd’s of London chairman, Lord Levine, penned an op-ed in 2009 about how “both organizations are in the business of anticipating and managing risk: Lloyd’s for the businesses and individuals that it insures across the globe and NATO for its 28 member states.”¹⁴ NATO can share and transfer its experience and expertise with managing collective security risks that are non-specific and non-geographic.

Although Asia is unlikely to welcome robust military interventions of the sort seen in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya, the security risks that concerned post-Cold War NATO (e.g. ethnic conflict, terrorism, piracy, drugs/arms nexus) are also of relevance to South-East Asian countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Cambodia. NATO tackles 21st century security challenges that have no real geographic limits and many of these challenges are faced by Asia too. NATO’s capacity-building of non-NATO states would also be of potential value in this regard. So would several institutional reforms that the Alliance has instituted.

The Emerging Security Challenges Division was created within NATO Headquarters in August 2010, to deal with a range of non-traditional global risks in a cross-cutting manner. It focused on improved *awareness* of risks, adequate *capabilities* to address them and *engagement* with partner countries (e.g. working with Allies to develop the NATO 2011 Cyber-

13 “NATO’s Second Unclassified Strategic Concept,” *NATO*, 30 May 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_56626.htm, accessed 08 April 2013.

14 Lord Levine and A. Rasmussen, “Piracy, Cyber-crime and Climate Change - Bringing NATO and Insurance Together,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 September 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/comment/6247862/Piracy-cyber-crime-and-climate-change-bringing-NATO-and-insurance-together.html>.

defence Action Plan). Capacity-building, raising awareness, and a robust methodology for the identification and assessment of risks would be of interest to pre-existing programmes, such as Singapore's Risk Assessment and Horizon-Scanning Centre based in its National Security Coordination Secretariat, which is precisely predicated on how to better manage and assess a range of risks. For a country like Singapore with its recent history of nasty surprises and "black swan" events such as infectious disease pandemics (e.g. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome [SARS]), trans-boundary haze and financial crises, the country would welcome state-of-the-art expertise in horizon-scanning and risk assessment.

Indeed, the coordinating structures and experience of NATO could provide some guidance to ASEAN states contemplating a more coordinated approach to managing a whole spectrum of risks, such as climate change and cybersecurity. NATO's experience in developing, for instance, action plans and policies on cybersecurity could be of interest to Singapore, which has set up its own National Cyber-Security Centre. Singapore is also becoming a hub for businesses concerned with cybersecurity. For instance, the company KPMG has set up a cybersecurity centre in the city-state, which is a development centre and test bed to develop cyber threat detection and incident response expertise and intellectual property rights. It will also provide programmes to train cybersecurity personnel in companies. Synergies could arguably be found with comparable initiatives and bodies highlighted in paragraphs 72 and 73 of NATO's 2014 Wales Summit Declaration.¹⁵

NATO's experience with Preventive Diplomacy in Macedonia and Kosovo might also prove fruitful in managing other regional security risks such as ethnic conflict. Pre-emptive conflict management and rebuilding peace are pressing issues in Asia's own ethno-religious conflicts such as in Southern Thailand/Philippines/Aceh/Rakine state in Myanmar.

Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) would be another

15 NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration*, 5 September 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

potential avenue for NATO to operate with partners in the region, given that the Asia-Pacific is one of the most disaster-prone areas in the world. The British Royal Navy in 2013 deployed HMS Daring and HMS Illustrious to help with relief efforts in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. NATO could conceivably employ its standing maritime components for such purposes, linking up with the new Regional Disaster Relief Coordination Centre that Singapore opened on its Changi naval base in September 2014.

In Singapore's case, its perception of security risks across a wide spectrum means a general convergence with NATO's post-Cold War experience, which can be invaluable to the tiny city-state. Its former Defence Minister Teo Chee Hean has spoken of a holistic, comprehensive view of Singapore's security challenges that are "transnational in nature and require multilateral cooperation ... Other examples of these new 360 degrees security challenges include maritime security, pandemics, non-proliferation, terrorism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief."¹⁶ Addressing senior Asia-Pacific national security officers assembled in Singapore for a networking forum in 2012, Teo also explicitly adopted the language and concepts of risk, describing what he called "the complex global risk landscape" and the dangers of inter-connectedness.¹⁷ Besides the growing complexity of Singapore's security risks, the increasing value and importance of flexible partnerships and ad hoc coalitions is also recognized by Teo: "the landscape of formal alliances had given way to a pattern of overlapping partnerships of different scopes and memberships, usually organised around areas of shared interest ... to address the new tensions."¹⁸

Singapore has traditionally steered its initiatives on global governance and multilateral institutions through the UN. However as issues and

16 C.H. Teo, "Plenary speech at the Shangri La Dialogue," 2 June 2008, Singapore, http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2008/jun/01jun08_speech.print.img.html (accessed 13 April 2013).

17 C.H. Teo, "Opening Address at the Sixth Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior National Security Officers," Singapore, 9 April 2012.

18 C.H. Teo, "Speech on Security Cooperation in Asia: Managing Alliances and Partnerships," *Shangri La Dialogue*, Singapore, 3 June 2007, http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/sp/2007/03jun07_speech.html#.VBqFyhZmPCk (accessed 14 May 2014).

challenges arise outside the formal UN framework, the country has also explored other non-UN avenues that can advance its interests. This can be seen in Singapore's founding of informal networks, such as the Global Governance Group (3G) to represent the interests of small states outside the G20, in the wake of the global financial crisis. Its participation in US-led coalition operations in Iraq, as well as NATO-led ISAF in Afghanistan, also demonstrates that it is not averse to working outside formal alliance structures. While NATO certainly remains first and foremost a formal military alliance, Singapore's pragmatic approach to developing ad hoc partnerships means it can potentially adopt a plug and play approach with NATO, based on functional cooperation on certain issues within the Asia-Pacific region.

Prospects for Functional Cooperation

Besides sharing its expertise and experience on the coordinated management of security risks such as cybersecurity, ethnic conflict, and terrorism, NATO could also enhance ties with Asia-Pacific countries by trouble-shooting and focusing on functional military themes of mutual interest that could leverage NATO expertise developed since the days of the Cold War. This functional, somewhat technocratic focus avoids the targeting of specific countries and could be appealing to countries in the region. NATO could develop a platform for joint cooperation with Singapore, expanding on existing shared interests in the military domain. The following is illustrative.

Submarine rescue is one of the first issues to come to mind - not only because Singapore has had prior engagements with NATO on this matter, but because it also possesses very specialized niche equipment and has significant interests to be advanced and protected in this context. Israel, Argentina, Chile, Singapore and Sweden were listed as observers in NATO's submarine rescue exercise in 2000 off Turkey. Singapore is also a regular participant in Exercise Pacific Reach, the Asian region's equivalent to NATO's submarine rescue Exercise Bold Monarch. Designed to enhance

rescue capabilities and build mutual trust in submarine rescue among participating navies, Pacific Reach was hosted by Singapore in 2000, and again in 2010. The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) also attends the NATO-based Submarine Escape and Rescue Working Group (SMERWG) meetings as an invited participant. Not only does it deploy a capable fleet of submarines, but Singapore operates one of the region's few specialized submarine rescue Ships, MV Swift Rescue. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) signed a Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation Arrangement with the RSN during the International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (IMDEX) in Singapore in 2013. Through sharing submarine rescue expertise, NATO can also engage with countries in the region, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, ROK and Japan, who now operate or are seeking to acquire larger, more sophisticated submarine fleets.

The Asia-Pacific, like the Euro-Atlantic, is a maritime region. Counter-piracy and maritime security are key concerns, where NATO can also help, given its past experience. In 2008, NATO deployed one of its Standing Naval Maritime Groups, composed of seven ships, to the Gulf of Aden on counter-piracy patrol. NATO member states have previously sent warships on port visits to Asia. The Alliance could build on these experiences to consider linking up more closely with pre-existing Asia-Pacific structures against piracy, such as the inter-governmental Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Centre hosted by Singapore. Singapore, for its part, has commanded CTF-151, the multinational naval group combating piracy in the Gulf of Aden, several times. Singapore's command team also collaborated with counter-piracy forces from the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR), NATO, other navies from China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea, as well as regional security authorities. Since April 2009, the SAF has deployed several Command Teams and Task Groups, comprised of amphibious landing ship docks and most recently a stealth frigate with a naval helicopter.

Singapore has also benefited from NATO training and exercises, as well as access to NATO facilities. NATO could also offer similar opportunities

for countries in the Asia-Pacific that were willing and able to do so. The following examples could be positioned as possible models for others. The Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) has participated in the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) programme since 2000. The RSAF is the first Asia-Pacific non-NATO nation to join the NFTC programme: it sends six trainee pilots and two qualified flying instructors per year for Advanced Training (Phase III) at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and Fighter-lead-in Training (Phase IV) at Cold Lake, Alberta. The Singapore Army also conducts tank exercises with the German Bundeswehr in the NATO-Bergen Training Area, codenamed Exercise Panzer Strike (XPS). Fourteen Leopard 2SG main battle tanks (MBTs) and 11 Bionix II infantry fighting vehicles participated in XPS 2013, the fifth in the series. These exercises also include live-fire exercises involving SAF's Leopard 2SG MBTs and the Bundeswehr's Leopard 2A6 MBTs. Germany's armoured vehicle technologies may also provide an inroad into the region for NATO as a whole. A total of 102 upgraded and modernised Leopard 2 tanks and 42 Marder infantry fighting vehicles were also ordered in 2013 by Indonesia. While Indonesia's tank units do not lack the training spaces that Singapore craves in Bergen, NATO could invite Indonesia to train in the Bergen training area as well, although lingering concerns about the military's human rights record in the past remain.

NATO's peace support operations doctrine could also help many ASEAN countries, such as Vietnam, who are relatively new to such operations and increasingly keen to deploy but lack doctrinal concepts. Countries in the region also engage actively in US-led multilateral exercises like Cobra Gold, Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises and Cooperation Afloat Readiness Training (CARAT), as well as the US Navy's Pacific Partnership mission (already including Japan, ROK, Malaysia and Singapore) to deliver humanitarian aid and medical services to remote parts of the region such as the South Pacific. NATO could conceivably send a NATO flotilla or aerial contingent to such exercises.

Finally, military medicine is another domain where NATO can raise its cooperative profile in the region. From 21st to 25th May 2012, the

Chiefs of NATO Military Medical Services (COMEDS) met for their 37th plenary meeting in Tel Aviv, Israel. At the invitation of Brigadier General Yitzak Kreiss, MD, Surgeon General Israel Defence Force, heads of medical services of all NATO countries, from Partnership for Peace and Mediterranean Dialogue member states, and also from Australia and Singapore attended the meeting. Within Asia, there is a similar track record of cooperation on Military Medicine as part of the “ASEAN Defence Minister Meetings Plus” (ADMM +) arrangements, which have been led by Singapore and Japan in the past. Here, NATO could also consider sending specialists on military medicine.

Conclusion

Singapore’s basic foreign policy assumptions shape its perception of long-term strategic trends and the extent to which it can or will cooperate with a NATO alliance that seeks its own “pivot” towards the Asia-Pacific region. As Lee Kuan Yew said in 2009, “small countries have little influence on international trends. We analyse the world clinically, take advantage of opportunities that come our way or get out of harm’s way.”¹⁹ This acute sense of vulnerability has translated into a foreign and security policy fundamentally predicated on ensuring as many major actors are engaged in the region as possible, in order to maintain a strategic equilibrium and ensure that the chances of its survival can be maximised.

On this premise, a greater NATO presence is no bad thing. However, given that NATO is often seen as part of the “West,” the Alliance will have to be careful to manage how its activities are perceived within the region. Furthermore, several NATO members, notably the Dutch, British, and French, have legacies of colonial rule in the region. Historical sensitivities also have to be taken into account. As stated earlier, Singapore, or for that matter many ASEAN members, will not want to be seen to be openly

19 K.Y Lee, “Speech at the US-ASEAN Business Council’s 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner,” 27 October 2009, http://www.news.gov.sg/public/sgpc/en/media_releases/agencies/mica/speech/S-20091027-1.html (accessed 30 March 2013).

aligning with any state against a rising China or other major powers.

NATO first has to consider what its own turn towards Asia is designed to achieve and what this might in fact look like in practice. It then has to realistically appraise what resources it can devote towards Asia. As this paper has argued, what matters here is which NATO will stand up: the Cold War NATO set up against a clearly defined external enemy like the Soviet Union, or the post-Cold War NATO that functions more like a collective risk manager for its members when faced with an array of ambiguous trans-boundary security risks.

In Singapore's case, given its 360 degree strategic outlook focusing on a wide spectrum of challenges, there is ample room, conceptually and practically, for cooperation with Euro-Atlantic partners on shared concerns such as cybersecurity, maritime security and strategic sea lines of communication, climate change, and terrorism. Some lessons can be drawn from Singapore's policies on the economic front. It has a long-standing policy of serving as a platform for external powers from Turkey to India seeking to make inroads into the ASEAN market: its thinkers and senior civil servants such as Peter Ho, senior advisor to the government's Centre for Strategic Futures, employ the terminology of a "connector hub" linking different regions. Singaporean leaders such as former PM Goh Chok Tong long recognised that "ASEAN must continue to enhance its external linkages" with non-ASEAN powers.²⁰ Goh has also recently cultivated links with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states in the Middle East. The question is whether Singapore can also serve as a connector hub for Euro-Atlantic partners interested in re-engaging with Asia-Pacific security? Its Changi Naval base is often presented by officials as open to all navies, not just the US. Indeed, Chinese and Japanese warships have actually docked side-by-side (coincidentally) on their way to and from counter-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden. If the "open port" notion is taken seriously, then it suggests much room for cooperation with NATO.

20 Cited in "Singapore tries to open up ASEAN," *The Age*, 9 October 2002, <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/10/08/1034061206052.html> (accessed 18 March 2010).

For its part, NATO can contribute in two major ways:

1. as a risk manager for Asian partners addressing: piracy, terrorism, WMD proliferation, preventive diplomacy, and conflict management and post-conflict resolution;
2. through functional cooperation on shared issues: military medicine, submarine rescue, maritime security, peace support operations doctrine, and training.

Much depends on NATO itself. When developing relationships with its official as well as *de facto* “global partners” in Asia, the Alliance should also clarify first what it expects from the region and what type of relationship it is trying to forge. Does the organization have sufficient political will and resources amongst all its members to focus on Asia and, perhaps most critically, where will NATO’s strategic focus be after Crimea? Given that most NATO members are actually struggling to fulfil their commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence and military budgets, it is unlikely in the near term that generous military resources will be made available for an Asian push, but that does not mean nothing can be done. At the end of the day, the most pressing question facing Asia-Pacific states is: will they see the continued emergence of a “global collective security NATO,” or a return to a more narrowly-focused “European collective defence NATO?” If it is the former, Singapore is clearly ready and able to engage.

PART 4

GREAT POWER COUNTER-BALANCE?

Russia's Pivot to China: Discerning Reality from Rhetoric

Andreas Heinemann-Grüder and Heidi Reisinger

“You are pivoting to Asia, but we’re already there” is how Russian officials like to comment on the US strategic rebalance. Against the backdrop of the strenuous relationships between Russia, the European Union (EU), United States (US) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), some Russian and Western observers claim that Russia is shifting its foreign and security policy and economic focus to China. Originally a “pivot to Asia” was announced for the US, now followed by a Russian one. While some observers highlight the follies of Russia’s turn to China, likening it to symbolic politics, others foresee a Russo-Chinese hegemony in East-Asia which would significantly contain and deter the United States. Skeptics seek consolation in the asymmetry of Russo-Chinese relations, the limited compensatory effect for Western sanctions, the recent decline in Russo-Chinese trade, and China’s stock market volatility. According to a reactive reading, Russia’s relations with China are merely a function of its frustrated rapport with the West. Without prejudice we should ask: Are there any fundamental building blocks for a potential concert of power between Russia and China, beyond the contingencies of East-West relations? Do Russia’s relations with China have substance and strategic salience; and if so, what do they represent – status seeking, multilateralism, a great power concert or an alliance of anti-Western regimes?

Russia and China share a communist legacy, nuclear power status, regional hegemonic ambitions, a state-controlled capitalist development path, and hold permanent seats in the United Nations (UN) Security Council. Both Russia and China are bound together by their interest in

authoritarian regime survival and in countering the dominance of the United States in international organizations and its global military power. Since the end of the Cold War, which also marked the end of Soviet and Chinese rivalry, Russia and China rhetorically upgraded their relations from a “constructive partnership” in 1994 to a “partnership of strategic cooperation” in 1996, and then a “comprehensive strategic partnership” in 2010. Yet, the history of distrust between China and the Soviet Union looms large. Could China and Russia be equal partners at all? Despite rhetorical declarations of goodwill, Chinese-Russian energy relations have been characterized by competition, underlying suspicion, price battles, and rivalry in Central Asia. Given the sheer size of the structural imbalance, Russia might be merely a candidate for “bandwagoning” with China, not for a balanced partnership. Russia is almost twice as large as China, but China’s population is more than nine times the size of Russia’s. China’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) tops Russia’s by a factor of 4.3 and its foreign exchange reserves exceed Russia’s by a factor of almost 44. In terms of economic might, military capabilities, and revisionist ambitions Russia and China cannot meet as equals. Authoritarian regimes tend to transfer their politics of domestic control and repression to their external behavior. Coalitions between authoritarian regimes are thus based on mutually beneficial exchanges and balancing, not on a community of values. The regime characteristics set limits for alliance formation.

The Ukraine crisis and the protests in Hong Kong in 2015 against China’s infringements on the freedom of elections led Moscow and Beijing to close ranks against democratic change—as both cases were portrayed as Washington-triggered developments to undermine Russian and Chinese power. During the twin crises in Kyiv and Hong Kong, Chinese state television portrayed Russian President Vladimir Putin as a strong leader standing up to foreign intervention.¹ Against the background of regionalist movements in Tibet and in Xinjiang, Beijing generally opposes secessionism. The annexation of Crimea, which was advertised by the Kremlin as an

1 Peter Baker, “Putin shows that he, too, can pivot toward Asia,” *International New York Times*, 10 November 2014, pp. 1 and 3.

independent regional decision, did of course stand against those principles, but Beijing failed to enforce the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances (1994) for Ukraine, which had then given up its nuclear power status in exchange for international security assurances, including from China.² Instead, China remained “neutral” in the Ukraine crisis, and tried to stay clear of the confrontation and keep trading with everybody as usual. The pattern does not add up to a Russo-Chinese alliance, but to non-infringement into the hegemonic politics of the other side – as long as one’s own interests are not negatively affected.

Russia as China’s Gas Station

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, energy relations between China and Russia have generally been marked by cooperation and assured regard for each other’s geopolitical interests. China’s fast-growing economy depends on energy imports, while Russia’s state income is based on the export of natural resources. Russian companies such as Gazprom, Soyuzneftegas and Rosneft are the largest suppliers of oil to China, while China is the main beneficiary of the Russian Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean oil pipeline. Against the backdrop of low growth rates in the European Union, financial sanctions and worsening relations with the West in general, the Russian government has been eager to increase its gas and oil exports to the fast growing energy markets in Asia, especially in China.

Europe still accounts for seventy percent of Russia’s gas and oil exports, but in 2014 both Russia and China committed themselves to a long-term gas partnership, building upon earlier gas deals between the Russian companies Rosneft and Transneft and China. After the forced disassembling of the Yukos company by the Putin administration in 2003-04, the state-owned Russian company Rosneft allegedly acquired the Yukos subsidiary Yugansneftegas with Chinese financial assistance – in exchange for Russian

2 After Russia, the US and the UK, China and France also gave Ukraine security assurances in individual statements.

promises of long-term oil delivery. If the Eastern and Western pipelines to China are actually completed, it will receive 68 billion cubic meters of Russian gas per year, thus outstripping the 40 billion cubic meters of gas currently delivered to Germany.

The \$400 billion Sino-Russian “Power of Siberia” gas deal signed in 2015, at the peak of its rift with the West over the Ukraine crisis, was a most relevant political remedy for the Kremlin to demonstrate the possibility of finding alternative partners to choose from, other than European states. Russian President Putin was literally ready to pay the price for an imperfect deal, which anyway could not offset Western sanctions, as its implementation is set to start in 2018 and to span a period of 30 years. China will not pay the same high price as the buyers in the European Union and the volume China will receive is only 25 percent of the amount of gas Gazprom currently sells to Europe. The deliveries will provide China with more than one-fifth of its present-day annual consumption. Yet, China may become Gazprom’s largest national customer and generate \$13 billion in additional annual revenue as from 2018. Russia has been obtaining loans or prepayments from China in order to explore hydrocarbon deposits in Eastern Siberia, to build pipelines, and to modernize its production facilities while avoiding the hazards or costs of transit to Europe. China is providing funds for development and transport, while Russia guarantees long-term delivery to China.

Russia’s Far East and East Siberia have been going through depopulation, deindustrialization, and general degradation, with low prospects of stable growth. Against the backdrop of China’s rapid economic growth, Putin reiterated that the socio-economic isolation of the Russian Far East represents a threat to Russia’s security. Russian politicians have repeatedly expressed concern regarding ethnic Chinese, Japanese and Korean settlement in the energy-rich but sparsely-populated Russian Far East, as well as increased Chinese investment in, and control of, Russian energy ventures. Russia’s future oil and gas must increasingly be extracted from places that are colder, deeper, and more remote. Chinese capital can assist Russian energy companies to develop these deposits, but this will require

advanced technology and qualified personnel currently found only in major Western extracting companies. The prospects for Russian gas exports to China will also be affected by global prices, surges in liquefied gas capacity, competition over Central Asian gas supplies, advances in shale gas technology, and renewable energy policies. While energy relations have primarily focused on hydrocarbons in the form of oil, gas, and coal, Russian-Chinese cooperation with regard to nuclear and renewable energy technology is far less in volume.

Apart from oil and gas exploitation and delivery, China participates in the Moscow-Kazan high-speed railway, to be completed in 2018. China and Russia are also engaged in the long-term joint development of a wide-bodied airliner, as well as in the development of a joint business incubator in Skolkovo near Moscow. However, most of these modernization initiatives, aimed at overcoming Russia's dependence on Europe's gas market and modernizing its infrastructure, will only bear fruit in years to come, if at all. Russia must broaden the trade beyond hydrocarbons, so as to include industrial and high-technology goods and attract more Asian investment in advanced technology.

Russia and China share the same frustration over the stalled reforms in international monetary institutions and the dominance of the US in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Against US objections, China decided in 2015 to fund a new multilateral bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, rather than give more money to the World Bank. The motivation to exit US- (or Japanese-) dominated international monetary institutions – instead of waiting to have a greater say in matters – also lies behind the New Development Bank established by the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). However, despite suggestions that the Russo-Chinese gas deal would be paid in rubles or in Chinese yen, the Chinese will pay for Russian gas in dollars: China prefers to use its petrodollar reserves in its energy transactions.

Russo-Chinese economic cooperation is aimed at long-term diversification of Russia's gas and oil exports, at attracting Chinese funding

for infrastructure development, and at overcoming the dependence on Western dominated international monetary institutions and the European gas markets. From a Russian perspective China is a powerful, yet politically less intrusive partner, even if the latter cannot mitigate the impact of the currently low oil and gas prices. Whether China will be the key for transforming Russia's natural resource economy into an innovative, competitive high-tech industry is largely a function of Russia's political economy (i.e. its preparedness to overcome crony capitalism and bureaucratic nepotism).

East Asia: Secondary Partnerships

Russia's economic linkages are most strongly developed with China, to a far lesser extent with the rest of East Asia. On the Korean peninsula, for example, security concerns and North Korea's erratic dictatorship have impeded Russian plans to construct a trans-Korean pipeline to ship gas directly from Russia to East Asia. North Korea has demanded excessive transit fees, while South Korea is concerned about Pyongyang's ability to disrupt the flow of gas. Russia has therefore been unable to secure substantial South Korean high-technology investment. Partnerships between Russian and Vietnamese companies account for more than a third of Vietnam's oil production. Vietgazprom, a joint company of Gazprom and PetroVietnam, is engaged in exploration activities on the continental shelf of Vietnam. From 2013 Vietgazprom has been running commercial production of gas from the Moc Tinh and Hai Thach fields. In 2009, Gazprom and PetroVietnam entered into the Agreement on Strategic Partnership envisaging cooperation in oil and gas projects in Russia, Vietnam and third countries. In 2014, Gazprom and PetroVietnam finally signed the Framework Agreement on projects for developing the Nagumanovskoye (Orenburg Region) and Severo-Purovskoye (Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area) fields in Russia. Nevertheless, Moscow is unlikely to risk relations with China in order to secure a much less economically and strategically valuable partnership with Vietnam.

Russia as the Past, China as the Future: Cooperation and Competition in Central Asia

China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan form the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which originated as the “Shanghai Five,” an initiative launched by Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1996 to settle border agreements and introduce regional security cooperation. The SCO can be seen as Russia’s first pivot to rebalance its Western-oriented foreign policy. Today the SCO, which remains a paper tiger, serves at best as a political instrument to organize relations with China and the former Soviet republics, which are sandwiched between the two and share a barely concealed aversion to NATO enlargement, as well as to democratic regime change. Russia wishes to establish an energy club among SCO members, but interests definitely clash in this respect. China and the Central Asian countries view their cooperation as a means of diversifying their energy supply. Originally, Russia was in a dominant position due to its control over pipelines. In 2007, for example, two Russian companies (TNK-BP and GazpromNeft) signed an agreement with KazTransOil to annually ship up to 5 million tons of oil to China via the Omsk-Pavlodar-Atasu-Alanshakou pipeline. The recession in Russia since 2014, however, demonstrated their vulnerability to the Central Asian countries. Particularly Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan saw a decline in oil and gas revenues, currency devaluation, and reduced gas exports to Russia, while China’s trade with the region exceeded that of Russia for the first time in 2014. Total Chinese investment in Central Asia reached \$30.5 billion between 2005 and the first half of 2014, including an extensive network of oil and gas pipelines, oil and gas exploration, power plant financing, and electric grid construction in Tajikistan. The China-Central Asia network of pipelines could supply annually up to 55 billion cubic meters of natural gas to China every year - more than half of China’s total gas imports. China is pressing for a larger role of its firms on Central Asian energy markets, thus eroding Russia’s dominant presence. China’s oil and gas partnerships with Central Asian republics have therefore been a source of dispute with Russia. Chinese energy companies want to invest in Central Asia and demand that

future deals give China's energy companies a say in the delivery of oil and gas from or through Central Asia.

China's President Xi Jinping signed an agreement with Vladimir Putin in 2014 to coordinate China's "One Belt One Road" (OBOR) initiative with the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in Central Asia. At the heart of OBOR lies the creation of an economic land belt that includes countries on the original Silk Road through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe, as well as a maritime route that links China's ports with Africa. The project aims at directing China's domestic overcapacity and capital for regional infrastructure development to improve trade and relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Central Asian and European countries. Central Asia is crucial for OBOR, because it is a significant destination for Chinese investment. Russia's influence in Central Asia may secure existing authoritarian regimes, thus meeting China's expectations to safeguard its investments. But ultimate visions diverge. Putin's anti-Western rhetoric and his intention to promote the EEU as an alternative to any European orientation are not shared by China. China and most of the Central Asian countries are not comfortable with being in confrontation with the EU, NATO or the US, nor with becoming hostages to Russia's policy of brinkmanship. China sees Central Asia with its OBOR initiative as a link to Europe. The potential competition for natural gas market share in China between Russia and Central Asia is a risk to sustaining the SCO cooperation.

Given declining European demand for natural gas, Russia is inclined to deliver gas from the West Altai route instead of from the East "Power of Siberia" route, so its surplus production in West Siberian fields could be sold, but this would be in direct competition with existing Central Asia-China gas imports. China and Russia are thus competitors over delivery routes for gas and oil, particularly over the expansion of the Prikaspiysky gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Russia and the Kazakh Atasu-Alashankou pipeline to ship oil to China. Russia's soft power, using ties that date back to the common Soviet past, still puts it in pole position in Central Asia. However, these connections are fading. But more important is that

Moscow-dominated organizations such as the newly founded Eurasian Economic Union suffer from structural imbalances and might therefore be as ineffective as their numerous predecessors, for example the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). China's way of developing bilateral ties based on trade and generous loans will increasingly supersede old Soviet bonds. In the long run the Central Asian countries have strong incentives to turn to China instead of being exclusively dependent on Russia.

Russia as China's Gun Room: Military Cooperation

China is a key purchaser and licensee of Russian military equipment, some of which has been crucial for the modernization of its army. As part of their strategic ties, Russia and China cooperate closely through arms deals and joint exercises. In this regard, Moscow's role as a partner is not only useful but necessary. Beijing doesn't share Moscow's caustic anti-Americanism, but needs Russian arms and know-how to reach military parity with the US in the Pacific by 2050.³ Russia even overcame its past reluctance to deliver up-to-date weaponry. In 2004, Russia had, for example, blocked the sale of both the Su-35 and Tupolev Tu-22M bombers to China. In 2015, China and Russia finalized the deal for the export of Russian long range S-400 missiles, which have the capability to intercept ballistic missiles and high speed aircraft. This is the largest Sino-Russian arms deal in over a decade. The 250km-range 48N6 and 120km-range 9M96E2 missiles could be used against fighters, bombers, early warning and electronic warfare aircraft, as well as cruise and ballistic missiles. The S-400 missiles would provide China with a deterrent against states like North Korea, Japan or the US.

Russia and China frequently conduct joint exercises – and not just in the vicinity of their borders. In 2015, naval exercises were even extended to the Mediterranean and the Japanese Seas. Moscow and Beijing additionally

3 Markus Wehner, "Russland sucht sein Heil im Osten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 24 May 2015, p. 11.

conducted a round of maneuvers along the coast of Russia's Primorsky Region. The scenarios of these joint maneuvers range from fighting terrorism, piracy and insurgencies, to the repulsion of external attacks, and joint offensive operations. Both sides agreed in 2015 not to conduct cyberattacks or attacks against technologies that could threaten each other's security or socio-economic stability. By pooling their efforts China and Russia are thus better placed to deter the US from projecting its military power in East Asia. Nonetheless, Sino-Russian military cooperation takes place against a backdrop of growing Chinese strength in their conventional forces that Russia seeks to keep at bay with its nuclear deterrent.

No 'Russland-Versteher' in China

The causes and effects of Russian-Chinese cooperation are manifold. Russia's "pivot to Asia" is based on its status as a petro-state while reflecting the rapid growth of energy demand in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as its own development and investment needs, which it cannot meet alone. China enters the relationship as the far stronger partner and is not likely to sacrifice its integration into the world economy and its access to Western markets and technology in the name of a "authoritarian grand alliance" with Russia. Russia's position vis-à-vis China is structurally weaker if compared to Russia's bargaining power with European energy consumers. Furthermore, Russia has no political leverage over Chinese politics if compared with the exploitable factionalism in the EU. China cooperated with the Soviet Union – in the 1950s and 1960s – from a position of weakness. The tables have been turned; nowadays Russia has to cooperate from a position without alternatives. Moscow's inferior status pertains to energy cooperation – Russia being China's gas station – and to its place in non-Western organizations, such as the SCO, the BRICS and vis-à-vis the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) compared to Beijing. As long as Russia basically remains an energy and arms supplier for China, the impact on Russia's modernization will be minimal. Russia's "pivot to China" may actually cause even more delay in its modernization.

Additionally, the pivot does not at all mirror social inclinations towards China in Russian society, which is skeptical of “China’s looming shadow” in Russia’s Far East.⁴ To borrow from the quote at the beginning of this article: why should Russians pivot, if the Chinese are already there? The Russian political elite is traditionally focused on the US, the “intelligentsia” on Paris, Berlin and London. The ordinary Russian citizen is not known to be ideologically attracted to China. Russians can be met in shops on the Champs-Élysées and on the Kurfürsten Damm. They send their children to boarding schools and universities in the UK and the US, not to China or other Russian partners in Asia, such as North Korea. Russian society, especially in Russia’s European portion, will continue to be focused on the West.

Russo-Chinese cooperation has a balancing effect, pooling the economic, political, and military resources from both non-democratic countries vis-à-vis Western countries, thus making it harder for them to exploit strains in Russian-Chinese relations, as was the case during the Cold War. The more China and other Asian countries rely on Russian energy supplies, the less willing they will be to question Moscow’s policies in international affairs, especially in the Ukraine conflict, Russia’s military intervention in Syria or in the case of authoritarian regime changes. Russia’s partners in China are interested in beneficial business deals; Russian national interests or even sensitivities about dealings with the “Lao Maozi” – the name given to Russians in China, following the stereotype of being hairy and rude – do not play a role. In contrast to Western Europe, there are no “Russland-Versteher” in China.

Optimistic outlooks on a Russo-Chinese alliance are based on mutual long-term dependence on hydrocarbons (and reasonably high global prices). Over the last 15-20 years both China and Russia succeeded in ensuring domestic acceptance of national policies due to the social and political rewards of steady and impressive growth rates, accompanied by extractive

4 Artyom Lukin, “Why the Russian Far East is so important to China,” *Huffington Post*, 12 January 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/artiom-lukin/russian-far-east-china_b_6452618.html.

and distributional power and associated with upward social mobility. Once the growth pattern is interrupted, both countries will have to face structural imbalances, bad governance and social cohesion problems. The Sino-Russo partnership is economically a one-dimensional exchange, geopolitically an ongoing rivalry over Central Asia, and militarily an assurance of non-aggression. It does not mirror a concert of powers, shared hegemonic ambitions, or a community of values.

China's Pivot West – Opportunities for Cooperative Security

Christina Lin

This paper examines the drivers behind China's "March West" across Eurasia and the High Seas to the Mediterranean. It highlights how this development presents the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with an opportunity to engage China in cooperative security on non-traditional security challenges in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region – particularly the Eastern Mediterranean – even before pivoting to Asia.¹

China's Expanding Presence in the Greater Middle East

China is moving west across the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road (aka "One Belt, One Road") [Map 4] to the Greater Middle East or MENA region.² Wang Jisi, a professor at Beijing University who once taught at the influential Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), observed in October 2012 that while the US pivots east, China should be "marching west" as a "strategic necessity for China's involvement in great power cooperation, the improvement of the international environment and the strengthening of China's competitive abilities."³ In fact, back in 2004, General Liu Yazhou, an influential "princeling" and political commissar of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) National Defense University, was already proposing that China march westward to "seize the center of the world (the Middle East)."⁴

1 Christina Lin, "China's Mediterranean Presence is An Opportunity for NATO," Atlantic Treaty Association Commentary, 5 May 2014.

2 Shannon Tiezzi, "China's New Silk Road Vision Revealed," *The Diplomat*, 9 May 2014.

3 Wang Jisi, "Marching Westwards: The Rebalancing of China's Geostrategy," Center for International and Strategic Studies, Beijing University, *International and Strategic Studies Report*, No. 73, 7 October 2012.

4 Yun Sun, "March West: China's Response to the US Rebalancing," Brookings Institution, 31 January 2013.

In a 2010 article in *Beijing Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (Beijing Contemporary International Relations), published by State Council's Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), deputy director of PLA's National Defense University Tang Yongsheng also wrote a piece expounding China's westward strategy.⁵ He argues that China, with its vast territory and rising strength, is not only a Pacific nation but also a nation of the Eurasian heartland. As such, Tang stated that China would now place importance on this westward strategy while maintaining vigilance on managing the Asia-Pacific area, in a two-pronged approach.



Map 4. China's Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road

Source: *Xinhua*, 8 May 2014

The globalization of China's economy has brought the (previously remote) MENA region much closer now, as it relates to China's national interest.⁶ For

5 Tang Yongsheng, "Actively Promoting Westward Strategy," *Beijing Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, 20 November 2010.

6 Christina Lin, "China's Strategic Shift Toward the Region of the Four Seas: The Middle Kingdom Arrives in the Middle East," *MERIA Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring 2013.

Beijing, MENA is first and foremost a region of energy resources to feed the growing Chinese economy. It is also a market for Chinese labour exports, an export hub into Europe and Africa, and forward front and key arena where Beijing promotes its “One China Policy” and combats terrorism and the separatist East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

The Arab Spring caught China by surprise. After evacuating 36,000 Chinese nationals and losing over \$20 billion in investments when the Qaddafi regime was ousted, Beijing is now primarily concerned about deterring another Libya-type scenario and protecting its national interests as well as the security of Chinese citizens abroad.

China also fears that new Islamist regimes in MENA countries will be more supportive of separatist Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang that threaten China’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and deny access to energy supplies. Thus the post-Arab Spring shift in MENA directly impacts China’s core interests,⁷ and China will increasingly exercise military power to protect those interests.

To this end, China is taking steps to develop long-range maritime power projection capabilities for these far-flung interests abroad. In 2004, President Hu Jintao commissioned the PLA to conduct “New Historic Missions” to protect overseas interests, in which the PLA stressed the need to develop a “logistics tail” in the form of overseas bases to sustain operations over the long term.⁸ In 2010, Hu again emphasized the importance of logistics when he underscored, “Modern wars are all about support. Without a strong comprehensive support capability, it is very hard to win combat victory. When logistics support is in place, victory is a sure thing.” Indeed, logistics and the security of supply are important “lessons learned” for the PLA, especially after watching NATO’s Afghanistan campaign suffer repeated supply line cut-offs by Pakistan and the creation of a more expensive

7 According to the Chief of General Staff Chen Bingde, China’s core interests are national sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and national unity, and national economic development (*China Daily*, 19 May 2011).

8 LTC Tania Chacho, “Lending a Helping Hand: The People’s Liberation Army and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief,” INSS, USAFA, 2009.

alternative Northern Distribution Network to the theater.⁹

In this context, on 4 January 2013, the *Xinhua*-owned *International Herald Leader* newspaper published an article on China's intention to build 18 overseas bases [Map 5]. It clarified that these are not United States-style military bases, but what they call "overseas strategic support bases" for logistics and replenishment.¹⁰



Map 5. China's future 18 overseas bases

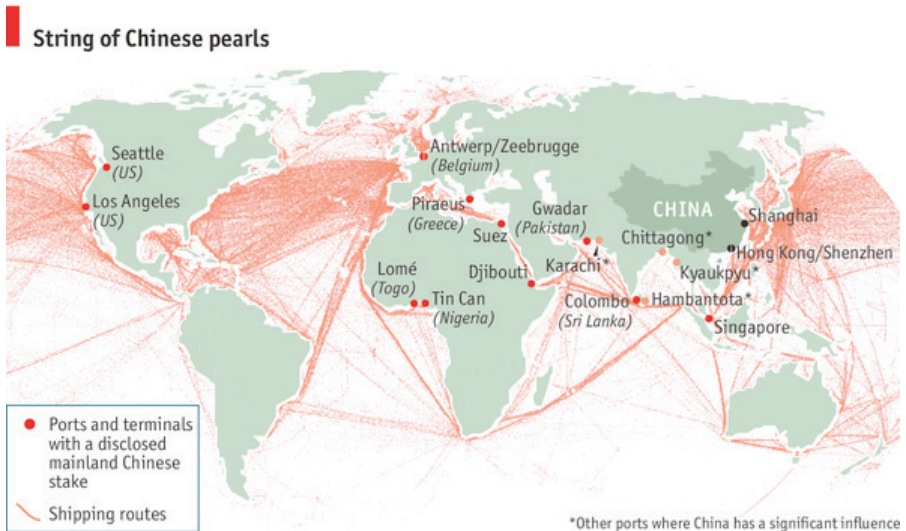
Source: *International Herald Leader*, January 4, 2013.

While the Pacific and Indian Ocean basins loom largest in the plans, China is courting countries on the Mediterranean littoral as well. Beijing

9 Christina Lin, "China-NATO Engagement in the Mediterranean Basin: Developing the Dragon's Logistics Tail and Supplying the PLA Navy in the Far Sea," ISPSW Strategy Series, Issue No. 219, March 2013, p. 4.

10 "Chinese paper advises PLA Navy to build Overseas Military Bases," *China Defense Mashup*, 9 January 2013, Yu Runze, "Chinese Navy expected to build strategic bases in Indian Ocean," *Sina English*, 7 January 2013.

is investing in a “string of pearls” of strategic seaports [Map 6] and various transport infrastructure, acquiring stakes in shipping and logistics companies, and expanding ports in Greece (Piraeus Port), France (Port of Marseille Fosx 4XL container terminal), and Spain (El Prat pier in Barcelona Port), as well as rail, air terminals, and fiber optic networks in Portugal (Huawei and Portugal Telecom) and Italy (air terminal north of Rome).



Map 6. String of Chinese Pearls

Source: “China’s Foreign Ports: The new masters and commanders,”
The Economist, 8 June 2013.

Beijing has also pursued agreements that enhance China’s direct access to Egyptian port facilities along the Suez Canal and expanded military cooperation, such as arms sales and defense industrial cooperation. Situated at the northern end of the Suez Canal, Egypt’s Port Said Container Terminal is one of the busiest in the region. Like several other key ports in the region (including Piraeus in Greece and Naples in Italy), it is now partially owned

by China. The state-owned enterprise COSCO Pacific holds 20 percent of the terminal, helping to make it one of the Mediterranean's dominant port operators.

Across the Suez Canal in the Red Sea, China is already enlarging Port Sudan, which gives China the ability to deliver maritime shipments (whether civilian or military) to Sudan and East Africa. Near the Persian Gulf, China has taken operational control of Pakistan's Gwadar Port, which it built. In North Africa, China is attempting to recoup and renegotiate its infrastructure contracts in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, as well as planning to build a naval base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.¹¹

For the last several years, the Chinese navy has sent several warships through the Suez Canal to visit Southern European and Eastern Mediterranean ports. In the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean, China has become more assertive in its stance regarding Syria: exercised three United Nations Security Council vetoes; dispatched its warships to conduct joint naval war games with Russia off the Syrian coast;¹² upgraded military ties with close US ally Israel; lobbied to play a role in the Middle East Peace Process;¹³ and courted NATO member Turkey to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) – a China-dominated Eurasian security bloc of energy producers, consumers, and transit countries that are also largely autocratic regimes.

Concerned about the security of energy supplies, China has also sent troops under the UN banner to maintain regional stability. Until August 2014, there were 1,000 Chinese UNIFIL troops in Lebanon and in the Cyprus UN peacekeeping mission (UNFICYP) under the command of a Chinese general.¹⁴ China deployed 500 combat troops to the UN mission

11 Jeremy Binnie, "China negotiating naval base with Djibouti," *IHS Jane's Defence Weekly*, 13 May 2015, <http://www.janes.com/article/51447/china-negotiating-naval-base-with-djibouti>

12 "Russia, China launch war games in the Mediterranean," *The Hindu*, January 25, 2014; Author correspondence with US CENTCOM official on 3 October 2013; Franz-Stefan Gady, "China and Russia Conclude Naval Drill in Mediterranean," *The Diplomat*, 22 May 2015.

13 Zachary Keck, "China wants to join Middle East Peace Quartet," *The Diplomat*, 15 January 2014.

14 UNFIL – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; UNFICYP – United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

in Mali to help stabilize neighbouring Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) member Algeria; a battalion of 700 combat troops was dispatched for the first time to South Sudan; and China discussed the possibility of sending troops to the West Bank under a UN banner before the 2014 Hamas-Israeli conflict.

Cooperative Security with China on Non-Traditional Security Challenges

The preceding section has illustrated that, while the US has been pivoting east to Asia, China has been pivoting west and increasing its economic and maritime footprint in the MENA region, including the Mediterranean, after the Arab Spring. As will be explained below, this presents an opportunity for the US and Europe – and by extension NATO – to constructively engage China, and together form a common strategy for post-Arab Spring stabilization and reconstruction.

NATO can engage China in a “partnership of necessity” – meaning engaging with countries that do not share its values but have shared interests in regional stability, while working with like-minded allies in a “partnership of choice” with shared values to shape a new Mediterranean security architecture still anchored in a liberal West.¹⁵ A “partnership of necessity” is possible because – despite differences between China and Western democracies on issues such as human rights, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the rule of law – the West and China share several convergent interests in the broader Middle East as regards emerging security challenges, as explained below.

Given Western democracies’ diminishing capability to continue acting as the sole providers of the global liberal order from which China has benefitted greatly, this is a good opportunity for Beijing to “step up to the

15 “Cooperative Security with China and the Post-Arab Spring Mediterranean Security Architecture” by Christina Lin, in *Liberal Order in a Post Western World*, 2013–2014, Transatlantic Academy Collaborative Report, by T. Flockhart, C. Kupchan, C. Lin, B. Nowak, P. Quirk, L. Xiang, April 2014.

plate” and help in burden-sharing. In 2013, China overtook the US as the world’s largest trading nation, and hence in view of its global economic interests, and its expanding presence in the Middle East and Mediterranean, China has an even bigger stake in ensuring maritime security and freedom of navigation there and in the global commons more generally. Given that 90 percent of trade is still seaborne, China has an interest in maintaining open sea lines of communication (SLOC) as evidenced in its anti-piracy task force in the Gulf of Aden.

Admittedly, some sceptics may doubt this notion of engaging China on global security norms and point to China’s aggressive behaviour in the East and South China Sea, such as unilaterally declaring an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) and redefining customary international law over the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Indeed, the Western Pacific is rife with longstanding historic rivalries between China and America’s Asian allies, making it difficult to engage China in confidence-building measures for regional stability and prosperity. However, US and NATO engagement with China in the Mediterranean would not feed China’s suspicion of encirclement, since China has no territorial claims there and it is geographically far away. Moreover, Chinese scholars have expressed interest in cooperating with the West in the region, given that the Middle East has become a high priority for China following the Arab Spring.¹⁶

NATO and China can also engage in the region with other Asian actors such as South Korea, Japan and India. With the projected bulk of global energy demand coming from Asia for the next 20 years, the Middle East and the Mediterranean will continue to be a key region of energy supply for these Asian states. In the Eastern Mediterranean, the Korea Gas Corporation (KOGAS) is already prospecting off the Cypriot Coast and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) is also looking for stakes in the Cypriot and Israeli gas fields. Building on the current cooperative template between China and NATO partners in Operation

16 Wu Bing Bing, “Beijing, Moscow, and the Middle East,” lecture at Washington Institute for Near East Policy’s Soref Symposium, Washington, DC, 9 May 2013.

Ocean Shield off the Horn of Africa, NATO can further engage China in the Mediterranean as a laboratory for confidence-building measures, and eventually take “lessons learned” for a joint pivot with its Asian partners to the Western Pacific in the hope of also nurturing cooperative security in the Asian giant’s own backyard.

With respect to China’s westward pivot, three areas in particular hold promise for cooperative security: maritime security, counter-terrorism, and crisis management.

Engagement with China on Maritime Security

Large gas discoveries in Israel and off Cyprus have drawn the attention of Lebanon/Hizbullah, Turkey, Greece, Iran, the US, European Union (EU), Russia and China. China is eyeing to build a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export terminal on Cyprus in exchange for stakes in its gas fields, and CNOOC approached Nobel Energy regarding the joint development of the Leviathan gas fields back in 2011. Thus China has a stake in maintaining energy and maritime security in this region.

To this end, China and NATO can engage in joint Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) patrols. With the emergence of ISIS and other extremist groups destabilizing Syria, Gaza, Sinai, Egypt, Libya, and especially with al Qaeda affiliates firing rocket-propelled grenades at Chinese COSCO shipping vessels in the Suez Canal, Beijing has a stake in stemming arms proliferation in the region.¹⁷

China has already expressed interest in Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) patrols, by visiting the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC) on 12 August 2015.¹⁸ The strategic location of the training centre in Souda Bay, Crete is also not lost on China, given

17 Sam LeGrone, “Video: Terrorists Launch Rocket Attack at Commercial Ship in Suez Canal,” US Naval Institute, September 5, 2013, <http://news.usni.org/2013/09/05/video-terrorists-rocket-commercial-ship-suez-canal>; “Cosco Asia: Group Warns of More Suez Canal Attacks” Ship and Bunker, 10 September 2013.

18 NMIOTC, “Visit of the People’s Republic of China Delegation to NMIIOTC,” 24 August 2015, <http://www.nmiotc.nato.int/files/PressReleases/pr372015.pdf>

that their Silk Road vision has earmarked the nearby Greek Port Piraeus as the main Mediterranean logistics hub for China's trade with Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Furthermore, given the divergent stance of China, Russia and Iran vis-à-vis the West on Syria, when the US threatened to attack the country and Russia responded by dispatching a flotilla, China also deployed warships to the Syrian coast to "observe" the situation. With a stand-off between the American, NATO, Chinese and Russian naval forces in the Mediterranean, a US strike on Syria could, conceivably, have risked a possible escalation or miscalculation of the situation between the great powers.

As early as July 2013 Admiral James Stavridis, NATO's former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), warned of Syria becoming a ground zero of great power rivalry with China, Russia and Iran on one side and the US, Saudi Arabia, Gulf States and much of NATO on the other.¹⁹ Given this, it is even more pressing for the transatlantic community to have confidence-building measures in place with China to avoid possible miscalculation and for crisis management. For example, the US and the Soviet Union had an "Incidents at Sea" agreement to avoid escalation during the Cold War, and in 2014 the US and China agreed on the multilateral Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) at the annual Western Pacific Naval Symposium, to avoid potential crises. A similar code of conduct or maritime hotline for crisis management is urgently needed for various naval powers, given that the Eastern Mediterranean is getting crowded.²⁰ NATO can also build on the cooperative anti-piracy template with China in the Gulf of Aden and apply it to the Eastern Mediterranean.

For example, China has attended Shared Awareness and De-confliction (SHADE) meetings for the Gulf of Aden, the Horn of Africa and the

19 James Stavridis, "Flash Point in the Eastern Mediterranean," *Foreign Policy*, 19 July 2013; Christina Lin, "US Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean—a New Persian Gulf?" *German Marshall Fund of the United States Web Log*, 6 June 2014.

20 US Department of State, Bureau of International Security and Non-proliferation, *Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas*, 25 May 1972.

Western Indian Ocean. Usually chaired by NATO, the US-led Combined Maritime Force (CMF) and EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR), SHADE is a cooperation forum whereby various anti-piracy stakeholders ranging from the shipping industry, law enforcement agencies, and multinational navies, including China, Russia and India, can share information and de-conflict activities in order to counter maritime terrorism.²¹ Representatives from the Oil Companies International Maritime Forum (OCIMF), which includes China's oil giant CNOOC, also attend these meetings to safeguard their energy interests. By striving towards a common operational picture, China can be an affective partner in NATO's Operation Ocean Shield in the Gulf of Aden, as well as in Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean.

China and NATO have already paid reciprocal visits to each other's flagships in the Gulf of Aden to build mutual trust, and in March 2014 China and EUNAVFOR conducted joint counter-piracy exercises in the region after a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) delegation visited the EU's flagship.²² There is not yet a NATO-China joint counter-piracy exercise, but as China is developing Djibouti's military capabilities with off-shore patrol vessels and surveillance aircraft, along with reportedly a future contingent of 10,000 Chinese troops to its new naval base, China via Djibouti will become an important player in future regional counter-piracy efforts.²³

Engagement with China on Counter-terrorism

Counter-terrorism in the MENA region is another area where NATO

21 Christina Lin, "NATO-China Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges," Congressional Testimony before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 19 April 2012.

22 NATO, "NATO and China Cooperate to Fight Piracy," 19 January 2012; EUNAVFOR, "EU Naval Force and Chinese Navy Warships Work Together in Counter Piracy Exercise At Sea in Gulf of Aden," 28 March 2014, <http://eunavfor.eu/eu-naval-force-and-chinese-navy-warships-work-together-in-counter-piracy-exercise-at-sea-in-gulf-of-aden/>

23 Paul Pryce, "China's African Engagement: Advancing Multilateralism," China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), 15 February 2015, http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2015-02/15/content_7696818.htm; "PLA base in Djibouti to expand China's influence at US expense," *Want China Times*, 25 August 2015, <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20150825000088&cid=1101>.

and China can aspire to more cooperation. In the MENA area, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is a threat shared by NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue partners as well as by China – especially in Algeria where, in 2009, AQIM attacked Chinese interests after the Xinjiang uprising. In Syria and Iraq, China also faces threats to its stability and territorial integrity in the form of Uyghur jihadists linked with al-Qaeda affiliates.

In the war against terrorism and Islamic extremism emanating from the MENA region, China seems to be emerging as a champion. Jacob Zenn, a counter-terror expert with the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation, said terrorism would likely dominate Chinese President Xi Jinping's leadership in much the same way as it did for President George W. Bush.

Beijing has been struggling with its worst series of terrorist attacks in a decade. On 28 July 2014, almost 100 people were killed in Xinjiang, and China's Middle East envoy Wu Sike emphasized Xinjiang terror groups have strong ties to al-Qaeda-linked militants in Syria and Iraq. China also estimates that there are at least 300 Chinese Uyghurs fighting with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). With the Muslim Xinjiang province increasingly on the radar of global terror groups, the government can no longer isolate the local "East Turkestan separatist" problem from the "global jihadist" problem. In early July 2014, a state-backed imam from China's biggest mosque in Kashgar was also assassinated, underscoring an escalation in 18 months of violence in a bid by extremists to radicalize Chinese Muslims.

In 2010, China's security budget was \$87 billion while defence was \$84.6 billion; in 2011, figures for the two budgets were \$99 billion and \$95.6 billion respectively; in 2012, \$111.4 billion and \$106.4 billion respectively; and in 2013, \$123.6 billion and \$119 billion respectively. In 2014, the Communist government deliberately withheld full disclosure of the security budget due to its sensitive nature, while defence stood at \$131.57 billion. However, based on past trends the figure for security was likely higher than the defence budget.²⁴ This suggests Beijing arguably views

24 "China withholds full details of 2014 domestic security budget," *South China Morning Post*, 5 March 2014.

terrorism and instability as a greater security threat than military conflict in the Western Pacific. China fears that the inability to safeguard its energy supply lines from increasingly Islamist-controlled and unstable countries will harm the continued economic growth that underpins the legitimacy and survival of the Communist regime.

Thus, while the US is rebalancing towards Asia and no longer needs Middle Eastern energy supplies even whilst China is increasing its energy dependency on the region, there is an opportunity for NATO to leverage China's westward pivot and expanding military footprint. Moreover, this supports NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept that commits the Atlantic Alliance to working more closely with international partners such as the UN and the EU. Given also that China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council that provides the mandate for NATO operations (e.g. Western Balkans, Afghanistan, Libya, the framework for NATO's training mission in Iraq) and is already engaged in cooperative security with the EU, SHADE can perhaps be an effective template for cooperation with respect to combatting overland terrorism in MENA, modeled after its cooperation on maritime terrorism in the Gulf of Aden.

Whereas SHADE for anti-piracy involved the US-led CME, NATO, the EU NAVFOR, and other navies, SHADE for anti-terrorism in MENA could involve the US, NATO, EU, China, SCO and other stakeholders. China has already expressed interest in deploying combat troops to Syria and Iraq and offered military assistance to the Iraqi government to fight ISIS.²⁵ Similarly to the Gulf of Aden operation, where various navies are fighting piracy and clearing their information through SHADE, troops fighting insurgents in MENA could also clear their counter-terror information through a SHADE-type forum.

25 Najmeh Bozorgmehr, Lucy Hornby, "China offers to help Iraq defeat Sunni extremists," *Financial Times*, 12 December 2014, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/3f4dc794-8141-11e4-b956-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3k4JwhPWD>; Jeremy Bender, "China Signaled It May Join Operations Against ISIS in Iraq," *Business Insider*, 15 December 2014, <http://www.businessinsider.com/china-airstrikes-in-iraq-2014-12>; Christina Lin, "ISIS Caliphate Meets China's Silk Road Economic Belt," *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 22 February 2015, <http://www.rubincenter.org/author/christina-lin/>

In this way, whether it is the US-led anti-ISIS coalition, China, or Egypt fighting terrorists in Syria, Iraq, or Sinai, various counter-terrorism forces could clear their information through a SHADE/Mercury-type cooperative template. On a practical level, SHADE is already partnering and integrating with the EU NAVFOR's Mercury where possible, in order to coordinate and de-conflict anti-piracy operations. Run by the EU's Maritime Security Center—Horn of Africa (MSC-HOA), Mercury is an unclassified near-real time information sharing system for both civilians and the military, and as such this template combined with SHADE could be applied to anti-terrorism operations.

Beyond de-confliction and coordination, China and NATO could also consider conducting joint counter-terrorism exercises. China is already engaged in military interventions abroad with joint patrols in the Mekong River between Myanmar, Thailand and Laos, after Chinese citizens were murdered there in 2011. Similarly, it will likely increase counter-terrorism forces in MENA to protect its energy interests and citizens. Beijing's traditional special operation units, such as the Snow Leopard Commandos (400 officers), have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and in 2014 President Xi expanded China's anti-terror forces with the new Falcon Commando Unit, a brigade force of 5,000 officers drawn from the People's Armed Police.

Over the years China has been investing in its counter-terrorism capabilities, and its special forces have steadily gained international recognition. In 2013 and 2014, its elite Snow Leopard Commandos won the SOFEX (Special Operations Force Exercise) Warrior Competition held in Jordan, beating the USA, Germany, and others in this multi-national competition. In 2015 it placed second after Russia. Given that China's counter-terrorism forces have reached a professional level comparable with US contingents such as the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, the elite Canadian Special Operations Regiment, and Russian Lynx Special Forces, among others, there is nothing to prevent Chinese special forces taking the

next step and participating in official NATO counter-terrorism exercises.²⁶ For example, NATO and China could also hold future joint counter-terror exercises similar to “Vigilant Skies” between NATO and Russia, as well as other similar exercises modelled on past NATO-Russia cooperation.²⁷

There has also been interest from the Chinese side regarding counter-terrorism cooperation with NATO and the US, which would support NATO’s Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism (PAP-T) with non-NATO countries. A Chinese scholar from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences proposed a NATO-SCO mechanism to enhance US-China cooperation and reduce conflicts in Central Asia, which could be extended to MENA, given that Egypt – also a NATO Mediterranean Dialogue partner – in 2015 applied for dialogue partner status with the SCO. The liaison mechanism is initially coordinating anti-terror issues between the US and SCO, which could progressively be upgraded to SCO + US (SCO + 1) dialogue or SCO + US, EU/NATO and Japan (SCO + 3) dialogue. NATO already has cooperation with most SCO members (e.g., Central Asia through PfP, Pakistan as a Global Partner, the NATO-Russia Council, and close anti-piracy cooperation with India), so it would seem logical to explore the cooperation potential with the SCO itself.

Engagement with China on Crisis Management and Emergency Response

NATO and China could also consider cooperation in crisis management and emergency response – China has almost one million citizens in the MENA region, where piracy and kidnappings are an ongoing problem. China evacuated 36,000 Chinese nationals from Libya during the 2011 conflict there, but has more than 50,000 workers in Algeria, another Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) state where

26 Jeffrey Lin and P.W. Singer, “Chinese Special Forces Take 1st, 2nd and 4th place at ‘Olympics’ for Elite Warriors,” *Popular Science*, 19 May 2014; “Could Chinese special forces be used for hostage rescue missions?” *Went China Times*, 9 February 2015.

27 NATO, “NATO and Russia hold joint counter-terror exercise ‘Vigilant skies,’” 3 October 2013.

AQIM is very active. China also has about 10,000 workers in Iraq.

Given China's increasing interests in MENA due to energy security concerns as well as the need to protect its overseas citizens, US and NATO engagement with China in this region is a way to move forward on regional stability post-Arab Spring.

To this end, China could cooperate with NATO's principal civil emergency response mechanism, the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), for requests and offers of assistance in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations. EADRCC could also conceivably partner with China's UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) in Africa, given that NATO has in the past provided support to UN operations and logistical assistance to the African Union's UN-endorsed peacekeeping operations in Darfur, Sudan and Somalia.

The US has already taken steps to help integrate China into existing maritime governance mechanisms by conducting joint naval exercises with the PLAN in the 2014 Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), hosted biennially by the US Pacific Fleet in Hawaii. During the six-week exercise, the Chinese task force participated in activities encompassing light weapons and artillery fire, damage control, supply sea lifting, surface platform drills, coordinated interceptions and landings, as well as joint warship and helicopter assaults, HA/DR, diving, medical exchanges and cultural activities.²⁸ Since the US is a key NATO member, this could pave the way for further confidence-building measures and Chinese cooperation in NATO's Operations Ocean Shield and Active Endeavour.

Conclusion – China and NATO Partnership in the Mediterranean

As argued above, NATO should engage China in cooperative security on

28 Andrew S. Erickson, Austin M. Strange, "China's RIMPAC Debut: What's in it for America?" *The National Interest*, 3 July 2014, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/china's-rimpac-debut-what's-it-america-10801?page=show>

non-traditional security challenges such as counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, maritime security and crisis management, especially in the MENA region. Indeed, Beijing's anti-piracy task force in the Gulf of Aden is already cooperating with NATO and the EU in this regard.

In instances where China and the North American and European Allies have divergent interests and positions, as in the case of Syria, it is important to establish confidence-building measures with China for crisis management and to prevent miscalculation and tension escalation. In this way, the US and NATO engaging China in cooperative security would contribute towards a confidence-building template in the Mediterranean for regional stability.

In sum, China's rise as an extra-regional power in the MENA region presents a timely opportunity for the US and NATO to engage Beijing in cooperative security. Emerging unconventional security challenges render Beijing a non-traditional, yet appropriate partner to help in burden sharing for regional stabilization and reconstruction.

Conclusion

Conceptual Ideas for Advancing the NATO and Asia-Pacific Partnership

Alexander Moens and Brooke A. Smith-Windsor

NATO's Partnership and Cooperative Security with Asia-Pacific: what it means for the 'Partners Across the Globe'

The contributions made in this volume point to the ongoing challenge of understanding the substance and direction of the relationship between NATO and four Asia-Pacific Partners (Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea), counted among the Alliance's so-called "Partners Across the Globe," or "Global Partners," which unofficially may also be considered to include Singapore as reflected in previous pages.¹ On the one hand is the awareness that the relationship between the North Atlantic Alliance and its Asia-Pacific Global Partners is important not only for the two regions involved but also for global security cooperation. At the same time, the relationship remains a topic for wide-ranging debate and its outcome is undecided.

The topic is always ripe for misunderstanding and unhelpful characterization. This volume has made it clear that NATO is not engaging with Asia-Pacific in order to expand its collective defence guarantee beyond the existing guarantees to Canada and the United States in the Western Pacific. NATO is also not entering the Asian realm to act as a geopolitical counterweight to China, to contain China in an indirect or covert way, or, as Mohan Malik describes it, to inflict "geopolitical discomfort." For some that begs the question "then what is NATO for when it comes to Asia-Pacific?" We argue it is important for security practitioners and scholars

¹ Mongolia is a Partner Across the Globe, but is not included in this analysis as it does not border the Pacific Ocean and thus does not fall within the purview of this volume on Asia-Pacific partners.

alike to consider NATO's third task or third plank in its *raison d'être*, called "cooperative security" (partnership), to phrase the answer to this valid question.

The relationship has indeed substance through this prism. Perhaps this is the largest common theme in this volume. Robert Ayson puts it this way: "NATO's role in Asia, such as it develops, may be more about expertise and ideas." Geunwook Lee, in his chapter, concludes that NATO's role in Asia-Pacific should be to help build and manage "multilateral security institutions." Philip Shetler-Jones quotes Michito Tsuruoka on how the latter sees the substance of the relationship: According to Tsuruoka, "NATO is of value to Japan in four key ways – as a political partner, operational partner, another means of co-operation with the US and as a multilateral school." These themes we want to explore first in more detail.

In order to clarify what is at stake for NATO and its partners in the context of cooperative security and partnership, we examine the growing interaction between the NATO Alliance and the regional security issues in Asia-Pacific on three conceptual planes. By framing the relationship along these three conceptual outlines, we hope we can identify strengths to build on and difficulties to overcome. We are not suggesting that this is the only subject area of NATO-Asia interaction. Christine Lin has made the case that working with China on security issues in other regions of the world besides Asia is another important area of activity for NATO engagement with Asian countries, especially as China is "pivoting west." But in this final chapter we want to draw mainly on the relationship between NATO and the four (five with Singapore) partners. In the last part of this chapter we will argue that this focus also leads us to examine (again) the relationship between NATO and India and to explore the "Indo-Pacific" area as a case study.

The first of the three approaches to understand the relationship between NATO and the Global Partners is a normative and legal approach. The second looks at the relationship through the vantage point of small "r" realism or a pragmatic-and interest-based prism. The final construct offers

a functional or organizational perspective. We use the three approaches in terms of compatibility and synergy. We are under no illusion that the relationship will ever become simple or clear-cut. However, we do believe that on balance there is a net positive to be gained for both sides by considering how the relationship could be strengthened.

Norms and Values

Any recent study of NATO's Partnership policies and actions since the launch of its first version, called Partnership for Peace in 1994, reveals how complicated these partnerships have become.² Initially, NATO had a clear objective to advance the common norms that underline the Alliance since its founding and which are found in its preamble ("the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law") to the newly independent and democratic nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Partnership in this early sense was a path-dependent policy, whereby aspiring NATO members could make broad changes in domestic and military policy to enhance their potential for joining the Alliance. But partners in their own right, rather than prospective Alliance members have, since the mid-2000s, become the more numerous category. The nature of partnership has evolved with this development and cooperative security, rather than pre-membership constructs, now principally defines the idea. Partnerships have become much more diverse geographically throughout North Africa and the Middle East, as well as into West and East Asia, and also include cooperation arrangements with international organizations. NATO's partnerships with the African Union and with the Gulf Cooperation Council are prime examples.

These changes in the nature of partnership over twenty years are reflected in NATO's most recent Strategic Concept (2010), which defines among the goals of partnership specific objectives in cooperative security such

² See, for example: David S. Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, Washington, D.C., US Institute of Peace Press, 2014, chapter 6.

as international security, arms control, and non-proliferation.³ Moreover, NATO's second and third core tasks (crisis management and cooperative security, respectively) likely overlap in practice. We can foresee such overlap in the international counter-piracy coalition off the coast of East Africa, for example. NATO's crisis management and its cooperative security are thus different places on a continuum rather than separate domains.

Most recently, through the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programmes (IPCP) set up in 2011, many partnerships have developed at the practical level into a wide array of activities that offer benefits to the partners and NATO in areas such as military standardization, but do not clarify how the Alliance as a whole advances "international security" in this way. Some are calling for a differentiated NATO partnership policy based on criteria, such as shared democratic values or the ability to join in crisis-management operations.⁴

There is indeed a strong "democratic values" connection between NATO and the Asia-Pacific Partners. Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea are constitutional liberal democracies. There is an element of legitimacy and electoral accountability in their foreign policy that matches the common norm in the Alliance. To be clear: the common principles noted above do not render the foreign and security policy of these states (or NATO members) beyond criticism. They are also self-interested states pursuing material benefits. However, the point is that a regular feature of restraint is observed in military policy and action, and the rule of law guides domestic and foreign decisions. Moreover, the objectives sought in defence policy reflect the public policy choices in domestic policy. These four partners, like the NATO allies in Europe and North America, renounce territorial expansion and aggression, while upholding respect for the rules-based international order.

The point is that such common values tend to lead to "common cause"

³ See: paragraph 4 in *Strategic Concept*, North Atlantic Council, Lisbon, 19-20 November 2010.

⁴ See, for example: Karl-Heinz Kamp and Heidi Riesinger, "NATO's Partnership after 2014: Go West!" *Research Paper* No.92, NATO Defense College, Rome, May 2013.

and thus make the partnership stronger. We see this dynamic of common normative goals in Australia's and New Zealand's cooperation with many European countries on humanitarian issues and good governance policies in the South Pacific. The shared norm of respecting existing rules and changing them only by means of due process forms another bond among NATO and these partners in respect of the sea-bed resource issues in the South China Sea. China has ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), but its lack of good faith to follow the very rules of this convention exposes the weak influence of law and accountability in China's domestic governance. As a group of dissident Chinese intellectuals has observed: "the political reality, which is plain for anyone to see, is that China has many laws but no rule of law. It has a constitution but no constitutional government. The ruling elite continues to cling to its authoritarian power and fights off any move toward political change."⁵ In contrast, NATO's like-minded Asia-Pacific Partners in their disputes with China find a common logic with NATO nations grounded in the rule of law.

Technical and Pragmatic Cooperation

On the other side of the spectrum of conceptual understanding of NATO cooperation with the four Asia-Pacific Partners, we find a pragmatic and mainly technical argument. Some of the authors in this volume have pointed out that the relevant relationship between the Asia-Pacific Partners and NATO is not so much along lines of values or common principles and also not in terms of creating more multilateral frameworks. Rather, they pitch the relationship in terms of specific bilateral security arrangements that produce "concrete outcomes" defined in "material terms."⁶ As is clear from Stephan Frühling's chapter, though Australia has a long history of interacting with NATO, it is not looking for additional talk shops, but

5 Evan Osnos, *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015, p. 161.

6 Tow and Taylor, p. 108.

rather is looking for specific areas of (often technical) cooperation such as sharing “maritime awareness data” when NATO anti-piracy operations started in the Gulf of Aden in 2008. Australia and other Global Partners seek to optimize the use of certain areas of expertise developed by NATO or to join in on the procedures and standards generated by NATO. The logic in this perspective is utilitarian, though Australia ultimately developed a high level of diplomatic and military representation in NATO’s headquarters. Japan followed soon after.

A good deal of practical cooperation and contribution to NATO has come from all four Global Partners and Singapore (as well as Mongolia) in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Japan has been among the largest donors to projects engaged in rebuilding Afghanistan. Beyond financial assistance, South Korea has provided logistical and medical units to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in ISAF. Australia, New Zealand and Singapore have made significant military, including combat, contributions. After ISAF was wound down, the question was raised from both sides of the table, how to maintain practical interaction? Both Australia (229) and New Zealand (8) committed personnel to the “training, advice, and assistance” mission called Resolute Support, which started in 2015. Japan and South Korea continue to provide financial aid to the fledgling government in Kabul and, alongside Australia, contribute significantly to the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund.⁷

The “practical and technical” dimensions are also reflected in the IPCP signed between NATO and the Asian Partners, as well as various participation agreements in NATO training and exercises. The main areas of cooperation agreed in these, or that are on the agenda, pertain to counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, peace operations, disaster response coordination, humanitarian missions, dealing with transnational threats, cybersecurity, and various areas of interoperability, especially on maritime matters, such as submarine safety.

7 Resolute Support Mission Key Facts and Figures, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_12/20151210_2015-12-rsm-placemat.pdf

Given that all four Global Partners are so-called security providers and not merely consumers, though New Zealand's capacity is modest given its size, the potential to benefit from "economies of scale" in specific technical cooperation is considerable.

Functions and Alliances

NATO, as a highly organized defence alliance with more than six decades of policy making and operational experience, has come to represent a dense set of connections among the member states in terms of defence policy making, collective defence and security efforts, and decision making. In the Alliance, member states have added to their common democratic values an international type of regime by which they are committed to consult each other's positions on a range of matters and committed to develop collective policies and actions on the three core issues of collective defence, crisis-management, and cooperative security. The NATO "regime" in this sense means a set of decision rules and interaction procedures that are added to facilitate the Allies' commitment to procure collective decision making and defence.⁸ As various contributors in this volume have pointed out, such a densely organized alliance experience is the opposite of the experience of countries in Asia, including the Global Partners in Asia-Pacific.

In this region, bilateral alliances have been the norm during the Cold War and beyond, with the United States as the hub. Beyond these, no multilateral defence alliances have come off the ground. The South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO, 1954-1977) and the tri-lateral Australia-New Zealand-United States defence arrangement are not really exceptions to the rule as SEATO did not develop any type of regime and US interaction with Australia, and New Zealand remained a hub-and-spoke dynamic. Moreover, the bilateral dynamic has been ad hoc rather

⁸ The three concepts applied here (principles or norms, decision rules, and common procedures) derive from Stephen Krasner's early work on regime theory in international relations. See: Stephen D. Krasner, (ed.) *International Regimes*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1983.

than institutionalized.⁹ With the rise of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and especially in the last 20 years, Asia and the Asia-Pacific area have seen the start of a thickening array of summits, forums, and councils. This complex set of arrangements is called Asia's "security architecture," though the term means different things to different nations (and scholars) and often includes economic and trade policy alongside security issues.¹⁰ None of Asia's security architecture resembles at this time the combination of regular dense cooperation and regular policy outcomes/action as found in NATO. Given this contrast in regional experiences, it is tempting to conclude all too quickly that the NATO model is a peculiar product of the North Atlantic region and has no direct bearing on the Asia-Pacific region.

But this would miss the point about the relationship between NATO and the four Asia-Pacific Partners and what the functional dimension of security cooperation with NATO could bring to the "table" in Asia-Pacific. NATO as an organizational dynamic offers an important set of functions that are not found in Asia, not even in the most defence-oriented forums such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+). These remain essentially political forums that are, as Robert Ayson notes, reluctant "to move from exercises to action." A functional relationship between NATO and these Global Partners would give the latter a dynamic to construct a cooperative security regime based on collective actions. The structure to facilitate this functional connection could be called the "NATO Asia-Pacific Forum." It is important to note that NATO's four Asia-Pacific Partners are more than partners in terms of common principles and norms. Tsuneo Watanabe quotes the Japanese Prime Minister to make the point that they are also "reliable partners corroborated by concrete action." In other words, when NATO engages with these states in shared decision making and joint activities, these states

9 The Five Powers Defence Arrangements among Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore set up in 1971 and which arose from their Commonwealth association could arguably qualify though it is composed of various bilateral agreements.

10 See: William T. Tow and Brendan Taylor, "What is Asian Security Architecture?" *Review of International Studies*, 36, 2010, pp.95-116.

have both the capacity and will to deliver. In the NATO Asia-Pacific Forum, we can foresee how the “values and norms” perspective and the “technical and pragmatic” perspective described above could be joined.

The logic behind a NATO Asia-Pacific Forum is as follows: as NATO nations pursue collective positions and actions in defence and security issues, they actually influence and shape one another’s values and interests. The outcome may not be optimal from the standpoint of any member, but it will be a product of various shared functions such as finding political agreement and joining this with military readiness.¹¹ For NATO this process has produced better overall results than had defence and military policy among member states been strictly national. It has facilitated convergence among national positions. This process has also created a stronger overall North Atlantic-European community for defence and security policy than if each European member and Canada had only bi-national alliance relations with the United States.

In such a NATO Asia-Pacific Forum, NATO members and Asia-Pacific Partners would join a process of finding compromise and convergence mixed in with synergy and shared effort on security topics as set out in the logic of cooperative security relations. The need for building trust is a recurrent theme in the Asia-Pacific security puzzle. Trust requires a common foundation of values and principles, but building trust results from the practice of interaction or from the repeated function of finding common positions on tangible issue and practical matters. Regular interaction on the basis of agreed procedures allows nations to calibrate their national positions in order to build coalitions that ultimately provide the states involved with interest or benefits that would be more difficult to achieve without the cooperation.

The point we are making must be seen in its correct context. States in the Asian-Pacific region have their own forums, and methods to consult, coordinate and cooperate regarding political, economic, and security

11 See: Alexander Moens, “How NATO’s Values and Functions Influence its Policy and Actions,” NATO Defense College, *NDC Fellowship Monograph 7* (2016, forthcoming).

affairs. They have in fact a large array of tools, including formal multilateral institutions in ASEAN and its derivatives such as the East Asia Summit. They do not need European or Euro-Atlantic security architecture to replace their own. At the same time, the Asia-Pacific Partners (and Singapore as well as non-Global Partners such as Thailand and the Philippines) each have a unique bilateral relationship with the United States. These bilateral hubs do not need replacement or fixing either, but they would benefit from a third (complementary) feature of alliance functioning. It is this third feature we are describing in this argument. The functional argument suggests that both NATO nations and partners will benefit more when they interact in a NATO-component body, such as the NATO Asia-Pacific Forum. We envision how this will allow the four to interact among themselves, in terms of finding common positions *while* they are working with NATO allies. This process influences their values and interests on a given issue. It helps create convergence on national positions and tends to affect state behaviour over time. Just as individual allies in Europe (such as France, the United Kingdom, Germany) and Canada have strong bilateral relations with the United States, they have also derived a regime benefit from adding or placing this relationship in part in the NATO context.

We are sensitive to the fact, as Robert Ayson has put it in this volume, that Asia already has “a crowded agenda.” At the same time, the NATO Asia-Pacific Forum has value of itself and as a complement to Asian arrangements, as we have argued above. The three approaches discussed can be complementary but not without challenges, and cannot be implemented without effort. The common principles of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty do not diminish the fact that Asian democracies, such as Japan and South Korea, have different characteristics and the fact that political cultures in Europe, North America and the Asia-Pacific differ a great deal. Mutual understanding will be paramount. Also, the regime building benefit of a NATO Asia-Pacific Forum takes time and patience and, unless the blending of values and interests by means of shared functions do produce regular net benefits for the participants, the process is unsustainable.

NATO's Partnership and Cooperative Security with Asia-Pacific: What it means for NATO

Philip Shetler-Jones notes that 33 NATO partners came to the 2014 Wales Summit, but that the summit outcome barely gave voice to the partnership and cooperative security policy devised by the Alliance. It was essentially a “Euro-centric” outcome. Of course, it is quite understandable that the seismic change brought to European security by Russia’s annexation of Crimea, its active support for the Donbas region of Ukraine, and its abrasive tone and threatening actions along the eastern border of the Alliance would produce a new “home game.” But, as Shetler-Jones acutely observes, the weighty geopolitical question of “Where does a North Atlantic Alliance fit into the Asian Century?” was left unanswered. We argue that NATO should indeed be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. The challenge to Europe presented by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to engage with the United States in Asia has not been answered by most European allies and Canada, even as various studies are pointing out that total global defence spending is shifting decisively towards Asia.¹² Many Asian-Pacific states are re-arming at a pace that can only be described as an arms race. Also, the number of potential conflicts is increasing. European allies and Canada have ample commercial interests, as well as global issues at stake in the Asia-Pacific region, to be directly impacted by such conflicts.

Most potential conflict cases in Asia will include the United States. Should not NATO members expect that Washington in such a scenario will ask for their assistance in one form or another? It would not necessarily be a NATO action *per se*, but it would surely include demands on many NATO allies. There can be no simple “division of labour” between the United States and its NATO allies vis-à-vis Asia. Stéfanie von Hlatky rightly points out that, “Whatever approach the Alliance decides on, the bottom line is that doing nothing is not an option. NATO is implicated in the US rebalance by association with its indispensable member state.” But

12 Sam Perlo Freeman et al., “Trends in World Military Expenditure: 2014,” *SIPRI Fact Sheet*, April 2015, <http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1504.pdf>

as argued above, the response to this need lies in the realm of cooperative security, and the methods lie in the task of helping Asia-Pacific Partners work together with NATO. But what can the Global Partners do in a NATO Asia-Pacific Forum if Canada and European allies themselves are not engaged? An argument could be made that such a council is at present needed as much to bring together and articulate Euro-Atlantic interests, positions and action as those of the Partners.

What are NATO's own expectations? After all, partnership is a two-way street. The Alliance's 2010 Strategic Concept says so:

*Dialogue and cooperation with partners can make a concrete contribution to enhancing international security, to defending the values on which our Alliance is based, to NATO's operations, and to preparing interested nations for membership of NATO. These relationships will be based on reciprocity, mutual benefit and mutual respect.*¹³

Historically, however, the Alliance has routinely been more concerned with what the external party wants, so as not to be seen as the *demandeur*. The oft-heard mantra "partners set the terms of the association" arguably manifests itself most visibly in the single Partnership Cooperation Menu, launched in 2012 and comprised of 1400 activities from which partners may pick and choose. But does this make good strategic sense? Strategy is "a set of coordinated, creative and sustainable actions (a plan) designed to overcome one or more core challenges that create value."¹⁴ To overcome NATO's challenges, to create value *for the Alliance*, surely the partnerships *paid for by its member state taxpayers* should be driven by a clear, tailored vision of what NATO's long-term goals are, as much as by what the external partner desires. There is the risk that IPCPs create a *de facto* hub-and-spoke dynamic between NATO qua organization and the partners, rather than a common strategic environment among NATO Allies and Partners which a NATO Asia-Pacific Forum would encourage. Building genuine reciprocity

13 NATO, "Active Engagement, Modern Defense," *Strategic Concept*, 2010.

14 Davide Sola and Jerome Couturier, *How To Think Strategically*, Harlow, United Kingdom, Pearson Education Limited, 2014, p. 6.

into partnerships with Asia-Pacific is at stake. And there is every indication that this would be welcomed. To recall the words of Yee-Kuang Heng in this volume:

Much depends on NATO itself. When developing relationships with its official as well as de facto 'global partners' in Asia, the Alliance should also clarify first what it expects from the region and what type of relationship it is trying to forge. Some scholars have criticised NATO's partnership strategy for being 'marked by tensions and contradictions between different types of partners and different and shifting rationales and preferences'. These 'global partners' should also not be confused with NATO's more formally structured partnership framework with East European states seeking membership. Furthermore, some 'global partners' such as Australia and Japan are mentioned all the time, while others such as Singapore and Mongolia are not.

Delineating NATO's own expectations and level of ambition for Asia-Pacific engagement is, therefore, an area ripe for follow-on scholarship to this volume. It is also ripe for careful reflection among policy-makers in the 28 (soon to be 29)¹⁵ member states that constitute the Alliance. And here NATO's crucial Asia-Pacific power—the United States—has a particularly important role to play. As highlighted earlier, during her tenure as US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, did much to instigate thinking about a European rebalance to Asia-Pacific in tandem with the US one. Since her departure, Washington's long-term expectations in this regard have arguably been less clear. Mark Webber put it this way: "Simply put, the Alliance does not figure in US considerations of how the rebalance to Asia can be sustained." We are not so sure that it actually is Washington's intent to not have a more prominent NATO role in Asia-Pacific, but as is the case in most major policy planks or actions in NATO, unless there is persuasive and enabling leadership provided by the United States, it remains difficult to get many European allies engaged. A Clinton Presidency may by default,

15 In December 2015, Montenegro was invited to enter into accession negotiations with NATO expected to last approximately one year.

therefore, serve to reinvigorate and mature the debate, but the imperative for alternative Democratic or Republican administrations to do so is no less compelling.

NATO member commitments to crisis management and cooperative security have been uneven. It is to be expected that in a NATO Asia-Pacific Forum allies will do some self-selecting in terms of participation and commitment. Obviously, the larger members such as France and the United Kingdom who have a continual military presence in Asia-Pacific will likely do most. However, in terms of building a regime of norms and values and alliance functions in the cooperation, other allies can play a role. Canada, as the other dual Atlantic-Pacific NATO member, should consider taking the lead on such an initiative.

Much of this volume has focussed on the relationship between NATO and Asia-Pacific partners, with the North Pacific region as the main backdrop. But there is an additional, inextricably intertwined piece of the equation. This is particularly evident when one considers, as Christina Lin has highlighted, Beijing's aspirations for a "Maritime Silk Road" linking Asia-Pacific to Europe via the Indian Ocean. In 2013, the Australian Defense White Paper described it as the "Indo-Pacific":

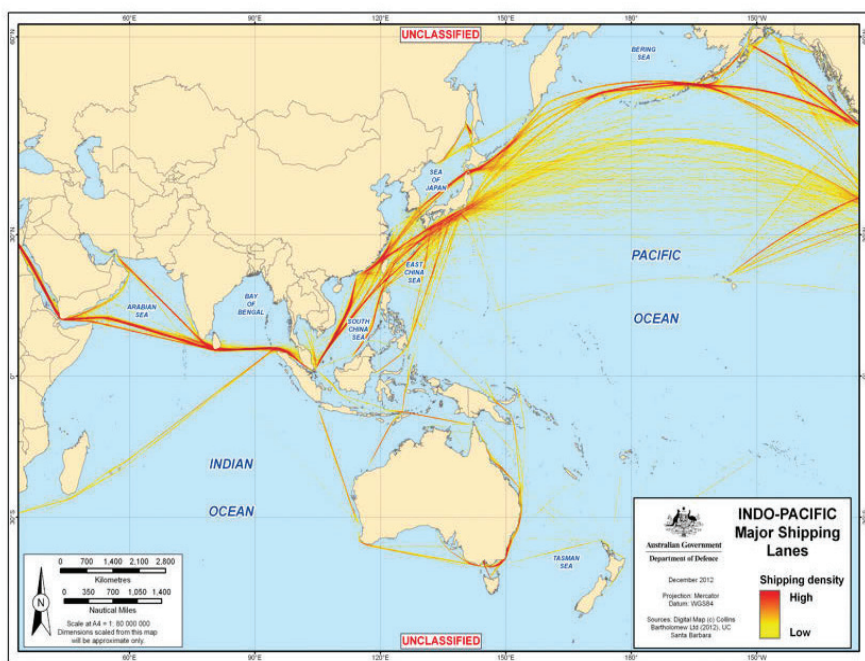
*The increasing economic and strategic weight of East Asia and emergence over time of India as a global power are key trends influencing the Indian Ocean's development as an area of increasing strategic significance. In aggregate, these trends are shaping the emergence of the Indo-Pacific as a single strategic arc ... but it comes with the growing empowerment of non-state actors with malign intentions, such as terrorists, people traffickers and human smugglers, pirates, transnational criminals and hacker ... Growing trade, investment and energy flows across this broader region are strengthening economic and security interdependencies.*¹⁶

Or, as Mohan Malik touched on in previous pages:

16 Australia, *Defense White Paper 2013*, Canberra: 2013, http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/2013/docs/wp_2013_web.pdf (accessed 2 February 2016).

The Indo-Pacific powers are today where Germany, France, Britain, and Italy were at the beginning of the 20th century. They are looking outward globally in search of markets, resources and bases, jockeying for power and influence, outmaneuvering and outbidding each other in different parts of the world, and forming natural resources-based partnerships characterized by hedging strategies. The major power competition is between China and the United States; in the maritime and continental domains, it is between China and Japan, and between China and India. The Indian and Chinese navies are increasingly tending to wave their respective flags in the Pacific and Indian oceans.

See **Map 7** below.



Map 7. The Indo-Pacific Region

Such observations point to substantive interests NATO nations have in maintaining a relevant cooperative security strategy framework beyond the North Atlantic region. In September 2015, for example, India opened the INS Vajrakosh naval station at Karwar, making it the largest naval base east of the Suez Canal.¹⁷ This came on the cusp of China's negotiations with Djibouti for a permanent naval base there.¹⁸

NATO is not removed from such developments. Quite the contrary. In April last year, NATO and the Republic of Djibouti themselves enhanced their cooperation by concluding an agreement to establish a NATO liaison office in that country in support of the Alliance's counter-piracy operation, Ocean Shield, in the Gulf of Aden.¹⁹ At the time of writing, there is ongoing debate within the Alliance about a sustained NATO presence in the Indian Ocean post-2016 when Ocean Shield's current mandate expires. Will, for instance, the contacts that have been established during the operation between the NATO Shipping Center and ReCAAP (Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia) Information Sharing Center in Singapore be sustained? Or, in a point which Philip Shetler-Jones briefly mentions in his chapter, could NATO-India cooperation in counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa serve as a foundation for a stronger partnership in the wider maritime domain? Though India is very cautious about any links with NATO, we expect it in practice to become more open to specific and technical areas of cooperation.²⁰ These and other questions demand thoughtful reflection to inform sound policy decisions about NATO's global partnerships with Indo-Pacific powers and organizations, both big and small. This should come as no surprise. World affairs are entering a

17 Sudhi Ranjan Sen, "Now, India has the Largest Naval Base East of the Suez Canal," *NDTV*, 10 September 2015, <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/now-on-indias-west-coast-the-largest-naval-base-east-of-the-suez-canal-1215952> (accessed 2 December 2015).

18 Jeremy Binnie, "China negotiating naval base with Djibouti," *IHS Janes* 360, 13 May 2015, <http://www.janes.com/article/51447/china-negotiating-naval-base-with-djibouti> (accessed 2 December 2015).

19 NATO, "NATO and the Republic of Djibouti consolidate their cooperation," 22 April 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_118880.htm (accessed 2 December 2015).

20 Regarding India's caution vis-à-vis NATO, see: Robert Helbig, "NATO-India: Prospects of a Partnership," *Research Paper* No.73, NATO Defense College, Rome, February, 2012.

phase in which the interdependence in commerce and security is inter-regional, even near-global. Therefore, inter-regional security cooperation will be on many agendas in years to come. And NATO, one of the most successful regional security enterprises in history, needs to be right at the center of the action.

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