

# U.S. Military Transformation and the Rise of China: Restructuring Regional Alliances

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**U.S. Military Transformation and the Rise of China: Restructuring Regional Alliances**

Boston College

College of Arts and Sciences Honors Program Senior Thesis Project

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## **Introduction: The China Challenge**

The United States military is currently carrying out a transformation in its war fighting strategy aimed at countering threats to America and maintaining a long term balance of power. As the lone superpower in the world, the United States seeks to secure its global supremacy by dealing with threats to the status quo in all regions of the world. In recent years, the major target of this transformation has been the rise of China, an event that could destabilize both the East Asian balance of power and the global one. The China challenge extends from the Korean peninsula to the west coast of Burma, including crucial sea lanes, choke points, and the Malacca Strait. The U.S. military cannot be in all places at the same time should a crisis arise, and so it has undertaken steps to transform into a rapidly deployable force. While the United States wants “a confident and prosperous China that can play a constructive role in the world,” there is a prevailing view that China may seek to displace American hegemony in the region should the U.S. make the opportunity available.<sup>1</sup> However, “if the United States does what it can and should do--if it strengthens its regional military presence and continues to modernize its forces--it can maintain its maritime dominance, its deterrent capability, the regional balance of power and U.S. security.”<sup>2</sup>

Currently, military planners have set a target deployment goal of “a brigade combat team anywhere in the world in 96 hours after liftoff, a division on the ground in 120 hours, and five divisions in theater in 30 days.”<sup>3</sup> This goal, however, still remains outside of U.S. current capabilities, and so the military must rely on creating a forward presence in critical regions like East Asia. Part one of this thesis will deal with how the United States is currently transforming

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<sup>1</sup> Evans Revere, acting Secretary of for East Asian and Pacific affairs, as quoted in “U.S. Seeks to Strengthen its Partnerships in Asia-Pacific Region,” *States News Service*, May 18, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Robert S. Ross, “Assessing the China Threat,” *The National Interest*, Fall 2005

<sup>3</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Concept for the Objective Force*, Washington, D.C.: White Paper with foreword by General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff, November 2001, p. 9.

its military, both in terms of war fighting strategy on the ground and positioning at sea. Though it is unlikely that the U.S. will engage China on the mainland, the possibility of American troop deployment to such areas as the Taiwan Strait and various islands in the South China Sea increasingly contributes to the importance of reshaping the force structure and deployment strategies of the military.

The second part of this paper will examine how unilateral forward positioning deployments, both on land and at sea in East Asia, helps to create a force structure that can respond to short-warning crises that may arise while continuing to secure American maritime dominance. In addition, the adoption of a strategically flexible force within the region will allow the U.S. to deploy troops stationed on foreign soil to virtually any conflict that threatens the region's stability. Antiquated methods of deployment, as illustrated in Operation Desert Storm, have proved to be ineffective when dealing with both current and future threats that the military will encounter. One of the greatest tests to transformation will be the ability to position our forces in a way that both deters China from taking any aggressive action but can also respond rapidly and appropriately should conflict occur. The rise of China is now a major priority for the Department of Defense and the most recent QDR has specifically noted that one goal of the 2007 fiscal year is "to help shape the choices of countries at strategic crossroads, strengthen deterrence, and hedge against future strategic uncertainty."<sup>4</sup>

As the U.S. transforms its military, it will rely on increased levels of commitment and cooperation from its regional allies; Part three will examine America's alliances in East Asia that continue to improve under the current situation, including the state of America's greatest strategic asset in the region, the U.S.-Japan alliance, as well as what the United States is doing to

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<sup>4</sup> Headquarters, Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., February 6, 2006, p. 6.

improve its capabilities in Southeast Asia. The rise of China is a pressing issue for Japan, Singapore, Philippines and Malaysia, and by allowing the U.S. increased access in this region, these countries can guarantee a continued U.S. presence to promote stability. At the same time, the United States can fulfill its own security goals in deterring potentially aggressive China and honor its alliance commitments should conflict arise that concerns the interests of these states. When considering the effect of forward deployment on America's alliances in regions of potential conflict, it is important to examine such factors as the length of time forward deployment will be necessary, the extent of troops and equipment prepositioned, and whether the time saved outweighs the political complications that may arise with the host nation.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, part four will look at the failing alliances in the region, the expectations that U.S. policymakers have of these states concerning transformation, and the resistance that each has shown. America's approach to dealing with the rise of China, while helping to bring the U.S. closer with many of its regional allies, has also called into question the future of some longstanding alliances in the region, specifically with South Korea and Australia. This section will also examine how the United States has dealt with the deterioration of these alliances in terms of strengthening its alliances elsewhere in the region. The paper will conclude with an analysis of how the overall transformation process has contributed to a fundamental change of the American footprint in East Asia.

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Peltz, John M. Halliday, and Aimee Bower, *Speed and Power: Toward and Expeditionary Army*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-1755, 2003, pg. 41-42.

## Part I: Military Transformation

A major transformation of the United States military and its war-fighting strategies is now underway, centered on a two-pronged approach to improve both the capabilities and deployability of forces. In order to respond more rapidly to short-warning crises, the military must reorganize its force structure to allow for rapid deployment. This, in turn, will require the army to change the way it deploys its forces, calling upon forward deployment and prepositioning to make up for the shortcomings of more traditional deployment models. Transformation is more than physically modifying the makeup of U.S. forces; it is a shift in doctrine that reflects the future of U.S. military operations.

The Army transformation is a complete process that deals with “every aspect of its doctrine, training, organization, and equipment.”<sup>6</sup> At the core of this move is the emerging doctrine of “full spectrum dominance” as laid out in *Joint Vision 2020* (JV 2020). In response to America’s continued presence as a global superpower and a wide variety of emerging threats that challenge this position, the armed forces are taking steps towards creating a force that is “able to conduct prompt, sustained, and synchronized operations with combinations of forces tailored to specific situations and with access to and freedom to operate in all domains – space, sea, land, air, and information.”<sup>7</sup> While JV 2020 is intended to be the framework for a total revolution in American military affairs, it has laid the groundwork for the transformation of the Army from the current Legacy Force to the Objective Force.

The Army has adopted two of the central concepts from JV 2020: dominant maneuver and precision engagement. A force capable of dominant maneuver, which is the motivation

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<sup>6</sup> Alan Vick, David Orletsky, Bruce Pirnie, and Seth Jones. *The Stryker Brigade Combat Team: Rethinking Strategic Responsiveness and Assessing Deployment Options*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-1606, 2002, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), *Joint Vision 2020*, Washington, D.C.: J-5 Strategic Plans and Policy, June 2000, p. 8.

behind the move to a brigade-based army, “will possess unmatched speed and agility in positioning and repositioning tailored forces from widely dispersed locations to achieve operational objectives quickly and decisively.”<sup>8</sup> The current system, organized by divisions (ranging from approximately 10,000 to 18,000 troops) consisting of three smaller brigades, introduces an extra level of command that has made it more difficult for in-field commanders to control combat situations. A transformation to the smaller brigades, which vary from 5,000 to 6,000 in strength, is aided by modern technologies, which “could provide the same—or more—combat power as current divisions.”<sup>9</sup> Precision engagement, defined as “the ability to locate and track targets, to engage targets with appropriate systems, and to achieve the desired effects,”<sup>10</sup> is essential to the Army’s new vision and its reliance on superior technology to link the new, smaller brigades on the battlefield.

The Army, having incorporated the elements of JV 2020, has simplified this doctrine to a central ideal: “the side that achieves a decisive operational capability first seizes the initiative.”<sup>11</sup> With this in mind, the ultimate goal of the Army is the Objective Force, which improves upon the Legacy force in the following characteristics: responsiveness, deployability, agility, versatility, lethality, survivability, and sustainability. The Army has clearly demonstrated its concern over response time/deployability. To develop a rapid deployment force, it has set the goal “to deploy a brigade combat team anywhere in the world in 96 hours after liftoff, a division on the ground in 120 hours, and five divisions in theater in 30 days.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> CJCS, JV 2020, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> John R. Brinkerhoff, “The Brigade-Based New Army,” *Parameters U.S. Army War College Quarterly*, Autumn 1997, pp. 61-62.

<sup>10</sup> Vick, et. al., *The Stryker Brigade Combat Team: Rethinking Strategic Responsiveness and Assessing Deployment Options*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-0 *Operations*, Washington, D.C., June 14, 2001, paragraph 3-43.

<sup>12</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Concept for the Objective Force*, Washington, D.C.: White paper with foreword by General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff, November 2001, p. 9.

A more agile and versatile force will eliminate the need to separate divisions to handle the assortment of missions that face U.S. forces, and instead would allow single units to handle a variety of operations from support and stability to actual war fighting. To be truly agile, units must be both flexible and mobile, a characteristic that we find in the brigade-based army. Survivability is linked to the Army's "need for speed," and "by seizing the initiative and seeing, understanding, and acting first, the Objective Force will enhance its own survivability through action and its retention of the initiative."<sup>13</sup> Finally, the Objective Force's ability to sustain itself in the field deals with the Army's attempt to decrease its logistical or combat footprint. Improving the reliability of equipment will allow in-field units to decrease their dependency on having to constantly re-supply;<sup>14</sup> however, "while reliability can and should be substantially improved, the Army probably cannot reach its objective force sustainability goals solely by increasing reliability."<sup>15</sup> There are four possible levers to advance sustainability: reliability ("affects a force's ability to accomplish missions"), maintainability ("encompasses factors that affect the resources and time needed to complete repairs"), fleet cycle life management ("how the Army will handle degradation from system aging and how it will design the system to accommodate upgrades"), and supply support ("requirements reflect supply chain decisions").<sup>16</sup>

### *A Brigade-Based Army:*

The United States Military has currently entered into a new stage of its transformation process, which attempts to correct the problems illustrated of Operation Desert Storm. The Current or Legacy Force is characterized by the two components of heavy and light forces, but

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<sup>13</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Concept for the Objective Force*, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Concept for the Objective Force*, p. 10-15.

<sup>15</sup> Eric Peltz, *Improved Equipment Sustainment is Critical to Army Transformation*, Arroyo Center Research Brief, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, RB-3039-A, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Peltz, *Improved Equipment Sustainment is Critical to Army Transformation*, p. 2.



there is a substantial gap between the capabilities of each. While heavy forces are equipped to provide the Army with a dominant stopping power against a variety of enemy forces, they are difficult to strategically deploy; in contrast, the light forces are well suited for rapid response but are inadequate against an enemy's heavy mechanized forces. In light of the problems associated with the Current Force, former Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki noted that, "Our forces must be capable of building sustained momentum in spite of the gap between those two operational capabilities. What we require is greater lethality, survivability and deployability all across the force."<sup>17</sup>

The Army's answer to this problem is the brigade-based system, which military planners hope will improve upon two elements of deployment and force projection: "the combat footprint" and deployment time. The Army Research Division at RAND's Arroyo Center has noted that in addition to deployment time, "the other goal is to reduce the CSS 'footprint'—the men and material needed to support combat forces—in the combat zone to improve both deployment speed and maneuver force mobility."<sup>18</sup> As early as 1997, the Army began to consider the transformation to a brigade-based system as a stepping stone towards Force XXI.<sup>19</sup> In doing so, strategists have predicted a variety of advantages that will result from this move, such as the simplification of command and control through the elimination of field command layers, the

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<sup>17</sup> General Eric Shinseki, "The Army Transformation: A Historic Opportunity," *Army Magazine*, October 2000, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> RAND Arroyo Center, *Annual Report 2002*, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Force XXI is generally considered the ultimate goal of the Army in terms of linking ground units virtually to create a force that uses technological superiority to exploit enemy units. In its simplest definition, "the multiyear Force XXI design effort was the first to invent and embody for those fighting units a linked, instantaneous, and common picture and awareness of the close and distant events of the unfolding battle of which they were part. "Digitization" was the rubric given this revolutionary emerging capability."

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/force-xxi.htm>

improvement of the mixing of combat forces,<sup>20</sup> a better integration of active and reserve components, and the ability to accommodate any required changes in force structure.<sup>21</sup>

A transformation to a brigade-based army could create significant changes to American warfare strategy that could revolutionize the Army and military affairs in general. First, the use of brigade teams would allow the army to revise its antiquated system of artillery support by having the brigades provide mutual fire support for each other. Rather than the classic linear arrangement of firepower positioned in the rear, artillery could be assigned to mobile brigades that could provide support for forward units and allow the army to employ newer, more technologically advanced weapons systems. Second, brigades are faster and more flexible than the current division formations, and with a more mobile artillery system, “brigades could move as coherent fighting forces in a nonlinear and noncontiguous manner.”<sup>22</sup>

A third possible benefit would be the ability of the Army to critically examine many of its logistical shortcomings. Brinkerhoff suggests that areas that deserve a closer look include the relationship between artillery and the units it must support, the composition of brigades, and a review of why past attempts at a more mobile fighting force have failed. Finally, a brigade-based system would allow for a more flexible management of force structure. A force comprised of brigades could be expanded or reduced more efficiently than larger divisions.<sup>23</sup>

*Lessons Learned- Problems and Solution from Operation Desert Shield/Storm:*

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<sup>20</sup> “Moving down to the brigade level would allow the Army to retain adequate amounts of these specialized capabilities (airborne, air assault, light infantry) in smaller packages. It would not be necessary to maintain an entire airborne division to have a parachute assault capability that can be provided by one separate airborne brigade.” Brinkerhoff, “The Brigade-Based New Army”, p. 68.

<sup>21</sup> Brinkerhoff, “The Brigade-Based New Army”, pp. 67-68.

<sup>22</sup> Brinkerhoff, “The Brigade-Based New Army”, pp. 70.

<sup>23</sup> Brinkerhoff, “The Brigade-Based New Army”, pp. 70-71.

The current school of thought regarding military transformation and deployment is a direct result of lessons learned in the first Gulf War. David Kassing notes that, “The deployment of U.S. forces to the Middle East in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm (ODS) has focused attention on the deployability of U.S. military power.”<sup>24</sup> The growing need for a rapidly deployable force is a testament to the shortcomings that American forces have experienced with their past deployment capabilities. Airlift, sealift, and prepositioning, the three major modes of American deployment, were all strenuously tested during Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield and neither could individually provide adequate deployment. To put it rather succinctly, “sealift could deliver the punch, but did not have the speed to get to the crisis area early. Airlift could provide the speed, but could not move heavy forces. Storing heavy equipment in the region helped.”<sup>25</sup> The success of operations as a whole tends to overshadow the significant faults that were revealed upon review of ODS. In many ways, the conditions for deployment in ODS were more favorable than can be expected in the conflicts which the U.S. will most likely face in the future. For this reason, and “to improve its strategic responsiveness, the Army is improving its ability to rapidly deploy to austere fighting environments, fight on arrival throughout the battlespace, and sustain operations until victorious.”<sup>26</sup>

On its surface, American deployment during the Gulf War seemed successful, and to some extent, it was, as U.S. forces scored overwhelming military victories. A deeper look, however, reveals that these outcomes can be misleading. American deployment benefited greatly from a series of factors: unopposed deployment, spacious sea and airports, local fuel

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<sup>24</sup> David Kassing, *Getting U.S. Military Power to the Desert: An Annotated Briefing*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, N-3508-AF/A/OSD, 1992, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*, (Little, Brown and Company: Boston 1995), p. 57.

<sup>26</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *2005 Army Modernization Plan*, Washington, D.C.: February 2005, p. 29,

sources, and a five month window of deployment.<sup>27</sup> In spite of these advantages, U.S. forces were not fully deployed and operational for approximately 165 days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Initial deployment, carried out in the first 90 days, accounted for a “substantial deterrent and defensive force” for the protection of Saudi Arabia. The second phase, which took place over the next 75 days, provided the offensive force necessary to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait as well as a considerable amount of support units and supplies.<sup>28</sup>

American strategists employed an area-defense concept, which “focused on defending key areas given the limited forces available.”<sup>29</sup> The necessity of a credible deterrent force meant initial deployments would have to get substantial units to the region in a timely fashion, “but available sealift meant the buildup of heavy ground forces would take several weeks, if not months.”<sup>30</sup> What resulted was a “window of vulnerability,” since “shortages of sufficient fast sealift with a roll-on/roll-off capability so crucial to loading and unloading armored equipment rapidly meant that heavy forces would deploy incrementally.”<sup>31</sup> Despite the overall success of ODS, each mode of deployment had its shortcomings, which would become the basis for the call for a significant transformation of the Army.

The U.S. military used a three pronged system for delivering troops and equipment to the regions of conflict; airlift, sealift, and prepositioning. Operation Desert Storm/Shield provided some key insight into the efficiency of each method, as well as its shortcomings, and “marked the first major strategic deployment of combat units by air.”<sup>32</sup> While the Final Report to Congress on the Conduct of the Persian Gulf War stated, “rapid buildup of initial forces during

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<sup>27</sup> Kassing, *Getting U.S. Military Power to the Desert*, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Kassing, *Getting U.S. Military Power to the Desert*, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Final Report to Congress, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, April 1992, p. 77

<sup>30</sup> *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, p. 78

<sup>31</sup> *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, p. 81

<sup>32</sup> John Lund, Ruth Berg, and Corinne Replogle, *An Assessment of Strategic Airlift Operational Efficiency*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-4269/4-AF, 1993, p. xiii

these crucial days would have been impossible without strategic airlift,” further assessment has noted that, “their great expense makes them impractical for delivering more than a small portion of cargo in a large-scale deployment.”<sup>33</sup>

Despite limited success, the airlift deployment during ODS failed on a number of levels. In the critical moments following the President’s decision to deploy troops, a “lack of stable, reliable requirement in the first weeks of the operation made it impossible to make efficient use of an airlift fleet.”<sup>34</sup> Further problems included mechanic failure, personnel shortages, and poor planning by those outside the Mobile Airlift Command (MAC), leaving airlift performance short of projected totals. In terms of short tons per day delivered, airlift performed below both the most optimistic projections and the Military Airlift Command’s (MAC) adjusted projections.<sup>35</sup> The presence of above average conditions and the subsequent inability of airlift coordinators to utilize this to their advantage calls into question the future of airlift in American operations. RAND’s assessment of ODS airlift noted that “the need to respond to rapidly evolving operational situations in the theater, albeit essential, meant that the airlift system performed at less than its theoretical optimum.”<sup>36</sup> With such critical factors working against the success of airlift, it is vital to consider ways to modify this essential method of deployment.

Airlift modernization has become a significant issue among Congressional leaders and military planners as the transport fleet continues to become outdated. Since the Gulf War, “the United States has reduced its Cold War infrastructure and closed two thirds of its forward

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<sup>33</sup> Congressional Budget Office, *Moving U.S. Forces: Options for Strategic Mobility*, February 1997, Section 2

<sup>34</sup> Lund, et al., *An Assessment of Strategic Airlift Operational Efficiency*, p. 74.

<sup>35</sup> “An early MAC estimate, allowing for only the first stage of CRAF and reserve volunteers, indicated that about 2,800 tons per day might be delivered. In fact, airlift delivered an average of 2,300 tons per day during the first 54 days of the Phase I deployments.” Kassing, *Getting U.S. Military Power to the Desert*, p. 26

<sup>36</sup> Lund, et. al., *An Assessment of Strategic Airlift Operational Efficiency*, p. 74.

bases.”<sup>37</sup> This has placed tremendous strain on the airlift structure, precisely because forces must now be strategically deployed over greater distances. The Air Force, as of 2005, has proposed five means to modernize strategic airlift; modernize C-5’s and purchase additional C-17’s, increased use of commercial aircraft, pursue airships and hybrid airships, reduce the airlift requirement, or accept less strategic airlift capability. It is clear that airlift will remain an option for the military, at least for the near future, as planning has already begun for its role in deploying the next wave of military force structure, the brigade combat teams.

Sealift, in contrast, is a more complex transport structure than airlift, and so it must be looked at both on its separate levels and as a collective unit. Overall, “the Department of Defense used sealift ships to move more than 70 percent of all dry cargo during the Persian Gulf War, but those ships took three to four weeks to travel from the United States.”<sup>38</sup> Sealift can be divided into four separate tiers of shipping which are differentiated based on the speed of their first deliveries. Prepositioning is naturally the fastest mode of sealift, but can be considered as a separate mode of deployment altogether. The other three consist of Fast Sealift Ships (FSS), Ready Reserve Force (RRF), and in some instances, commercial ships chartered by DoD.

As early as 1992, in RAND’s assessment of Operation Desert Shield/Storm deployment, it was conceded that the favorable conditions present during the conflict would not be as likely in later conflicts. It is for this reason that rapid deployment and forward positioning have become so vital to future military success. Following the end of the Cold War, significant changes in military force structure have ushered out heavy forces and replaced them with light, rapidly deployable units. During Operation Desert Shield/Storm, prepositioning was crucial in establishing a sufficient force within the theatre as early as possible. The U.S. had Maritime

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<sup>37</sup> Christopher Bolkcom, CRS Report for Congress, *Strategic Airlift Modernization: Background, Issues, and Options*, March 25, 2005, CRS-1

<sup>38</sup> *Moving U.S. Forces: Options for Strategic Mobility*, Section 2

Prepositioning Squadrons at Diego Garcia and Guam, while, “two carrier battle groups with more than 100 fighter and attack aircraft, and more than 10 surface combatant ships were directed to the Gulf Region on 2 August.”<sup>39</sup> In addition, the Afloat Prepositioning Force, responsible for storing supplies for the Army, Navy and, Air Force performed exceptionally well, meeting planned expectations. According to RAND’s analysis of Gulf War Deployment, the Afloat Prepositioning Force arrived without incident within 11 days of being called into action. The MPS performed on a similar level, though slightly under expectations in terms of time and maintenance.<sup>40</sup>

*A Stronger Case for Prepositioning/Forward Deployment:*

The ambitious goal set forth by General Shinseki “to deploy a brigade combat team anywhere in the world in 96 hours” seems unattainable with basing solely in the United States and budget constraints. In light of this, military planners have paid closer attention to the possibility of a greater reliance on prepositioning (equipment) and forward deployment (troops) through the use of regional U.S. bases and cooperation from allies. In their analysis of the Army’s effort to develop a faster fighting force that can be rapidly deployed, Peltz, Halliday, and Bower note that when determining the most plausible locations for what they call forward unit positioning, “the decision process should start with a review of regions where fast-response capability is desired.”<sup>41</sup> This method would prove especially beneficial in East Asia, where the United States is currently meeting the rise of China by continuing to restructure its forces and strengthen its capabilities in the region. With the China challenging covering such a large area (from the Korean peninsula to the west coast of Burma, including crucial sea lanes, choke points,

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<sup>39</sup> *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, p. 79

<sup>40</sup> Kassing, *Getting U.S. Military Power to the Desert*, p. 27-29

<sup>41</sup> Peltz, et. al., *Speed and Power: Toward and Expeditionary Army*, p. 41.

and the Malacca Strait), it becomes more difficult for the U.S. military to be everywhere at the same time. The Army, in conjunction with the Navy and Air Force, will play an important role in deterring China, as it “ensures critical access is available when needed through forward-deployed forces, forward positioned capabilities, peacetime security cooperation initiatives, and, when called, through force projection from the CONUS or any other location where needed capabilities reside.”<sup>42</sup>

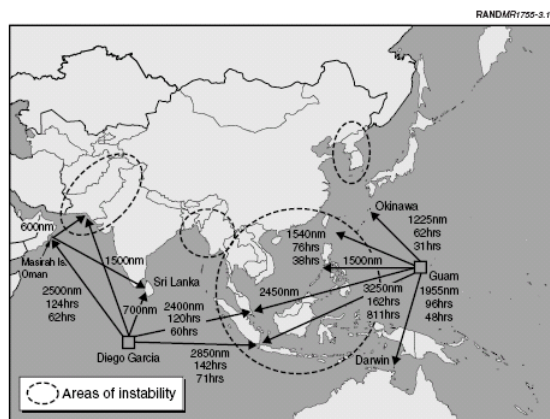
There are three basic forms of prepositioning that deal with a region of high priority. In the first case, the United States could rely on its regional allies to allow for prepositioning of troops and equipment in areas located in close proximity to possible sites of conflict. This is not a new concept, with examples including, “heavy brigade sets in Kuwait that were prepositioned in response to the Iraqi threat, sets prepositioned in Germany during the Cold War, and equipment sets in South Korea.” What makes this idea so attractive at this stage in American military affairs is the emphasis that has been placed on the need for rapid deployment, and the considerable increase in importance of certain regions (specifically East Asia, and to some extent, the Middle East). The other two forms of prepositioning center around the implementation of a “theater-oriented” system, with equipment or troops prepositioned on ships in the region or in nearby countries, which would then be transported throughout the region by ships.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Concept for the Objective Force*, Washington, D.C.: White paper with foreword by General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff, November 2001, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Peltz, et. al., *Speed and Power: Toward and Expeditionary Army*, p. 47.





Times based on 20 knots sailing speed (LMSR)/40 knots sailing speed (TSV)

Figure 3.17—Movement of Prepositioned Afloat Must Often Start Before Beginning Air Movement of Deploying Units 44

To effectively implement a system of prepositioning, the Army must modify its current protocol to maximize speed and efficiency. In the past, prepositioning guidelines mandated administrative loading (loading done to maximize space without tactical consideration), a lack of urgency for moving early in response to threats, dated equipment, a single force type (fixed application) and the prepositioning of full units. With an emphasis on rapid deployment, these characteristics must be changed. First, as mentioned in the discussion of airlift loading, the new, restructured brigades would be able to deploy faster if operational/mission loading (equipment loaded so as to be ready for use immediately) was utilized. Second, the development of a strategic warning system would allow the movement of prepositioned equipment to begin prior to the full outbreak of conflict. A third step which must be carried out with the utmost priority is the modernization of prepositioned equipment, which is a given in the context of the transformation overhaul that the Army is undergoing. In addition, ships used for prepositioning are capable of supporting different forces, and this should be exploited by forward deploying multiple unit types. Finally, the question of cost is certainly on the minds of military planners.

<sup>44</sup> Peltz, et. al., *Speed and Power: Toward and Expeditionary Army*, p. 48.

By limiting forward deployment to select equipment rather than full units, cost can be substantially cut.<sup>45</sup>

*Future Considerations:*

Inevitably, there will be some obstacles in the way of this transformation process and many of the initiatives will fall short of their projected goals. At this point, the 96 hour deadline for brigade deployment continues to be outside the reach of military planners, and even calls into question the viability for such a rapid response time. Retired Lt. Col. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr. point out that while a rapidly deployable expeditionary force is essential to the future success of the Army, it [the Army], “must make difficult tradeoffs in its design parameters (force lethality, mobility, and sustainability) to meet these extremely demanding and seemingly arbitrary deployment timelines.”<sup>46</sup>

A second obstacle can be seen in the urban warfare currently being fought in Iraq, which has demonstrated the problems that arise when the impact of American air superiority is reduced, emphasizing the necessity for precise and advanced intelligence gathering. The vision for the new brigades and eventually the Objective Force, which centers around the ability of U.S. forces to “see first, understand first, act first, and finish decisively” is intended to improve American capabilities in scenarios where “it seems likely that the local inhabitants or occupying forces will have a better picture of the environment than Army forces which arrive after the fact.”<sup>47</sup> This will place an even greater burden on military planners to plan for such missions when finalizing the brigade teams. To date, the army seems ready and willing to accept this challenge in

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<sup>45</sup> Peltz, et. al., *Speed and Power: Toward and Expeditionary Army*, pg. 47-51.

<sup>46</sup> Lt. Col. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Land Warfare: Transforming the Legions*, Joint Force Quarterly, Autumn 2002, p. 80.

<sup>47</sup> Krepinevich, *The Army and Land Warfare: Transforming the Legions*, p. 81.

developing brigades that will be able to sustain themselves in both long term operations and irregular warfare.<sup>48</sup>

Military transformation is a complex process, but a necessary one if the United States is to maintain its prominent position in the international security structure. The evolving nature of threats to America's security challenges military planners to rethink the way we fight wars. Drawing upon the lessons of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, it is clear that a transition to a rapidly deployable force is a necessity, given the high probability of short warning conflicts.

Staging this rapidly deployable force within the continental United States no longer seems practical, and the strong case for prepositioning cannot be ignored. The issue at hand is how this will affect America's relationships with its allies who will be called upon to house U.S. troops and equipment in regions of likely conflict. No region demonstrates this problem quite like East Asia, where uncertainty concerning the rise of China stands to threaten the overall stability of the region as well as America's position there. How regional actors balance the rise of China and increasing demands from American leaders will have a direct effect on U.S. military planning in the region.

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<sup>48</sup> According to the February 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the Army reports this Progress to Date: "Consistent with these future force characteristics, the Army is significantly expanding its capabilities and capacity for the full range of military operations, including irregular warfare and support to security, stability and transition operations. It is reorganizing its combat and support forces into modular brigade-based units – including brigade combat teams (BCT's) and the support brigades to sustain them – to increase breadth and depth for the long war. They are increasing their proficiency in irregular warfare, thereby freeing up some special operations forces for more complex tasks." Headquarters, Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., February 6, 2006, p. 42.

## Part II: Unilateral Deployments and East Asia

The United States Military, and specifically the Navy, have begun a series of unilateral deployments and transformations with an eye on increasing their power projection capabilities in East Asia and responding to the rise of China. As pointed out in a Congressional Budget Office Report on fleet modernization, “above all others, the specific potential threat that concerns much of the Navy’s leadership and many Members of Congress is a new naval competition with the People’s Republic of China.”<sup>49</sup> Navy Sea Power 21, the conceptual framework for this transformation, consists of three major components: Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing. This transformation is aimed at improving the “ability of naval forces to project precise and persistent offensive power from the sea...defend themselves at sea...and operate at sea, as sovereign entities free from concerns of access and political constraints associated with using land bases in other countries.”<sup>50</sup> Sea Basing will further allow the military to launch expeditionary operations and utilize more rapidly deployable forces (i.e. the new brigades) in regions of conflict, though Navy officials do not expect this to become a viable option for another thirty years.

In the near future, the Navy plans on a fleet modernization that “would be organized around 11 carrier strike groups (one less than now exists), nine expeditionary strike groups (two less than in the current fleet), nine surface action groups, and four SSGN strike groups.”<sup>51</sup> The overall size of the fleet is to be reduced from 375 ships to a smaller, but more capable 290 ships fleet, with the argument behind it that capabilities are more important sheer numbers. Under this transformation, a more advanced system of weapons programs is expected to be launched.

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<sup>49</sup> “Options for the Navy’s Future Fleet,” Congressional Budget Office, May 2006, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Ronald O’Rourke, “Naval Transformation: Background and Issues for Congress,” *CRS Report for Congress*, June 2, 2005, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> “Options for the Navy’s Future Fleet,” Congressional Budget Office, May 2006, p. xv.

Leading this development surge is a new class of Nuclear Powered Aircraft Carriers (CVN-21), designed to replace the current Nimitz class as they move into retirement. The CVN-21, which is not expected to begin construction until 2008, will provide the Navy with more capable carriers and aircraft deployment, but raises significant questions about both cost and size. Many critics doubt that this will be feasible in terms of the overall budget for the program as well as whether such massive ships will be able to perform in the types of future combat scenarios that are currently being envisioned.<sup>52</sup>

A second initiative being undertaken by the Navy is the Trident Submarine Conversion (SSGN) program, which converts Ohio class nuclear submarines (first commissioned in 1981) into “cruise-missile-carrying and special operations forces (SOF) support submarines.” Each submarine would be capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles and 66 SEAL team members, and would use existing launch tubes to deliver both its arsenal and deploy SEAL personnel through the Advanced SEAL Delivery System. As the Navy continues to produce these submarines, the question of basing becomes important. As early as the 2001 QDR, it was suggested that the Pacific theatre was the appropriate place to base these subs, and more specifically, at U.S. facilities in Guam. The SSGN program highlights some major components of the current transformation procedure, representing a “conversion of a strategic-nuclear force platform into a non-strategic platform” while combining stealth with the capability of carrying a significantly larger number of cruise missiles and delivering a larger payload volume.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the modernization of the fleet, the Navy is also seeking to restructure naval formations and deployment options. Currently, the Navy is organized around “aircraft carrier battle groups and Amphibious Ready Groups,” but such a system is no longer considered

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<sup>52</sup> “Options for the Navy’s Future Fleet,” Congressional Budget Office, May 2006, p. 15-16.

<sup>53</sup> Ronald O’Rourke, “Navy Trident Submarine Conversion (SSGN) Program: Background and Issues for Congress,” *CRS Report for Congress*, June 20, 2006, p. 1-4.

feasible for the flexibility necessary to deploy to multiple regions at the same time. In response to this, the Navy has begun to implement a Global Concept of Operations, which “reorganizes the Navy into a larger number of independently deployable, strike-capable formations.” At the center of this transformation are the SSGN submarines which have been assigned to the new surface strike groups (SSGs) and can independently carry out operations.

A major element of this fleet transformation and military transformation in general, is the emphasis that is being placed on flexibility. The Navy, which currently uses a six-month forward deployment schedule, has begun to implement changes that make this schedule more flexible. By working in changes to the system concerning deployment length and rotational deployment schedule, the Navy hopes to deal with the criticism that “maintaining the standard six-month deployments resulted in a fleet that offered insufficient flexibility for responding to the potential need for surging large numbers of naval forces in a short time to respond to major regional contingencies.”<sup>54</sup> A combination of more flexible deployment schedules and prepositioned forces, while not officially designated as such, seems to be specifically tailored towards dealing with the rise of China. At present, “a carrier strike group and an expeditionary strike group are based permanently in Yokosuka and Sasebo, Japan, respectively” and “the Navy has studied options for basing six more submarines and a squadron of cruisers and destroyers in Guam,” with an additional carrier home-ported in San Diego.<sup>55</sup> Presently, Guam’s Apra Harbor is the home to two Los Angeles-class nuclear-powered attack submarines.<sup>56</sup> Though the importance of the region has required defense planners to relocate forces and equipment, such a transformation is challenged by the vulnerability of prepositioned forces and the dispersion of

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<sup>54</sup> Ronald O’Rourke, “Navy Ship Deployments: New Approaches – Background and Issues for Congress,” *CRS Report for Congress*, July 14, 2006, p. 1-2.

<sup>55</sup> “Options for the Navy’s Future Fleet,” Congressional Budget Office, May 2006, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup> Christian Caryl, “America’s Unsinkable Fleet,” *Newsweek*, Feb 26, 2007

troops to reduce that vulnerability. It is here that we see the need for greater cooperation with our allies as “the pentagon plans to minimize presence, reduce large overseas bases and keep military assets away from hotspots to reduce ‘exposure to asymmetric threats’ while advancing joint operations and sharing roles with allies.”<sup>57</sup>

### *The Importance of Guam:*

With American military strategists carrying out a program of unilateral deployments in East Asia, perhaps their greatest asset lies on the U.S. territory of Guam, which “offers the U.S. military both proximity to potential hot spots and the advantages of operating off U.S. soil.”<sup>58</sup> Though Guam has historically been a key staging area for U.S. troops (there is a major U.S. Navy port and Air Force base already on site), the current administration has advocated a major buildup on the small island. Current estimates place an additional 8,000 Marines on Guam by 2014 (transferred from Okinawa) and an overall troop increase nearing 20,000 within a decade, all in an attempt to make the island a forward deployment base for the U.S. in the Pacific.<sup>59</sup> This forward deployment is a direct result of both the transformation to a rapidly deployable military and the growing concern over the rise of China. Defense analyst Richard Halloran has noted that “The larger strategic rationale [for the shift] can be summed up in one word, and that's ‘China.’”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “Pentagon Eyes Greater Pacific Presence but no 2<sup>nd</sup> Carrier Force,” *Japan Economic Newswire*, January 26, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Christian Caryl, “America’s Unsinkable Fleet,” Feb 26, 2007.

<sup>59</sup> As early as 2003, in his testimony before Congress, Admiral Thomas Fargo, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, alluded to the necessity of Guam, stating, “We are still in the process of looking at our force posture and footprint throughout Asia and the Pacific, and I think it is way premature right now to make any commitments beyond the point of saying to you that I think that Guam's future is very bright and positive, in my view, as a key location for our military forces.” *U.S. Security Policy in Asia and the Pacific: Restructuring America’s Forward Deployment*, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, June 26, 2003, p. 111.

<sup>60</sup> Caryl, “America’s Unsinkable Fleet,” Feb 26, 2007.

Guam's continuing importance does not stop at forward deployment of troops. In addition to the two currently based attack submarines, and with the possibility of adding up to six more, the Navy "also plans to refurbish wharves to accommodate aircraft carriers and to transform Guam into a base for its new Littoral Combat Ship (a shallow-draft stealth ship designed to operate close to shore) and [SSGN]."<sup>61</sup> Such accommodation would serve as a temporary basing area for the carriers, as military personnel have decided against a permanent home-porting of aircraft carriers in Guam, opting instead for San Diego. With an eye on future conflict with China, the U.S. continues to take steps to ensure naval dominance in the region. To support this endeavor, military planners have also boosted the Air Force presence on Guam by relocating tanker planes, additional fighter planes, and unmanned spy planes which may replace the U2 spy planes that are currently based in South Korea. In 2003, the U.S. ordered the deployment of 24 long range bombers to Guam in response to a possible crisis involving North Korea, and has implemented a plan for frequent rotations of B-2 strategic bombers on the island.<sup>62</sup> The island is also the "first installation outside the continental United States to store 3,000-pound conventional air-launched cruise missiles" at Anderson Air Force Base.<sup>63</sup> The increased forward deployment on Guam serves to both re-assure our allies in Southeast Asia that our commitment to them and to balancing the rise of China is still strong and to position U.S. forces in a place where they can rapidly respond to short-warning conflicts. As General Paul Hester has noted, "If you want to look for unobstructed operations that America may want to do,

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<sup>61</sup> Caryl, "America's Unsinkable Fleet," Feb 26, 2007. The Littoral Combat ship operates in coastal areas and is "the Navy's newest surface combatant...intended to be a focused-mission ship rather than a multimission or single-mission ship." "Options for the Navy's Future Fleet," Congressional Budget Office, May 2006, p. 17.

<sup>62</sup> Barbara Starr, "U.S. Orders 24 Long-Range Bombers to Guam", March 3, 2003 accessed on <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/03/04/n.korea.bombers/index.html>; Bill Gertz, "Pentagon 'Hedge' Strategy Targets China," The Washington Times, March 17, 2006, accessed on <http://www.washingtontimes.com/national/20060316-114755-3306r.htm>.

<sup>63</sup> "Anderson Air Force Base," <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/andersen.htm> accessed on 4/24/07.



there is no place that is deeper penetrating into the western Pacific, under an American flag, than in Guam.”<sup>64</sup>

Finally, Guam is strategically located to cut down on response time, but still lies outside of China’s maritime power-projection capabilities. Still, the threat of Chinese missile capabilities is a concern for defense planners, who now seek to incorporate Guam into the U.S. missile defense system already in place in the region. As the U.S. improves its own capabilities and infrastructure on Guam, and strengthens its own power-projection and deterrent capabilities in the region, the likelihood of China initiating conflict diminishes. Given the number of sources of tension in East Asia, specifically the Taiwan Strait and North Korea, and the Spratly Islands in Southeast Asia, Guam “could certainly serve as an excellent patrol base and important inter-theater staging base, and relatively secure rear area in event of a crisis or conflict, particularly one extending over a period of time.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Al Pessin, “Tiny Guam Key to US Pacific Military Strategy,” *Voice of America News August 23, 2006*, quoting General Paul Hester, Commander of the U.S. Air Force in the Pacific and Indian Ocean areas.

<sup>65</sup> Tom Donnelly, senior advisor in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., as quoted in Richard R. Burgess’ “Guam Re-Emerges as Major Staging Area for U.S. Forces,” *Sea Power*, Vol. 49, No. 12, December 2006, p. 44-64.

### **Part III: The Role of Regional Alliances**

Military transformation cannot be solely a unilateral endeavor on the part of the United States and a heavier emphasis will be placed on the cooperation of allies to assist U.S. forward deployment of personnel and equipment, particularly U.S. allies in East Asia. This shift in war-fighting strategy makes it increasingly important for allies to accommodate the demands of the United States, but at the same, will foster a change in alliance relationships. A rapidly deployable force, supported by equipment based overseas, will require allies to not only grant access to their ports and bases, but to maintain these facilities and be willing to provide war-time assistance to the U.S. in almost any way necessary.

The heavy demand of military transformation on alliance partners is affecting the way in which the United States restructures its security relationships in East Asia. Transformation targets the capabilities of both the U.S. and its alliance partners, as well as the interoperability of the combined forces. As James J. Przystup, a senior fellow in the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University notes, “U.S.-led transformation should not be a threat to alliance solidarity. Done right, in fact, it will reinforce deterrence and strengthen the military effectiveness of the alliance in performing a range of vital tasks.”<sup>66</sup> While the United States and its allies may not always be aligned in their expectations of the alliance, a positive response to transformation can increase the burden sharing and bring about a more mutually beneficial relationship. As the major power in each of these alliances, the United States, by insisting upon an increased level of cooperation as it transforms its force structure, seeks to bring about greater burden sharing for collective security within the alliance, while at the same time reinforcing its commitment to promoting stability in the region. In doing so, the U.S. must call on its alliance

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<sup>66</sup> James J. Przystup, “Military Transformation: Enhancing Capabilities and Commitment,” *INSS Special Report*, March 2004.

partners to contribute in ways that are most in line with their current capabilities, whether it is the commitment of forces to U.S. led operations or rear area and logistical support while the United States conducts operations elsewhere in the region.

As a result, the United States has strengthened its alliances with many states in the region, most notably Japan, Singapore, Philippines, and Malaysia. The U.S.-Japan alliance is the centerpiece of U.S. strategy in East Asia, as both countries are now pre-occupied with the rise of China.

*Japan:*

America's footprint in East Asia currently rests firmly in the U.S.-Japan alliance, which former United States Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage has referred to as "our greatest strategic asset in the region."<sup>67</sup> Since the end of World War Two, the United States and Japan were close allies, working together to ensure stability in East Asia in the face of a common Soviet threat. However, "once freed from the strategic constraints of containing the Soviet Union, both Washington and Tokyo ignored the real, practical, and pressing needs of the bilateral alliance."<sup>68</sup> This post-Cold War drift led to a straining of relations that would be exposed during the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis, which subsequently produced the 1996 U.S.-Japan Joint Security Declaration and the revised Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation. In the October 2000 INSS Report (though unofficial, still quite relevant) on the alliance, Armitage proposed the foundation for improving the security cooperation which consisted of a reaffirmation of U.S. forces to defend Japan, a "diligent implementation of the revised

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<sup>67</sup> Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, "The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020," *CSIS Report*, February 2007, p. 15.

<sup>68</sup> Richard L. Armitage, et al., "The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership," *INSS Special Report*, October 2000, p. 3.

Guidelines,” and a decreased American force structure in Japan, based on capability rather than quantity.<sup>69</sup>

In order to reduce the American military footprint in Japan, strategists had to reassess the use of Okinawa for forward basing and deployment. Okinawa provided a strategic stronghold for American forces, “positioned at the intersection of the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean—only about one hour’s flying time from Korea, Taiwan, and the South China Sea.”<sup>70</sup> Unlike Guam, using Okinawa for basing and troop buildup is not without its political challenges, and the 1996 U.S.-Japan Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) agreement dealt with this issue by calling “for a realignment, consolidation, and reduction of U.S. bases on Okinawa.”<sup>71</sup> The removal of forces from Okinawa was not necessarily a poor strategic move, but Armitage argued that the agreement should have explicitly called for the U.S. to diversify its forces and spread them across the region, stating “from a military perspective, it is important for U.S. forces to have broad and flexible access across the region.”<sup>72</sup>

The United States has been assertive in promoting its goals in East Asia of “opposing a dominant regional power, seeking free and open trade, and promoting democracy.”<sup>73</sup> Armacost and Pyle note that “the forward deployment of 100,000 American troops in East Asia, the network of bases and alliances in the region, and the role of the Seventh Fleet in maintaining regional security give the U.S. engagement policy a far more assertive character [than Japan’s].”<sup>74</sup> Japan’s proximity to China has influenced the way in which Japan participates in the security relationship with the United States. As Armitage notes, “during most of its existence,

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<sup>69</sup> Armitage, et al., “The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership,” p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> Armitage, et al., “The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership,” p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> Armitage, et al., “The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership,” p. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Armitage, et al., “The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership,” p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Armacost, Michael L., and Kenneth B. Pyle, “Japan and the Engagement of China: Challenges for U.S. Policy Coordination,” *The national Bureau of Asian Research*, Vol. 12, No. 5, December 2001, p. 10.

<sup>74</sup> Armacost and Pyle, “Japan and the Engagement of China: Challenges for U.S. Policy Coordination,” p. 10.

the U.S.-Japan security relationship operated under two fundamental principles: that the United States will defend Japan and the areas under its administration. And that Japan would provide bases and facilities for U.S. forces in country for the security of the Far East.” In recent years, Japanese leaders have been more willing to provide assistance to U.S. led operations outside the region, as evidenced by the deployment of Japan’s Self-Defense forces in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the reconstruction of Iraq.<sup>75</sup>

In contrast to the state of the alliance in 2000, the U.S.-Japan security relationship is now moving in a direction of greater collaboration as Japan asserts itself more on regional and global matters. The United States can now expect Japan to provide “for more of the areas required for its own defense” but at the same time, “the U.S. must view itself as an Asia-Pacific power and decide to take part in all aspects of life in Asia.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, AS Japan remains under the protection of the United States, recent trends in the alliance have allowed the U.S. an even greater presence in the region through Japan.

In 2008, the United States is scheduled to base a nuclear carrier in Japan for the first time, thereby increasing American capabilities and “allows the most rapid response times possible for maritime and joint forces, and brings our most capable ships with the greatest amount of striking power and operational capability to bear in the timeliest manner.”<sup>77</sup> Logistically, American defense planners are working to integrate Japan into its Command, Control, Communications, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance structure (C4ISR) through “closer linkages between American and Japanese command, control, and communication (C3)

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<sup>75</sup> Armitage and Nye, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020,” p. 19.

<sup>76</sup> Armitage and Nye, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020,” p. 20.

<sup>77</sup> “U.S. to Base Nuclear Carrier in Japan,” *China Daily*, October 29, 2005.

systems.”<sup>78</sup> This is being accomplished in large part through the buildup of Japanese missile defense as it contributes to the American missile defense system, which includes contingencies for the defense of Taiwan.<sup>79</sup> In doing so, Japanese installments will allow for a more integrated network of communication and intelligence for early warning and tracking. The 2005 Security Consultative Committee Document entitled “U.S.-Japan Alliance-Transformation and Realignment for the Future” listed Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) as an essential step to strengthen posture for bilateral security and defense cooperation, stating, “to support these BMD systems, they emphasized a critical importance of constant information gathering and sharing, as well as maintaining high readiness and interoperability in light of the minimal time available to respond to a ballistic missile threat.”<sup>80</sup> The report also called for the United States to evaluate the potential sites for the new U.S. X-Band radar system, and to “deploy active defenses, such as Patriot PAC-3 and Standard Missile (SM-3) to support U.S. treaty commitments.”<sup>81</sup> Japan has also recently acknowledged that its own Ballistic Missile Defense subsystem will be integrated with and serve U.S. national missile defense.

In fostering closer relations and joint operability, the U.S. and Japan have collaborated on developing and producing the technology necessary for missile defense. Armitage, in his recommendations for security and military cooperation between the two countries, stated, “The United States and Japan should consider opportunities for joint development of key systems, subsystems, and related technologies for the CG(X), the successor to the Ticonderoga Class

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<sup>78</sup> Charles Wolf Jr. and Jonathon D. Pollack, Cross-Cutting Issues in Asia, the United States, and the Global Economy, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-1571-RC, 2002, p. 194.

<sup>79</sup> James J. Przystup, “China and the U.S.-Japan Alliance,” *Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University*, p. 51.

<sup>80</sup> Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, and Nobutaka Machimura, “U.S.-Japan Alliance-Transformation and Realignment for the Future,” October 29, 2005, p. 4.

<sup>81</sup> Rice, Rumsfeld, and Machimura, “U.S.-Japan Alliance-Transformation and Realignment for the Future,” p. 6.

Aegis Guided Missile Cruiser.”<sup>82</sup> Presently, Japan has taken valuable steps to contribute to missile defense by launching six of its own Aegis destroyers which are equipped with U.S.-designed SM-3 anti-missile systems.<sup>83</sup> In addition, Japan has lifted its self-imposed ban on arms exports so as to allow for the “transfer of ballistic missile defense technology from Japan to the United States.”<sup>84</sup> Japan’s commitment to absorbing substantial portions of the cost of these systems will become more important as the United States begins to replace older weapons systems. A CRS Report for Congress on the new naval weapons programs makes note of the fact that the CG(X) “would be equipped with a more powerful radar that could support missile-defense operations” but “might be somewhat larger and more expensive to procure.”<sup>85</sup>

A final and critical component of the enhanced alliance cooperation deals in large part with Japan’s willingness to provide logistical support for U.S. operations within the region. In a 1996 joint communiqué from Washington and Tokyo, “Japan guaranteed base access for U.S. forces and committed itself to increased logistics and rear-area support roles.”<sup>86</sup> The 1997 revised guidelines expanded Japan’s role even further and called for cooperation in rear area support to “include supplies (construction of office, accommodations, etc., inside US facilities, provision of material except arms and ammunition), transportation (including land, sea and air transport of personnel, materials inside Japan), maintenance of US aircraft, vessels and vehicles, provision of medical services, security of US facilities and areas, communication and others

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<sup>82</sup> Armitage and Nye, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020,” p. 27.

<sup>83</sup> “Japan Launches Sixth Aegis Warship,” *Agence France-Presse*, August 30, 2006.

<sup>84</sup> Joseph Coleman, “U.S., Japan Expand Missile-Defense Plan,” *The Associated Press*, June 23, 2006, accessed on <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/23/AR2006062300261.html> on March 25, 2007.

<sup>85</sup> Ronald O’Rourke, “Navy DDG-1000 (DD(X)), CG(X), and LCS Ship Acquisition Programs: Oversight Issues and Options for Congress,” *CRS Report for Congress*, July 26, 2006, p. 10.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia”, *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 4. (Spring, 1999), p. 62.

(water, electricity, etc).”<sup>87</sup> These new provisions were included as part of a changing role for Japanese forces that involves them in “the case of any contingency in the defence of not just its own territory, but also in ‘areas surrounding it.’”<sup>88</sup>

By shifting the nature of collective security to involve geographically important areas that affect Japanese security, the United States can expect to secure greater cooperation from Japan in coordinating possible Taiwan contingencies.<sup>89</sup> The potential for America to rapidly deploy forces from Japanese bases in the event of a crisis in the Taiwan Strait is something that has worried Chinese leaders and the implementation of a successful TMD system “could reduce China’s ability to threaten the island (Taiwan) with ballistic missile attacks, the PLA’s main means of coercing Taiwan.”<sup>90</sup> Japanese and American leaders, in January of this year, further strengthened possible cooperation for a Taiwan contingency by agreeing that Japan would “provide rear support for U.S. forces and possibly engage in other activities” which could include “Japanese troops conducting rear-area search and rescue for US soldiers, ship inspections and rescue operations for overseas Japanese living in the affected areas.”<sup>91</sup>

### **Southeast Asia:**

An area of strategic importance in this region is Southeast Asia, where the United States and China are the two dominant powers. The U.S. has a distinct advantage because Southeast Asia’s maritime environment allows for an American naval dominance, insofar as China does not have maritime power projection capability. That is not to say that China is not actively

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<sup>87</sup> Arpita Mathur, “Japan’s Changing Role in the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance,” *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 28. No. 4, 2004, p. 508.

<sup>88</sup> Mathur, “Japan’s Changing Role in the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance,” p. 508.

<sup>89</sup> The 1997 guidelines called for defense cooperation “in response to situations in ‘areas surrounding Japan that have an important influence on Japan’s security.’” Mathur, “Japan’s Changing Role in the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance,” p. 507.

<sup>90</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia”, p. 65.

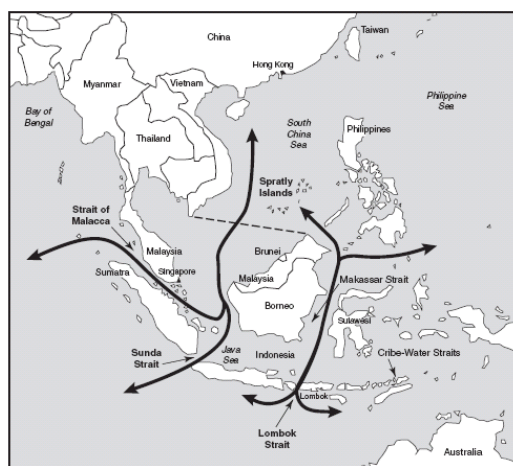
<sup>91</sup> “Japan, U.S. to Study Joint Operation Plan for Taiwan Contingency,” *Kyodo News Service*, January 4, 2007.



seeking ways to improve its naval capabilities; in fact, “the Chinese are likely...to pursue an activist policy to influence regional developments as well as to acquire the capabilities to project military force throughout the region.”<sup>92</sup>

As the United States seeks to consolidate its maritime presence in Southeast Asia, it benefits from the general acceptance of American forces in the region; “in the post-Cold War period, regional uncertainties about the potential dangers attending a rising China have led some analysts to conclude that almost all Southeast Asian states (sometimes referred to as Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN) now see the United States as the critical balancing force, both in the military and political-economic spheres.”<sup>93</sup>

Southeast Asia has become one of the most significant regions in terms of American strategic interests. Both the United States and members of ASEAN have an interest in protecting the vital sea lanes that run through Southeast Asia, which could be threatened by China’s territorial claims to critical islands on their (the sea lanes’) periphery.



SOURCE: John H. Noer, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University, Washington, D.C. 94

<sup>92</sup> Richard Sokolsky, Angel Rabasa, and C. Richard Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Toward China*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-1170, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> Evelyn Goh, “Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies,” East-West Center Washington, 2005, p. vii.

<sup>94</sup> Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Toward China*, p. 12.

At this point in time, China's limited naval capabilities make this possibility very unlikely, but it is no doubt on the minds of the region's main actors, who welcome American influence to preserve the freedom of navigation.

*Singapore:*

In its search for regional actors who are willing to accommodate American interests in the region, the United States has been able to consistently rely on Singapore, whose relationship "is the most substantial and multifaceted relationship that the United States has with any Southeast Asian country."<sup>95</sup> Though the two countries are not formal alliance partners, each has come to expect a certain level of cooperation from the other based on two common security threats: the short term threat of terrorism in Singapore and the long term potential for regional destabilization due to a rising China. Singapore finds itself in a very hostile neighborhood and "the trajectory of militant Islam in the neighboring states of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are inextricably linked to the terrorist threat to Singapore."<sup>96</sup> The events of September 11 have significantly improved on an already productive relationship between the two countries, and though they "still eschew a formal alliance, Singapore is quietly cooperating with the United States more closely on key antiterrorism and anti-proliferation issues, including its participation in the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative aimed at intercepting illegal weapons cargoes transported over sea, air, and land."<sup>97</sup>

Following the end of the Cold War and the uncertainty that ensued, Singapore secured a continued American presence in the region by signing a Memorandum of Understanding that

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<sup>95</sup> Anthony L. Smith, "Singapore and the United States 2004-2005: Steadfast Friends," Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, February 2005, p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> Andrew Tan, "Terrorism in Singapore: Threats and Implications," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 23, No. 3, December 2002, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> Goh, "Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies," p. 25.

gave U.S. forces access to Singaporean naval and air facilities. Two years later, the United States ended its use of its naval base at Subic Bay in the Philippines after a series of failed negotiations regarding American use of and eventual withdrawal from the base; Singapore was eager to afford them a new base for this relocation.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps the most significant arrangement was a 1998 agreement in which Singapore announced that they would fund the construction of a deep sea pier to allow for U.S. aircraft carrier access. The use of existing facilities rather than the creation of permanent bases is a new approach to keeping a U.S. presence in the region and “consists of a network of bilateral arrangements that facilitate training, exercises and interoperability which, in lieu of permanent bases” and “will permit the US to remain engaged and forward deployed in Southeast Asia.”<sup>99</sup> In addition to the facilitating of forward deployment, Singapore has participated in joint military exercises with the United States including Cobra Gold, the annual Thai-U.S. military exercise.<sup>100</sup>

The United States continues to improve its defense cooperation with Singapore. In August of 2005, U.S. and British navies carried out anti-Weapons of Mass Destruction exercises in the South China Sea, and were assisted by the Singaporean Navy, strengthening America’s commitment to helping Singapore deal with their concern over local terrorism. May 2005 marked the 11th time that Singapore and U.S. forces conducted joint exercises in the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) series, “which have served to enhance the interoperability of the two armed forces.” Security in the Malacca Strait is also on the minds of regional and U.S. leaders, and U.S Pacific Fleet Commander Gary Roughead publicly

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<sup>98</sup> “Although Singapore is not a treaty ally, it supports a strong U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region and has offered the U.S. increased access to its facilities since the closure of our bases in the Philippines.” Matthew P. Daley, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, “U.S. Interests and Policy Priorities in Southeast Asia,” Testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, Washington D.C., March 26, 2003.

<sup>99</sup> “Singapore Changi naval base,” found on <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/singapore.htm>.

<sup>100</sup> Goh, “Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies,” p. 5.

commended Singapore (among other nations) for their work in securing this area, as well as pledging U.S. support if requested to ensure regional maritime stability.<sup>101</sup>

What does this cooperative relationship mean for both Singapore and the United States? Clearly, Singapore has a clear interest in maintaining the status quo in the face of both local terrorism and a rising China. Militarily, Singapore has the most advanced and modern forces in Southeast Asia due in large part to their trade with the United States, and “because of its relative sophistication and significant defense budget, the Singapore armed forces are the only military force in Southeast Asia that can interact with the U.S. military meaningfully.”<sup>102</sup> This provides a unique aspect to the relationship, because the United States can reasonably expect a certain level of cooperation from Singapore in an attempt to maintain their [Singapore’s] posture in the region.

At the same time, Singapore will continue to fulfill American expectations, as seen with the construction of the deep sea pier, because they view the United States as both a stabilizer in the region and the leading actor in the global war on terrorism. American policymakers must continue to put forward a strong pledge to pursue its interests in the region, as “Singaporean defense cooperation is based on the expectation that the United States remains committed to maintaining a presence in the region. Should confidence in the U.S. commitment falter, Singapore could see no alternative but to accommodate Chinese regional hegemony.”<sup>103</sup>

Despite the solid relationship with Singapore, two problems exist that jeopardize the ability of the United States to continue its deployment plans in Southeast Asia. First, the bilateral agreements between Singapore and the United States may only go as far as their current

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<sup>101</sup> “US, British, Asian Navies Stage Anti-WMD Exercise in the South China Sea”, *Agence French Presse*, August 17, 2005; “Singapore, US Conduct Annual Bilateral Naval Exercises,” *Xinhua General News Service*, May 31, 2005; “US Seeks Closer Ties Between Its Navy and Asia-Pacific Navies,” *Thai Press*, March 13, 2006.

<sup>102</sup> Goh, “Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies,” p. 37.

<sup>103</sup> Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Toward China*, p. 33.

levels, and “it is unlikely that Singapore or other ASEAN states would permit the United States to stage combat or combat support operations from their territory.”<sup>104</sup> Second, the U.S. will find that Singapore is not entirely fit to handle the type of forward deployment that they have envisioned for the near future. Though recent improvements to their port facilities have aided American naval activity in the region, the reality is that “while welcome as an affirmation of the value to the region of the U.S. military presence, Singapore is simply too small a venue to be other than place, not a base for U.S. forward deployments.”<sup>105</sup>

#### *Philippines:*

The Philippines is one of five countries in East/Southeast Asia that has a treaty alliance with the United States. After the 1991 withdrawal of American forces from bases in the Philippines, the relationship cooled, only to be re-invigorated with the emerging threat of global terror. The two governments now “share concerns over growing evidence of links between Philippine and international terrorist organizations” and the U.S. “is providing security assistance to enhance the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to counter terrorism.”<sup>106</sup> A November 2001 joint statement following a trip by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Washington re-affirmed the commitment of the United States to improve Philippine security forces through an aid package that “would include a robust training package, equipment needed for increased mobility, a maintenance program to enhance overall capabilities, specific targeted law enforcement and counterterrorism cooperation, and a new bilateral defense

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<sup>104</sup> Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Toward China*, p. 65.

<sup>105</sup> Richard H. Solomon and William M. Drennan, “The United States and Asia in 2000: Forward to the Past?”, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 1, Jan.-Feb., 2001, p. 9.

<sup>106</sup> Peter Rodman, Assistant Secretary of Defense International Security Affairs, “U.S. Security Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region,” Prepared Statement for the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, House International Relations Committee Hearing, Washington D.C., June 26, 2003.

consultative mechanism.”<sup>107</sup> As part of this assistance, American troops are undertaking joint civic projects (i.e. building roads, repairing schools) to combat the grass-roots support for Al Qaida as well as conducting joint military exercises to improve bilateral interoperability for counterterrorism operations.<sup>108</sup>

In 1991, heated negotiations over the use of the naval base at Subic Bay by the U.S. Navy and the subsequent Pinatubo volcanic eruption (which rendered the base temporarily unusable and expensive to restore) led to an American withdrawal from the Philippines. In 1995, the U.S. made no efforts to deter Chinese occupation of a reef located within 150 miles of the Philippines; though the State Department did issue a statement denouncing the threat or use of military force to assert territorial claims in the area. Chinese actions subsequently opened the eyes of the Philippine government to the necessity of establishing stronger ties with the U.S., and the United States now benefits from the Philippine perspective on the rise of China, especially concerning territorial claims in the South China Sea. These developments contributed to the 1998 RP-U.S. Visiting Forces Agreement, which “was a major step in the reconstruction of the U.S.-Philippine defense relationship and, from Manila’s standpoint, of reestablishing deterrence in the region.”<sup>109</sup>

The United States and the Philippines have improved upon their defense cooperation in recent years. Both U.S. and Philippine naval forces partook in a joint counterterrorism exercise in August of 2005. In May of 2006, Roughead announced the staging of joint training exercise with the Philippine Navy and Marines to better prepare them for advances military exercises, and noted that, “We have many activities in the Pacific Fleet that are focused on operating with our friends and partners in the region.” The United States, as the global leader in the war on terror,

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<sup>107</sup> President George W. Bush and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, “Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines,” November 20, 2001.

<sup>108</sup> “U.S.A, Philippines Join Forces Against Terror,” *The Statesman: The Financial Time Limited-Asia Intelligence Wire*, February 19, 2007; “U.S., Philippines Conduct Joint Exercises,” *United Press international*, October 16, 2006.

<sup>109</sup> Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Toward China*, p. 34.

has used this to their advantage in improving relations in Southeast Asia, and in August of 2006, the U.S. and the Philippines conducted bilateral naval exercises (CARAT) aimed at the combating of terrorism, with provisions to expand the training exercise to communication, command and control, and diving and salvage routines.<sup>110</sup> The exercises, conducted to enhance regional cooperation primarily aimed at terrorism and transnational crimes in the sea lanes, by their very nature and location, allow the United States and its regional allies to contain China in the South China Sea without specifically carrying out contingency plans for possible disputes over the Spratly Islands.

Philippine military leaders are pleased with the overall progress made by the two nations. Owen Cortez, a Philippine task force leader for the joint exercises noted that, “it was a very successful event for us and the US navy contingent because we're able to attain our objectives in improving our command and control tactics, logistics procedure, and our maritime security capabilities.” The United States also seeks to improve the ability of regional forces to better serve American interests, as a report on the bilateral exercises noted, stating, “The series of drills and simulation activities are expected to strengthen the Philippine navy's capability to contribute to the internal security and counter-terrorism operations.”<sup>111</sup>

Although the Philippines has refused to re-instate basing privileges for U.S. forces following the 1991 closure of the U.S. base at Subic Bay, defense cooperation has been enhanced in other ways. The Philippine Defense Reform (PDR) has improved defense cooperation and “is a key bilateral instrument for keeping Washington engaged, for building a stronger alliance, and for enhancing the capabilities of the AFP. Philippine leaders have also visited the United States

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<sup>110</sup> “RP-US Naval Exercise Starts”, *Manila Times*, August 17, 2005; “US Pacific Fleet Lines up RP Exercises,” *Manila Times*, May 22, 2006; “RP, US Set Naval War Games,” *Manila Standard*, August 8, 2006.

<sup>111</sup> “Philippine Commander Hails Joint US Naval Exercises”, *The Philippine Star*, August 22, 2006; “U.S., Philippine Navies to Start Joint Exercises,” *Xinhua General News Service*, August 14, 2006.

to affirm their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties between the nations, including joint exercises and American assistance for the modernization of the AFP.<sup>112</sup>

What then does the future hold for the U.S.-Philippine defense relationship? With an eye towards China, the U.S. must continue to foster improving relations with the Philippines, which could provide valuable basing for air superiority over the sea-lanes of the South China Sea. If China pursues a more hostile course of action towards its ASEAN neighbors, the United States could look to the Philippines, as well as Singapore, to lead a regional military cooperation effort with the U.S.<sup>113</sup>

*Malaysia:*

The United States has also found a strategic partner in Southeast Asia in Malaysia. During the current Operation Enduring Freedom, Malaysia, among other countries, has “contributed support ranging from over flight, access and basing to escort, logistics, and troops on the ground.”<sup>114</sup> However, in terms of dealing with the rise of China, the U.S. has found that Malaysia is not as reliable as Singapore. Though many in the Malaysian military establishment remain cautious of China’s intentions, “some security analysts in the region believe that Malaysia has decided to accommodate China on South China Sea issues and is emulating Chinese tactics vis-à-vis the Philippines.”<sup>115</sup> The rise of Chinese economic power in the region has influenced the way Malaysia views their relationship with China, and in turn, the United States. Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu have noted that “particularly with Malaysia and

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<sup>112</sup> “Philippines Rules out Return of US Military Bases,” *Xinhua General News Service*, May 24, 2005; “Philippine Defense Chief in US to Boost Bilateral Ties,” *Xinhua General News Service*, December 6, 2005.

<sup>113</sup> Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Toward China*, pp. 76-78

<sup>114</sup> *U.S. Security Policy in Asia and the Pacific: Restructuring America’s Forward Deployment*, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, June 26, 2003, p. 38.

<sup>115</sup> Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Toward China*, p. 36.



Indonesia—both of which are committed to national and regional ‘self-reliance’ and are sensitive about their sovereignty and position within the Non-Aligned Movement—the United States will need to be patient in building trust in the relationship and in improving their defense capabilities.”<sup>116</sup> In doing so, they must deal with the inevitability of anti-West sentiment and the realization that cooperation with China by regional actors will only help to enforce their regional identity and values.

Defense cooperation with Malaysia continues to improve the relationship between the two nations and allows each country to achieve its own goals in the region. In May of 2006, the U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander visited Malaysia to discuss American cooperation and the overall stability of the region. The U.S. and Malaysia also carry out CARAT exercises aimed at advancing American interests in the region as well as allowing Malaysian forces to gain more experience in these situations.<sup>117</sup> In addition, American aircraft carriers, including the nuclear powered USS Enterprise have made port calls in Malaysia, and “[U.S.] ship visits and exercises in Malaysia, which have gradually increased, have become an important component of our Southeast Asian presence.”<sup>118</sup>

Prior to the retirement of Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad, an outspoken critic of many U.S. policies, the amount of cooperation that could be expected out of Kuala Lumpur was often unclear. In a 2001 RAND report on the changing environment in Southeast Asia, Angel Rabasa noted that “Malaysia hosts regular bilateral exercises with the USAF, but operational use of Malaysian facilities for regional contingencies is unlikely unless Malaysian security was

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<sup>116</sup> Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy Toward China*, p. 76.

<sup>117</sup> “U.S. Pacific Fleet chief to visit Malaysia,” *Xinhua General News Service*, May 11, 2006; “Malaysian-US naval Exercise Under Way,” *Malaysian National News Agency*, July 26, 2006.

<sup>118</sup> “USS Enterprise Makes Port Call,” *New Strait Times*, August 17, 2006.; “Enhancing our Regional Relationships,” *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, U.S. Department of Defense, Washington DC, 1998.

threatened.”<sup>119</sup> Mahathir’s exit from office has alleviated some concerns that Malaysia could not play a role in American forward deployment. Military officials continue to include Malaysia in their force relocation plans that would “shift some troops from their long-standing major bases in Japan and Korea and to establish smaller bases in such countries as Australia, Singapore, or Malaysia.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Angel Rabasa, et al., *The United States and Asia: Toward a New U.S. Strategy and Force Posture*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-1315, 2001, Appendix C, p. 202.

<sup>120</sup> Mahyar A. Amouzegar, et al., *Evaluation of Options for Overseas Combat Support Basing*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MG-421, 2006, p. 11.

#### **Part IV: Tensions in Regional Alliances**

America's military transformation, while fostering stronger ties in the region, has also contributed to weakening U.S. relations with historical allies, most notably South Korea and Australia. Increasing demands on these countries to accommodate the United States on security issues directly involving regional stability has raised questions concerning the future of these alliances. While both alliances still have the potential to strategically benefit each country, the parties involved will have to reconcile differences that have materially affected the structure of each relationship. Ultimately, however, the attenuation of these alliances will inevitably affect U.S. ability to maximize its rapid deployment capability in East Asia.

##### *South Korea:*

Since the end of the Korean Conflict in 1953, the United States and South Korea (ROK) have been strong allies in East Asia, with U.S. troops permanently stationed as a "trip-wire" between the north and the South. The relationship remained strong throughout the Cold War in the face of a common Soviet threat, and continued thereafter in response to North Korea's aggressive procurement of nuclear weapons. The rise of China, however, and diverging American and South Korean views on the response to it has forced policymakers on both sides of the alliance to question future utility of the alliance.

The changing nature of the security relationship between the United States and South Korea can be attributed in part to a series of shifts on the domestic front in the ROK. Growing anti-American sentiment, a result of increased democratization in Korean society, has created an atmosphere in which it is now more tolerable to openly criticize U.S. policies concerning the south. At the same time, Korean society is undergoing a resurgence of nationalism, both in the

way the ROK asserts itself towards the United States and in the way they identify with North Koreans.<sup>121</sup>

International factors have also contributed to the changes in the US-South Korean alliance. Since 2002, “China has become the dominant source of economic growth for South Korea.”<sup>122</sup> China is now the leading target of foreign direct investment from South Korea, occupying the distinction once held by the United States. In addition, South Korean annual exports to China increased almost 50 percent between 2001 and 2003, making China the largest export market for South Korea.<sup>123</sup> The China-ROK relationship is now the strongest in the region, as “a kind of ‘China fever’ has swept across South Korea, or at least the business community.”<sup>124</sup> These changes in China-South Korean relations have contributed to the reorientation of South Korean foreign policy.

The U.S.-ROK alliance, predicated on the defense of South Korea and the ability to use the peninsula to position forces for regional stability (i.e. deter China), may now be destined for failure. Perhaps the greatest source of tension in the alliance stems from South Korea’s willingness to abandon a hard-line stance toward North Korea. In the past, North Korea’s aggressive ambitions served as a common threat that united the security interests of both the United States and South Korea. But the Bush administration’s inclusion of North Korea in the “axis of evil” comes at a time when South Koreans have “the image of North Korea as a nation of the same race... while the perception of the North as an enemy state has weakened.” Indeed,

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<sup>121</sup> Sook-Jong Lee, “Allying with the United States: Changing South Korean Attitudes,” *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Spring 2005, p. 93.

<sup>122</sup> Robert S. Ross, “Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia”, *Securities Studies* Vol. 15, No. 3 (July-September 2006), p. 374.

<sup>123</sup> Ross, “Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia”, pp. 374-375.

<sup>124</sup> David Shambaugh, “China and the Korean Peninsula: Playing for the Long Term,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Spring 2006, p. 48.

“many Koreans now view North Korea as having neither the willingness nor the capacity to wage a war against the South.”<sup>125</sup> As the South Korean leadership continues to put forth a Sunshine Policy towards the North, American military leaders have begun to restructure United States Forces in South Korea (USFK), placing a larger burden on the ROK to provide for their own defense.

The strain on the alliance produced by the rise of China and America’s current plans for military transformation has dealt the U.S. a setback in organizing and maintaining its presence in East Asia. An indication of this is the declining levels of security cooperation as “South Korean accommodation of the rise of China is also reflected in Seoul’s resistance to post-cold war defense cooperation with the United States.”<sup>126</sup> United States efforts to implement a rapid response model for its forces has challenged South Korea’s understanding of its national interest. A 2006 agreement on joint flexibility, while speaking with a degree of general optimism, stated that “In the implementation of strategic flexibility, the U.S. respects the ROK position that it shall not be involved in a regional conflict in Northeast Asia against the will of the Korean people.”<sup>127</sup> Though not specifically mentioning the pressing issue of the day, the statement reflects South Korean unwillingness to allow the use of U.S. forces in their country to be used for conflicts that involve China, namely any intervention in the Taiwan Strait.

United States forces in South Korea are now being withdrawn and restructured to serve the greater American goal of regional stability. Though the initial redeployment of USFK was intended to bolster the war effort in Iraq, the restructuring of forces reflects U.S. recognition of the diminished utility of its forces in South Korea for the transformation that is currently

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<sup>125</sup> Lee, “Allying with the United States: Changing South Korean Attitudes,” pp. 93-95.

<sup>126</sup> Robert S. Ross, *Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia*, p. 381.

<sup>127</sup> “Korea, U.S. Agree on Strategic Agenda, USFK Deployment Flexibility,” *Yonhap News Agency*, January 20, 2006.

underway in the U.S. military.<sup>128</sup> The United States clearly intends for its forces in East Asia to deter China from expanding its influence in the region, and Korea's unwillingness to accommodate U.S. changes and hard-line stance towards the North has forced policymakers to look elsewhere for cooperative alliance partners.

If the United States wants to transform its military and expect countries to cooperate, then it must continue to show that it is committed to maintaining stability in the region. Korea presents an obstacle to accomplishing this goal by contesting American efforts to firmly establish itself on the mainland. Although some argue that if salvaged, "the U.S.-ROK alliance will continue to serve as a bedrock for America's commitment in the region,"<sup>129</sup> this is an optimistic view on the current situation, insofar as the United States is strengthening its alliances with other regional actors to compensate for a dwindling relationship with South Korea. In implementing the goals of military transformation with regards to USFK, the U.S. would not only have to be able to base rapidly deployable brigades in Korea, but it would also have to retain the joint command structure that integrates Korean forces with American forces. But South Korea has shown resistance to maintain U.S. joint command of allied forces. President Roh Moo-hyun, "wishes to destroy its (the alliance's) time tested dynamics by wresting away from the United States wartime operational control of the two countries' armed forces, the result of which will be the complete and virtually irreversible dismantlement of the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command (CFC)."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> "The U.S. government unexpectedly notified the Korean government that it would redeploy 3,600 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea to Iraq." Lee, "Allying with the United States: Changing South Korean Attitudes," p. 88.

<sup>129</sup> Balbina Y. Hwang, "The U.S.-Korean Alliance on the Rocks: Shaken, not Stirred," *Heritage Lectures*, delivered September 27, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>130</sup> Sung-Yoon Lee, "Korea-US: Swan Song for an Alliance," *Asia Times*, September 16, 2006 accessed on <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/HI16Dg02.html>.

As South Korea becomes more dependent on China for economic growth and less willing to accommodate the United States on North Korea, it will become more reluctant to cooperate with the United States on issues regarding military transformation and policies aimed at regional stability. In addition, the proximity of South Korea to China and the apparent necessity to accommodate GROWING Chinese strategic power makes it unlikely that Korean leaders will allow their country to be used for U.S. led operations aimed at the Chinese. Further, they may still be counted on even less to act independent of American control as a rear area responsible for logistical support, which in turn means that they may be completely left out of contingency planning for regional conflict.

*Australia:*

The United States-Australia strategic alliance, embodied in the Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America (ANZUS), has historically been one of America's most stable relationships in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.<sup>131</sup> As one of the original democracies in the region, Australia has consistently been aligned in its values with the U.S., and "over the past century the two countries have fought together in five wars and began the new century as allies in the war on terrorism."<sup>132</sup> On the issues of terrorism, including proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the emergence of failed states, Australia has allowed the United States, as the great power in the alliance, to take the lead. Though there has been little domestic resistance to America's dominance of the alliance, the question of a rising

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<sup>131</sup> "When New Zealand refused in 1985 to allow U.S. nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed ships to enter its ports, the United States abrogated its ANZUS responsibilities toward New Zealand in 1986; however, New Zealand has not formally withdrawn from the alliance." Paul Dibb, "U.S.-Australia Alliance Relations: An Australian View," *Strategic Forum*, August 2005, endnote 7.

<sup>132</sup> Paul Kelly, "Australian for Alliance," *The National Interest*, Spring 2003.

China and how the U.S. plans to deal with it has become a cause for concern in Australian politics.

The general structure of the U.S.-Australia relationship has been centered on extended nuclear deterrence and a security guarantee from Washington. While Australia technically is responsible for its own self-defense within the region, such a posture “is immeasurably strengthened by highly privileged access to U.S. intelligence, defense science, weapons, and military logistics support.” In terms of weaponry, Australia purchases a majority of their high-technology weapons systems from the U.S., as well as equipping their air force and navy with the latest in U.S. aircraft and combat systems. At the same time, Australia is committed to improving the interoperability of its forces with American forces and has shown little resistance to hosting U.S. forces, including nuclear powered and capable warships.

The alliance is not completely one-sided however. Australia has been willing to be proactive in regional affairs. It was quick to invoke the ANZUS treaty following September 11 and “provided combat troops in Afghanistan and Iraq” while helping to foster “antiterrorist cooperation agreements with countries in the region, especially Southeast Asia.” Even more, Australia has the ability to contribute capabilities “that are in short supply in the U.S. military inventory, such as air refueling tankers, special forces, certain types of electronic surveillance and intelligence, conventional submarines, and, in the future, highly capable early warning aircraft.”<sup>133</sup>

Despite intense cooperation and mutual reliability, the alliance has shown potential signs of tension concerning the rise of China. The United States continues to be welcomed as a regional stabilizer, but as is the case with South Korea, China has displaced the United States as

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<sup>133</sup> Dibb, “U.S.-Australia Alliance Relations: An Australian View.”



the leading economic partner with Australia, with China becoming the “second most popular source of Australian imports and second most popular destination of Australian exports.”<sup>134</sup> Therefore, “Australia values a U.S. forward role that contributes to the regional balance but tolerates the rise of China by seeking to incorporate it into mainstream international economic and security systems” and “opposes any American efforts to define its Asian purpose as the ‘containment’ of China.”<sup>135</sup> As the American military transforms and repositions its forces in the region with a clear eye toward deterring, and to some extent, containing China, the question arises as to what level of resistance Australia will demonstrate toward accommodating U.S. demands. Australian forces are not structured to actively participate in war-fighting situations in Northeast Asia, which may relegate them to operating as a rear support area.

The most notable and likely cause for concern in Australia is a possible crisis in the Taiwan Strait, which would draw the United States into conflict with China and jeopardize the economic and strategic relations that Australia has with both countries. Australia has made it quite clear that it will not contribute to American operations against China over Taiwan, the core U.S., strategic concern regarding China, despite its willingness to accommodate U.S. missile defense installations on its soil. Alexander Downer, Minister of Foreign Affairs, has assured Chinese leaders of this, stating, “I think they increasingly understand this isn’t directed at China, or isn’t designed to intervene in the China-Taiwan issue—which is of course their great area of sensitivity.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Dan Blumenthal, “The Impact of China’s Economic Growth on North and Southeast Asia,” *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, Washington DC, July 22, 2005.

<sup>135</sup> Kelly, “Australian for Alliance.”

<sup>136</sup> William T. Tow, “Sino-American Relations and the ‘Australian factor’: Inflated Expectations or Discriminate Engagement?”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 4, p. 461.

The U.S.-Australia alliance, while exhibiting signs of tension over views of the rise of China and a possible conflict in the Taiwan Strait, is less at risk (compared to South Korea) of failure as the U.S. transforms its military. American demands of Australia are significantly less than those made of allies in closer proximity to China (i.e. South Korea) and the U.S. could benefit from the realization that Australia is a firm alliance partner in a strategic location for positioning just outside the region. If Washington is willing to come to a better understanding of Australian concerns in the relationship, they will find that they still have a willing partner that strongly advocates an American presence in Asia. At the same time, the U.S. can benefit greatly from stronger trilateral relations that include both Japan and Australia, compensating for the loss of South Korea as a strategic ally. Even as the U.S. continues to transform its military with a view towards China, American policymakers must understand that “U.S.-China relations must remain benign if trilateral security cooperation is to be a factor for strategic reassurance rather than a stimulus of regional destabilization.”<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, Australia is less significant in terms of overall transformation, as opposed to South Korea or Japan, and so American leaders should not be so quick to condemn Australia for its determination to maintain regional stability through cordial relations with both the U.S. and China.

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<sup>137</sup> Anne Searle and Ippei Kamae, “Anchoring Trilateralism” Can Australia-Japan-US Security Relations Work?” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 4, December 2004, p. 474.

## **Part V: Conclusion**

The United States military footprint in East Asia is undergoing a fundamental change in response to the rise of China, due to the transformation of American forces and war-fighting strategies. As the U.S. increases its role in global security, its forces will be called into action in various parts of the world, and not always at different times. With appropriate forward deployments and cooperation from allies, the move to a rapidly deployable force will allow the United States to virtually go anywhere at any time. With an eye on a rising China and the potential for destabilization in East Asia, the United States has thus restructured its forces and alliances in the region. There is much uncertainty concerning the direction that Chinese leaders will take as their country becomes a great power, and this is a troubling issue for both the United States and China's neighbors, who have traditionally been American allies. By increasing their presence in the region, the United States has shown a commitment to maintaining the status quo in East Asia as well as given a clear indication to China that it will not tolerate aggressive action towards its alliance partners.

This transformation has not been without its challenges, as the demands of America's new capabilities have put a strain on many of its alliances. In the case of Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines, the United States has found allies that are willing to accommodate the transformation and provide the U.S. with access to bases, logistical support, and rear area support. The strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance is especially important, as this security relationship has been America's greatest strategic asset in the region; greater cooperation in the South China Sea has allowed both the U.S. and its allies to contain aggressive Chinese intentions concerning territorial claims that could affect strategic choke points and shipping lanes. To accomplish these goals, the United States has combined its unilateral deployments and increased

coordination with its allies to enhance both their capabilities and the preparedness for contingencies involving conflict with China.

The change in America's footprint in East Asia can also be seen in the way the U.S. has had to compensate for the loss of traditional alliance partners. China's increasing economic stature in the region has caused both South Korea and Australia to question their alliance with the United States, especially now that U.S. military transformation has called for greater cooperation from these partners. With the loss of South Korea as a strategic partner in close proximity to China, American leaders have worked to bring the country closer with the allies already discussed. In this way, the U.S. footprint not only changes in nature and structure, but also in location within the region. Troop realignment away from South Korea and the general inability to use the peninsula to serve American strategic interests has forced U.S. leaders to look elsewhere for access and cooperation. Australia, a traditionally strong ally has not been one of these countries willing to cooperate, and its increasingly strong ties to China have created a "potential area of future tension should the US and China have a major disagreement, particularly over Taiwan."<sup>138</sup> In the aforementioned allies (Japan and the ASEAN states), they have found willing participants who will support America's transformation to rapid deployment and continued stabilization of the region. In the near future, the U.S. will have to continue to closely monitor these alliances to meet the expectations of each of its allies while seeking to enhance their capabilities and those of each alliance as they deal with a rising China.

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<sup>138</sup> "Australia's Defence Relations with the United States," *Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade*, May 22, 2006, p. 80.

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