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# WHY, DESPITE A RAPIDLY MILITARIZING CHINA, ARE THERE NO MULTILATERAL COLLECTIVE DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS IN ASIA?

Lindsay, Matthew J.

Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School

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**NAVAL  
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**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**WHY, DESPITE A RAPIDLY MILITARIZING CHINA,  
ARE THERE NO MULTILATERAL COLLECTIVE  
DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS IN ASIA?**

by

Matthew J. Lindsay

December 2021

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MULTILATERAL COLLECTIVE DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS IN ASIA?**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(EAST ASIA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC)**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

With the return of great power and strategic competition, a renewed analysis of U.S. alliances in the Indo-Pacific is required. Competition with the Soviet Union during the Cold War elicited the formation of NATO, a multilateral collective defense institution. This thesis aims to answer why, despite a rapidly militarizing China, there remains no such institution in Asia. To that end, it examines the Chinese threat relative to that posed by the Soviet Union, then examines U.S. relations with its major partners in the region—India, Japan, South Korean, and Australia—to understand the forces that are inhibiting multilateralism.

This thesis finds that the current geopolitical environment in the Indo-Pacific does not yet warrant a change to the hitherto successful hub-and-spokes system. China's increased assertiveness in the region does not present an existential threat to the United States and its allies, and China's economic appeal and regional clout disincentivize states from provoking it. However, parsimonious structural theories inadequately explain the lack of a multilateral institution in Asia. Domestic politics, norms, identity, and legal constructs also influence states' desires and/or abilities to participate in such an institution. Nevertheless, a substantial Chinese transgression that severely upsets the status quo could drive states to form a multilateral collective defense institution in the region, as the appetite for defense-related multilateralism is increasing.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A2/AD	anti-access/area denial
ACO	Allied Command Operations
ACSA	acquisition and cross-servicing agreement
ACT	Allied Command Transformation
ADF	Australian Defense Force
ADMM PLUS	ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting-Plus
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASW	anti-submarine warfare
BDN	Blue Dot Network
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
COMCASA	communications compatibility and security agreement
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EAS	East Asia Summit
ECS	East China Sea
FOIP	free and open Indo-Pacific
FONOP	Freedom of Navigation Operations
FPDA	Five Power Defense Arrangements
GDP	gross domestic product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GPC	great power competition
GSOMIA	General Security of Military Information Agreement
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	Indian Ocean

IR	international relations
ISA	Industrial Security Agreement
JSDF	Japan Self-Defense Force
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LEMOA	Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement
MC	Military Committee
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBA	National Basketball Association
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NPG	Nuclear Planning Group
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSS	National Security Strategy
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PRC	People's Republic of China
RAAF	Royal Australian Airforce
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
ROK	Republic of Korea
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SACT	Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
SCS	South China Sea
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SPT	Six-Party Talks
TCS	Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WTO	World Trade Organization

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

As the Indo-Pacific becomes more significant within the global arena, scholars and policy makers alike continue to give much attention to the security dynamics in the region. Even with China's economic rise and military expansion, security relations in Asia largely remain unchanged since the early Cold War period. Whereas a multilateral framework was created in Europe in response to the looming Soviet threat, no such developments have occurred in response to China's expanded military presence in Asia. This thesis thus aims to answer the following question: Why, despite a rapidly militarizing China, are there no multilateral collective defense institutions in Asia? To answer this question, the thesis must first explore the decision-making process that led to bilateral agreements in Asia and a multilateral agreement in Europe during the early Cold War period. Then the thesis will need to analyze whether or not those decisions continue to impede the construction of a multilateral framework in Asia today or if some other phenomenon is responsible.

To that end, the remainder of this chapter is broken into four sections. The next section provides the significance of the research question. The second substantive section provides a literature review that summarizes theories on why states cooperate, why Asia did not develop a collective defense institution in the postwar period, and why Asia still lacks such an institution today. The third section provides the most applicable hypotheses in answering the thesis question. The final section explains the research methods and design for the rest of the thesis.

### **A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

States across the Indo-Pacific remain uncertain over what China's rise means for regional stability. In 2010, China supplanted Japan as the largest regional economy and second largest economy globally. This moment in history signified a reversion to a regional hierarchy that was new to the modern world and anything but for the Chinese. For them, it was a long-awaited return to normalcy. Around this time, many academics and policy makers questioned what China's rise to great power status meant for regional and global



stability.<sup>1</sup> Uncertainty still remains today, but most would agree that some of China's actions in the past decade give pause to optimistic views. Having witnessed a more assertive and militarily capable China, regional allies are unnerved. China has showed itself willing to use economic coercion. In 2010, China withheld rare earth materials from Japan over a territorial dispute; more recently, it closed down Korean-owned businesses involved in the U.S. deployment of air defense systems to the peninsula.<sup>2</sup> China has demonstrated that it was willing to inflict economic harm over more trivial matters as well. In 2019, it restricted NBA broadcasts following a tweet by one of the team's general managers that supported Hong Kong protests.<sup>3</sup> Despite international condemnation, China developed underwater reefs and rocks—in disputed waters—into islands with infrastructure capable of supporting military operations. Furthermore, China has now obtained the largest ship count of any navy in the world and has increased patrols in the surrounding seas, most controversially around the disputed Spratly and Senkaku Islands. Chinese ground forces have clashed with Indians over territorial disputes along their shared Himalayan border. These actions are worrisome for the United States and are particularly concerning to its partners in the region, which remain unsure whether or not China will use its newfound status to be a responsible stakeholder or regional bully, the latter of which is significantly more difficult to deal with individually or bilaterally.

The United States' global decline is equally alarming with respect to the stability of the Indo-Pacific region, as its role as security guarantor is no longer a surety. Shortly after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008, scholars and foreign policy analysts began to question whether the era of U.S. hegemony was at an end.<sup>4</sup> The wars in the Middle East had already soured both international and domestic audiences' feelings toward U.S. commitments overseas. Military commitments such as these spread forces thin and further

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Layne, "The Waning of U.S. Hegemony—Myth or Reality? A Review Essay," *International Security* 34, no. 1 (July 2009): 147–72, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2009.34.1.147>.

<sup>2</sup> Shannon Tiezzi, "Is China Ready to Take Its Economic Coercion Into the Open?," May 31, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/05/is-china-ready-to-take-its-economic-coercion-into-the-open/>.

<sup>3</sup> Arjun Kharpal, "Chinese State Media and Tencent Suspend Broadcast of NBA Preseason Games in China," CNBC, October 8, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/08/china-state-tv-suspends-nba-broadcasts-after-morey-hong-kong-tweet.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Layne, "The Waning of U.S. Hegemony—Myth or Reality?"

increased disparity in power projection capability within the first island chain. China's rise coinciding with an American downward trend is concerning for partner nations, as it raises doubt that the United States would or could come to their aid in the event of a conflict or dispute with China.

Though these concerns are understandable, American policy makers across the political spectrum have demonstrated resolve in strengthening the country's allies and countering China. President Obama began the pivot to Asia. President Trump's *National Security Strategy* (NSS) bluntly labeled China a revisionist state.<sup>5</sup> The *National Defense Strategy* (NDS) explicitly called for expanding Indo-Pacific alliances and partnerships to deter aggression and maintain stability.<sup>6</sup> In a public speech, Secretary Pompeo warned of the PRC's desires for hegemony and called on free democracies across the world, especially those in the Indo-Pacific, to hold China accountable for its abuses of the rules-based order.<sup>7</sup> President Biden has yet to issue his official NSS, but his Interim NSS equally paints China as the primary threat, stating that China "is the only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system."<sup>8</sup>

What do a rising China, a declining United States, and calls for expanded alliances in Asia indicate? These factors denote that there are legitimate concerns over the change in the security dynamic within Asia and that states may be in the preliminary phases of balancing against China. The 2018 NDS's section on the Indo-Pacific calls for bringing "together bilateral and multilateral security relationships to preserve the free and open

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<sup>5</sup> White House, "National Security Strategy of the United States of America" (Washington, DC: White House, December 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Jim Mattis, "Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy" (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018), 14.

<sup>7</sup> "Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Remarks at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum: 'Communist China and the Free World's Future'" United States Department of State, July 23, 2020, <https://sv.usembassy.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-remarks-at-the-richard-nixon-presidential-library-and-museum-communist-china-and-the-free-worlds-future/>.

<sup>8</sup> White House, "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance" (Washington, DC: White House, March 2021), 8, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>.

international system.”<sup>9</sup> This effort is significant, as the region lacks a multilateral collective defense institution like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In the past, NATO was created as a coalition, led by a major power and supplemented by middle powers, to deter a vastly dominant regional power for the entirety of the Cold War. Since then, it has been utilized to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) in other areas of the world. Most notable was the enforcement of the no-fly zone during the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict. In addition, NATO has also been an active participant in the fight against terrorism by sending forces to Afghanistan for twenty years. By contrast, Asia lacks an institution like NATO and instead coordinates across a web of alliances that utilize the United States as a central cog. As an example, to enforce UNSCR 2371—sanctions against North Korea—a coalition of countries including the United States, Australia, England, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and France sent forces to the East China Sea (ECS) to monitor illicit ship-to-ship transfers that included North Korean vessels.<sup>10</sup> However, operations of this magnitude require much cooperation and coordination between states and their militaries. Without having the military cooperation and structure provided by organizations such as NATO, states cannot expect to execute such missions in a timely manner. Whereas the issue that Resolution 2371 addressed afforded the participating militaries the time necessary to coordinate, a major conflict with China would not be as forgiving. In fact, a NATO-like institution may very well make the difference in maintaining one’s sovereignty or stability in the region. For this reason, it is of immense importance to understand why, despite calls for multilateralism, Asia continues to lack an institution similar to NATO.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the aftermath of WWII, the United States played an integral role in the stability of both Europe and Asia. In Europe, multilateralism was pursued and culminated in what could be argued is the most ambitious and expansive defense pact ever created. NATO was

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<sup>9</sup> Mattis, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy,” 9.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Lubold and Ian Talley, “Seven Countries Join to Hunt Ships Smuggling Fuel to North Korea,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 14, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-u-s-led-coalition-to-track-illicit-fuel-shipments-to-north-korea-1536922923>.

established under the principles of collective defense. Conversely, defense ties established in Asia were mostly bilateral, less developed, less integrated and did not feature binding language similar to that of NATO's Article 5.<sup>11</sup> There exists a large body of literature on why these region's security dynamics differed in the postwar period. Scholars continue to postulate why an organization like NATO is still absent in Asia today. The literature spans the entirety of the international relations spectrum of theories and levels of analysis. This topic has seen renewed interest given the increase in strategic significance of Asia, China's rise, a return of great power competition (GPC), and increased calls for multilateralism in the region. The following subsection begins with a theoretical breakdown on why states do and do not cooperate. The next section defines collective defense and highlights its most important tenets. The final section provides a summary on existing literature that examines why Asia did not develop collective defense institutions in the postwar period and why Asia still lacks such institutions today.

### **1. Theoretical Overview of Cooperation**

The three major paradigms of International Relations (IR) theory—realism, liberalism, constructivism—offer differing opinions on why states do and do not cooperate. Neorealist view cooperation between states as a manifestation of balancing. Whether it is to balance against powers or common threats, realists interpret cooperation as an extension of a state's internal security concerns.<sup>12</sup> They contend that the self-interested nature of states within an anarchic system ultimately leads to limited cooperation due to cheating and states' concerns about relative gains.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, neorealists have doubts about multilateral cooperation, as they view institutions to be creations of self-serving great

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<sup>11</sup> John Duffield, "Why Is There No APTO? Why Is There No OSCAP?: Asia-Pacific Security Institutions in Comparative Perspective," *Contemporary Security Policy* 22, no. 2 (August 2001): 73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260512331391148>.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1st edition (Long Grove, Ill: Waveland Press, 2010); Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): 3, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538540>.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 485–507, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300027715>.

powers and ultimately incapable of shaping states' behaviors.<sup>14</sup> However, other realists have theorized that under a clear hierarchy of states, cooperation is likely. In the event that a state reaches hegemony, it will seek alliances as a means to preserve the status quo that it has benefitted from most.<sup>15</sup>

Liberals have a more optimistic view of cooperation among states in an anarchic system. They claim that the introduction of global trade and the differentiation—and optimization—of goods provided by each state, acquiring resources and increasing wealth was no longer a zero-sum game.<sup>16</sup> States would achieve optimal outcomes by cooperating. Furthermore, due to the continual interaction between states, it is their best interest to cooperate with one another and establish a norm of reciprocity.<sup>17</sup> However, neoliberals acknowledge the difficulty of multilateralism. The larger the participation in institutions, the harder it is to maintain control, and thus member states' working together to achieve mutual gains becomes more unlikely.<sup>18</sup> For this reason, liberals contend that cooperation is best facilitated by international regimes and institutions that are created out of shared interests.<sup>19</sup>

Constructivists provide additional insights into both realism's balancing and liberalism's cooperation. They argue that state cooperation is shaped by process rather than structure.<sup>20</sup> States' "perception" of threat, rather than material factors, is the determining

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<sup>14</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 5, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539078>.

<sup>15</sup> A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger*, New edition edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> Richard Rosecrance, *Rise Of The Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World*, Highlighting edition (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

<sup>17</sup> Robert M. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth A. Oye, "Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy: Hypotheses and Strategies," *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (October 1985): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2010349>.

<sup>19</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Revised Edition (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Oye, "Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy."

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391–425.

reason for alliance patterns.<sup>21</sup> A state's identity and values largely shape who is and isn't perceived as a threat. Shared identities between states minimize the security dilemma that realists argue inhibits cooperation. The existence of shared identities and interests across states prevents feelings of unilateral exploitation and instead leads to increased willingness to cooperate among friends. Constructivist share neoliberals concerns over cooperation; however, they contend that the uncertainty is a byproduct of identity rather than that of a simple increase in numbers.<sup>22</sup>

Though each paradigm offers significant insights into cooperation—or lack thereof—between states, a more extensive analysis is necessary to fully comprehend the decision-making processes that led to the current defense dynamics in the region.

## **2. Collective Defense and Its Champion**

The world witnessed vast institutional developments following the end of WWII. Building on the principle of collective defense, NATO, an unprecedented defense pact, was established. In its most rudimentary form, collective defense can be defined as merely a security pact where an attack against one member state elicits a response from all member states. However, this simplistic definition is insufficient to capture the extent of collective defense institutions today.

NATO is not simply an agreement between states to ally with one another in times of war. The bedrock of the member states' solidarity can be found in Article 5. It provided the foundation of the Treaty's commitment to collective defense by acknowledging in writing that an attack against one member state would be considered an attack against all members, and in response, all members would be obligated to assist the attacked member by actions it deemed necessary, to include the use of armed force.<sup>23</sup> More than that, however, NATO's civilian and military components are both integrated organizations that

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<sup>21</sup> Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (July 1998): 187, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.23.1.171>.

<sup>22</sup> Hopf, 189.

<sup>23</sup> "Collective Defence - Article 5," NATO, accessed February 11, 2021, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_110496.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm).

have individuals from various member states serving on behalf of NATO.<sup>24</sup> In addition, NATO has a number of combined defense measures to include standing forces, standing maritime forces, and integrated air defense systems.<sup>25</sup> Though it, like many security pacts of the past, was created largely in response to a perceived threat, NATO's version of collective defense is more than a defense agreement. It is multilateral, binding, and integrated on an unprecedented scale. Furthermore, it is an ongoing collaboration of states working together on security-related issues in both peacetime and wartime alike.

### **3. No NATO in Asia**

There exist both historical and modern factors that help explain the absence of a NATO in the Indo-Pacific. One must first understand why such an institution was not pursued in the past to explain its absence in the present. States' actions and decisions of the early Cold War period have had a lasting effect on modern institutional development. The structural nature of international relations does not fully capture why bilateralism was chosen in Asia and multilateralism in Europe, as both regions faced similar situations at the conclusion of WWII.<sup>26</sup> Academics instead have considered first- and second-level analysis to explain this. Some place the majority of responsibility on the United States, while others argue Asian states and elites are accountable for blocking collective defense initiatives. Identity politics has also been emphasized by scholars looking to understand the difference between Europe and Asia. Regardless of any reasoning for bilateralism over multilateralism in the past, many in academia acknowledge its impact on multilateral development in the present. They contend that modern developments are hindered by the path dependent and entrenched alliances of the past. However, others instead attribute the lack of a NATO-like institution to present day factors. There has been much debate over China's rise and whether or not its actions have even warranted balancing in the shape of a collective defense institution. This section highlights the more prominent theories related to why there is no NATO in Asia.

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<sup>24</sup> "Structure," NATO, accessed February 11, 2021, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/structure.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> NATO, "Collective Defence - Article 5."

<sup>26</sup> Duffield, "Why Is There No APTO?"

a. *Why was there no NATO in Asia?*

One explanation, offered by John Duffield attributes the variance in the two regions' institutional developments to their differences in regional structure, meaning that the relative capabilities of states and geography suited bilateralism in Asia and multilateralism in Europe.<sup>27</sup> In Europe, both Britain and France as major powers played leading roles in the developmental process of NATO. In Asia, Japan was the only country capable of fulfilling such a role, but potential regional allies—Australia, New Zealand, Philippines—would not accept it due to its past aggressions.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the “closeness” of Europe with its many shared borders made a threat against one country unnerving for all in the region. In addition, the proximity of European nations allowed for easier engagement and cooperation. In short, the geography of the Asia-Pacific was not conducive to interdependency and instead acted as a roadblock to multilateral efforts. States with the capacity to overcome the geography obstacle were absent from the region, as were the incentives for cooperation that existed in Europe.

Victor Cha instead credits U.S. postwar planners for the region's security structure.<sup>29</sup> He argues that the United States preferred bilateralism because it could “exert maximum control over smaller ally's actions,” a luxury diminished by multilateral frameworks where smaller states can band together to offset the influence of powers.<sup>30</sup> It sought alliances with South Korea to restrain Syngman Rhee, who was eager to reunify the peninsula, and the Republic of China, whose leader Chiang Kai-shek made clear his desires to retake mainland China. Conversely, the United States first attempted to restrain Japan through regional institutions as it had done in Europe with Germany, but because other regional allies still had reservations about Japan, the United States then opted for a bilateral agreement so it could more easily influence Japan's postwar transformation. Therefore,

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<sup>27</sup> Duffield.

<sup>28</sup> John Foster Dulles, “Security in the Pacific,” *FOREIGN AFFAIRS*, 2021, 182–83.

<sup>29</sup> Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*, Reprint edition (Princeton; Ewing: Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> Victor Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia,” *International Security* 34, no. 3 (January 1, 2010): 158, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2010.34.3.158>.



according to Cha, East Asia's bilateralism today is an entrenched relic of U.S. choices in the early Cold War period.

Cha further argued that a NATO-like institution in Asia would have provided little value during this period.<sup>31</sup> First, U.S. military capabilities far outpaced any other potential allies and thus would not be enhanced through a multilateral arrangement. Second, the United States intervention in the Korean war demonstrated its commitments to the region, which then provided enough of a deterrent in itself that multilateralism was no longer necessary. Finally, the gains the United States would receive by joining a collective defense institution were not attractive enough to justify the loss in leverage it would otherwise have in bilateral alliances.

Christopher Hemmer and Peter J. Katzenstein equally attribute the phenomenon to the United States. However, whereas Cha's work captures the self-interested nature of states and falls within the realist camp, Hemmer and Katzenstein argue from a constructivist point of view. They contend that collective identity played an underappreciated role in the U.S. desires to pursue multilateralism in Europe and bilateralism in Asia.<sup>32</sup> In Europe, Americans saw members of a shared community of relatively equal standing. The North Atlantic construct further tied Americans to their European brethren, who they already shared many affinities with through racial, historical, political, and cultural factors. However, in Asia, such ties did not exist. Religion and democratic values were largely absent, and race proved to be a powerful disqualifier for multilateralism. American policy makers and planners viewed Asians as alien, inferior, and undeserving of the same privileges awarded to the Europeans with NATO. Even the Congress members who wanted to prioritize Asia over Europe did so for personal interests and not for mutual cooperation amongst states. In their opinion, Asia was full of resources and opportunities, and under white leadership, "barbaric yet obedient" Asian peoples could

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<sup>31</sup> Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," 188.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Hemmer and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Why Is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism," *International Organization* 56, no. 3 (2002): 575–607, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081802760199890>.

be “saved.”<sup>33</sup> Given such feelings, an institution such as NATO, where trust is paramount, was unlikely to ever be seriously considered in Asia.

These two explanations argue that the United States was responsible for bilateralism in the region, however, Amitav Acharya disputes those claims and maintains that it was instead Asian actors who prevented multilateral defense institutions from forming.<sup>34</sup> Though the United States initially resisted proposals for a regional organization in Asia, the Korean War led some like John Foster Dulles to call for a collective defense institution for the purpose of preventing communist expansion. However, Asian nationalist leaders undermined American efforts by painting collective defense organizations as a continuance of Western dominance. They argued that such organizations would be damaging to Asian states’ newfound national sovereignty and the region’s autonomy. In addition, a regional collective defense institution was also at odds with the non-intervention and non-alignment movements that took hold in South and Southeast Asia during the early Cold War period. Asian leaders were of the opinion that the region should have its own independent voice in international affairs and saw a collective defense institution with Western powers as damaging to that cause.

Collective defense institutions were also rejected by Asian states due to the fresh memory of colonialism. Burma’s Aung San equated calls for collective defense to Japan’s “Co-prosperity Sphere.”<sup>35</sup> In the early Cold War period, many Asian states still feared a re-emergence of Imperial Japan and would not join any alliance that had Japan as a member state.<sup>36</sup> Thus, colonialism’s legacy prevented multilateralism in Asia for two reasons. One, Asian states were wary of regional pacts that they viewed as a continuance of Western interference within their states. Two, the wounds experienced during colonialism, occupation, and wartime further prevented states from accepting multilateralism.

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<sup>33</sup> Hemmer and Katzenstein, 596.

<sup>34</sup> Amitav Acharya, “Ideas and Power: Non-Intervention and Collective Defense,” in *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism*, Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> Acharya, 44.

<sup>36</sup> Hemmer and Katzenstein, “Why Is There No NATO in Asia?,” 581.

*b. Why is there still no NATO in Asia?*

The above theories focus on institutional development in the postwar and early Cold War periods. These insights are important to understanding why there continues to be a lack of multilateral defense institutions in Asia today, as choices and realities of the past can have significant impacts on the outcomes and possibilities of the present. Some legacies have become so entrenched that despite desires for change, doing so has proven difficult, while others continue to foster feelings inhibiting cooperation.

Indeed, many in academia have credited the lack of modern-day multilateral defense pacts in Asia to path dependence and the bilateral choices of the past. Andrew Yeo writes that “Over time, positive feedback loops and institutional adaptation have shaped a consensus in which elites in the United States and in Asia have come to embrace bilateral alliances as a key component of not only their national security but also regional stability itself.”<sup>37</sup> Abandoning agreements with a successful track record for an untested multilateral institution is impractical.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, a replacement of current bilateral alliances would come with significant costs, both in dollars and domestic turmoil. For over half a century, the United States and its partners have developed security infrastructure and legal structures to support their alliances. The economic costs of replacing these frameworks with new ones would be exhaustive. In addition, efforts to change preexisting alliances would likely elicit criticism from Asian domestic audiences who would perceive such efforts as a U.S. retrenchment.<sup>39</sup>

Colonialism’s legacy has had a lasting impact to security cooperation between states as well. Both realists and liberals alike would argue that Japan and Korea have robust reasoning for defense cooperation. Yet they do not because each state views the other in

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<sup>37</sup> Andrew Yeo, *Asia’s Regional Architecture: Alliances and Institutions in the Pacific Century*, 1st edition (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019), 133.

<sup>38</sup> T. J. Pempel and Chung-Min Lee, eds., *Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Architecture and Beyond*, 1st edition (Routledge, 2012), 79.

<sup>39</sup> Pempel and Lee, 79.

terms of their differences rather than their likeness.<sup>40</sup> This “identity conflict” stems from historical tensions over Japan’s colonizing of the Korean peninsula. It has led to distrust between the two states and continues to inhibit security cooperation. Similarly, the non-alignment and self-determination movements that arouse in South Asia in response to decolonization continue to weigh heavily on Indian policy makers. In the face of a rising China, India has moved towards further cooperation with the United States and other regional allies, but it still wages an internal struggle over its desire to maintain autonomy.<sup>41</sup> Such feelings are an obstacle to collective defense institutions as states are required to give up authorities to the collective and are also beholden to the actions of others. Colonialism’s legacy continues to harm the likelihood of a NATO-like organization in the region.

Finally, instead of historical legacies’ impacts to modern institutional development, some scholars and foreign policy experts attribute the lack of a multilateral institution to phenomena unrelated to the past. They contend that the relative differences between the Soviet Union and modern-day China, as well as the current global environment, explain the divergence. Unlike the Soviet Union, China’s actions and rise have encouraged cooperation with China, vice balancing against it. During the Cold War period, communism and the Soviet Union presented a clear existential threat to democracies.<sup>42</sup> Balancing against such a threat was an easy decision. There was no economic drawback in doing so as the Soviet Union’s economy was isolated. Today, China is heavily involved in the world market and economically intertwined with most Indo-Pacific states. It is the largest trade partner in both imports and exports of Australia, Japan, and South Korea. It is the third largest recipient of U.S. and India’s exports but still provides both countries with

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<sup>40</sup> Sam Brustad and Ji Young Kim, “Identity Politics and Asia-Pacific Security Relations: Understanding the Foundation of Australia–Japan versus Japan–South Korea Defence Relations,” *International Politics* 57, no. 4 (August 2020): 663–83, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-019-00196-6>.

<sup>41</sup> Tanvi Madan, *Fateful Triangle: How China Shaped U.S.-India Relations During the Cold War* (Brookings Institution Press, 2020), 292,296.

<sup>42</sup> Kurt M. Campbell and Jake Sullivan, “Competition Without Catastrophe: How America Can Both Challenge and Coexist With China,” *Foreign Affairs* (New York, N.Y.) 98, no. 5 (2019): 98.

most of their imports.<sup>43</sup> The “economic interdependence” that China shares with countries that would potentially balance against it dulls states incentive to do so. Furthermore, China’s continued engagement in the various informal institutions in the region has demonstrated its ability to be a responsible stakeholder in Asia.<sup>44</sup> Now, Asian and Western countries once wary of a Chinese threat are instead looking to increase cooperation and benefit from its rise.<sup>45</sup> Still, there exists an uncertainty in what a rising China means for the region.<sup>46</sup> Such uncertainty makes it hard for states to commit to institutions that would be perceived as containment by China. China’s rise and recent actions are worrying for regional states, but not to the level of existential threat like the Soviet Union of old. Thus, the incentives to form a collective defense institution in response to China’s rise are developing but have not yet passed states’ threshold to act.

### C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

As the literature review demonstrates, a vast range of analysis and theories provide possible reasons why the Indo-Pacific lacks a NATO-like institution. However, due to the U.S. pivot to Asia and its increased emphasis on multilateral efforts in countering China’s rise, Cha and Hemmer and Katzenstein’s works were ruled out for further analysis. Cha’s argument was heavily influenced by U.S. concerns over the ensuing Cold War. The Cold War has since ended, and with it, the fear of being entrapped in a conflict from outside the region that could escalate to a global war. Furthermore, Cha’s arguments for why a collective defense institution held little value in the region no longer apply. Allies within the region have closed the capability gap and utilize much of the same equipment as U.S. forces. Due to China’s increased military capabilities and expansion, U.S. threat of intervention no longer carries the same clout that it once did. In addition, the gains from joining a multilateral institution have increased substantially for the United States. Partner

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<sup>43</sup> “China Trade Balance, Exports, Imports by Country and Region 2018 | WITS Data,” WITS, accessed February 26, 2021, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CHN/Year/LTST/TradeFlow/EXPIMP>.

<sup>44</sup> Pempel and Lee, *Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia*, 114; Yeo, *Asia’s Regional Architecture*, 154.

<sup>45</sup> Pempel and Lee, *Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia*, 114.

<sup>46</sup> Pempel and Lee, 77.

nations' location alone provides immense leverage to U.S. interests in the region. In regard to Hemmer and Katzenstein's argument, the world has come a long way since the early Cold War period. Asians are no longer considered alien and inferior to Western peoples. In fact, American leadership continually highlights the values and adherence to international rules and norms that it and its Indo-Pacific allies share.

Duffield's argument on regional structure difference accounting for the variance in multilateral institutions in Europe and Asia does not fall within the purview of this thesis as well. Geography in the Indo-Pacific region continues to create less interdependency than in Europe, but the stopping power of water and distance are less impactful today. Globalization and technology have allowed easier coordination between states. Furthermore, China's military expansion, cyber activities, missile developments, and its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have linked regional allies' security concerns and made the region seem less vast. China's naval dominance within the first island chain equally diminishes allies' sense of security. It is no longer a surety that a U.S. naval intervention could successfully prevent a state such as China from aggressive actions in the region.

For these reasons and given recent developments, the following hypotheses offer the greatest degree of explanatory power:

1. China considerations. Significant differences between modern-day China and the Soviet Union of old complicate states' desire to form a multilateral defense institution aimed at countering China. China's actions have yet to elicit strong balancing because states remain unsure of how China will conduct itself as a regional power. Factors such as economic interdependence further complicate balancing at this time.
2. Path dependency. Alliances and agreements made during the Cold War period have prevented multilateral defense institutions from forming. States are unwilling to gamble on newly formed multilateral institutions when existing commitments have proven to be successful in maintaining peace in the region.

3. Sovereignty concerns. States that have been previously colonized are still tentative about joining multilateral institutions that involve some compromise of sovereignty for the sake of security. This hesitancy stems from fears that their actions and desires will be controlled by others in ways reminiscent of past horrors.

This thesis does not aim to pick a “winner” amongst the above hypotheses but instead evaluates the credibility of each through analysis of Indo-Pacific states’ contemporary policies and statements. For instance, is country X attempting to increase ties with China? Does it go out of its way to appease China? Do Indo-Pacific states fall back on institutions they are most comfortable with or embrace newer untested avenues? Do leaders of these states simply provide empty promises of multilateralism in speeches, or are their announcements encouraging multilateral cooperation followed up with concrete actions that demonstrate progress?

To test the validity of each of these hypotheses, policy documents and statements by country leadership on a variety of topics—United States, China, defense relations, economic cooperation, multilateralism, etc.—are scrutinized by comparing them to their respective states’ and militaries’ actions. Data sets include military exercises and operations, service and access agreements, increased engagements by leadership, and public polls, as public sentiment and perception is a variable that must be accounted for in democracies. Military cooperation can be sensitive and withheld from public audiences; therefore, this thesis relies on open-source press releases from the various Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Defense, and military components to gauge defense cooperation.

#### **D. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This thesis is an analysis of current defense relations between the United States and its allies in Asia. In addition to the United States, this thesis focuses on the following countries: Japan, India, Australia, and South Korea. These states maintain varying levels of defense agreements with the United States, actively participate in multilateral military exercises, have the military capacity to provide beneficial support to an alliance, and are

better situated to resist and confront Chinese influence than other regional actors. Member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are addressed only in passing since the impartial nature of ASEAN, its limited military cooperation, and Chinese influence on many of its members make a formal alliance unlikely. For these reasons, the thesis only refers to ASEAN member states to support or counter findings related to the countries that are being examined.

The thesis begins with a comparative analysis of modern-day China and the Cold War–era Soviet Union to establish why one elicited a multilateral response and the other has not. Next, the thesis conducts case studies on the countries of interest and identifies similarities and common themes. The thesis concludes by summarizing its findings and aims to answer why a multilateral institution similar to NATO is absent in Asia.

Within this framework, the bulk of the thesis examines Asian defense relations from 2008 until now—2021. This time period was chosen for many reasons. For one, China announced its return to great power status with an impressive hosting of the 2008 Olympics. By 2010, it had overtaken Japan as the second largest economy in the world and worked to modernize and increase its military presence in the region. In that same period, U.S. global standing, already damaged by unpopular and long-lasting wars in the Middle East, took a significant hit for its role in the GFC. As was outlined in the significance section, Chinese actions in the past decade have made both regional partners and the global community apprehensive about China’s rise. Overall, this rise and the relative decline of the United States’ global standing has generated regional movements towards multilateralism not seen since the Cold War. Though multilateral cooperation amongst militaries has increased in recent years with the United States’ push towards a free and open Indo-Pacific, a formal multilateral framework to coordinate such efforts remains absent.

The thesis’s research material comprises both primary and secondary sources. Such sources include books, academic journals, news articles, press releases, speeches and opinion pieces from significant persons, independent security-focused thinktanks, and documents and data sets from both global institutions (IMF, World Bank, etc.) and governments. Much of the information used is qualitative, but quantitative research is also



utilized to determine relevant states' military expenditures, trade relations, and overall economic capacities. The sources are limited to materials in and translated into English.

The remainder of the thesis is organized as follows: Chapter II examines NATO, the Soviet Union, and China. Chapter III provides historical overviews of the countries of interest—the United States, India, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Chapter IV examines regional developments and factors inhibiting collective defense for each country of interest. Chapter V concludes the thesis by examining its findings and theorizing what changes need to occur for a collective defense institution to be established.

## **II. COLLECTIVE DEFENSE AND ITS FORCING MECHANISM**

In order to understand why a multilateral collective defense institution is absent in the Indo-Pacific region, it is necessary to understand similar institutions found elsewhere. Why were they created? How do they function? Are they successful? The answers to these questions will provide the reader with the dynamics that surround collective defense. This section utilizes NATO as a case study and examines what a multilateral collective defense institution is and what it is not. The following section examines the threat of the Soviet Union in the post-WWII world and juxtaposes it to today's PRC to determine if the latter justifies a balancing against it like what the former received in the early Cold War period.

### **A. MODERN COLLECTIVE DEFENSE: NATO**

An analysis of NATO informs the reader of key features found in successful multilateral collective defense institutions. NATO is an institution of multiple like-minded states that advance shared interests and deter aggressions by maintaining interoperable forces reliant on one another's commitment to the institution. The organization is made up of 30 member states from across the North Atlantic and Mediterranean regions. It was founded in 1949 by its 12 original members to "safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law."<sup>47</sup> Following the devastation from WWII, European states were in a vulnerable position economically, politically, and socially. The threat of the Soviet Union and spread of communism was very real for these susceptible societies. Not wanting to make the same mistakes that plagued post-WWI Europe, the United States maintained forces in region and provided generous economic support. This effort was not solely altruistic but also reflective of the United States' self interest in building up its overseas markets and preventing the spread of communism. Protecting these interests tied the United States to Europe militarily. NATO provided the military defense necessary to compliment the economic and social recovery efforts taking place in post-WWII Europe.

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<sup>47</sup> "The North Atlantic Treaty," NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm).

The institution has both a political and military element that enables the thirty member states to discuss security concerns, coordinate strategic planning, enact policy, and conduct operations. The two major bodies within NATO are the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Military Committee (MC).<sup>48</sup> The NAC is the main political decision-making body of NATO; it includes representation from each member state and conducts frequent meetings to discuss any policy or operational matters that member states see fit to address.<sup>49</sup> NAC consultations not only address threats, but also help to manage problems between allies.<sup>50</sup> The meetings occur multiple times per week, are chaired by an elected Secretary General, and are typically held at the ambassadorial level. Ministers of foreign affairs represent their respective states at the NAC three times per year, and ministers of defense, two times per year. Heads of state conduct summit-level discussions when called upon. Another major body, the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), holds equivalent authority to the NAC on all matters nuclear. The MC is the link between the NAC and the military structure of NATO.<sup>51</sup> When requested, it provides military policy and strategy to the political elements of NATO and guidance to the strategic commanders—Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT). The MC meets at least once per week at the permanent military representative level and three times per year at the chief of defense level and is chaired by the NATO’s senior military official—typically a non-U.S. four-star admiral or general.

The military structure of NATO consists of the Allied Command Operations (ACO) and the Allied Command Transformation (ACT). The ACO is commanded by SACEUR, a U.S. four-star general or admiral, and ensures Allied defense and security by operating

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<sup>48</sup> “What Is NATO?,” NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>.

<sup>49</sup> NATO, *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division, 2006), 34–37; “North Atlantic Council (NAC),” NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49763.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49763.htm).

<sup>50</sup> Celeste A. Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO After the Cold War,” *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (2000): 714, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081800551343>.

<sup>51</sup> NATO, *NATO Handbook*, 37; “Military Committee (MC),” NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49633.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49633.htm).

at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.<sup>52</sup> Various headquarters and commands fall under the ACO, as well as a small number of military assets immediately available and assigned to the alliance via memorandums of understanding and technical agreements.<sup>53</sup> However, the preponderance of NATO forces that SACEUR commands are multinational forces voluntarily provided by member states when “needed.”<sup>54</sup> ACT is commanded by SACT and maintains warfighting superiority and interoperability and prioritizes defense planning and capability development.<sup>55</sup>

NATO’s political and military decisions are made by consensus, ultimately allowing member states complete sovereignty over their forces and political decision-making ability. When consultations lead to a NATO decision, “it is therefore the expression of the collective will of all the sovereign states that are members of the Alliance.”<sup>56</sup> NATO argues that its decision-making process is a major source of the alliance’s strength and credibility.<sup>57</sup> However, by requiring consensus, NATO subjects itself to the possibility of initiatives being unilaterally blocked by any member state. Internal disputes and competing interests among member states are plentiful, making consensus difficult to achieve in many cases.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, in the event of an aggression against a member state, the invocation of Article V does not necessarily imply military action by all states. Instead, Article V obligates member state to assist with “such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force.”<sup>59</sup> This language is the backbone of the alliance; however, it also allows

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<sup>52</sup> “Allied Command Operations (ACO),” NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_52091.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52091.htm).

<sup>53</sup> “NATO Standing Naval Forces,” NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, <https://shape.nato.int/about/aco-capabilities2/nato-standing-naval-forces.aspx>.

<sup>54</sup> “Troop Contributions,” NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_50316.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50316.htm).

<sup>55</sup> “Allied Command Transformation (ACT),” NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_52092.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52092.htm).

<sup>56</sup> NATO, *NATO Handbook*, 33.

<sup>57</sup> NATO, *NATO Handbook*, 33.

<sup>58</sup> Ryan Heath, “Alliance Divided: Breaking down NATO’s Factions,” POLITICO, December 03, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/news/2019/12/03/breaking-down-nato-alliance-factions-074855>.

<sup>59</sup> “Collective Defence - Article 5,” NATO, accessed June 16, 2021, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_110496.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm).

any form of support to be in compliance with NATO commitments. This ambiguous language provides significant latitude to states, as what one member state deems necessary may be vastly different from the view of the attacked member state. In addition, military forces operating under a NATO chain of command can disobey orders of a foreign superior officer if approved to do so by their own national chain of command. This dynamic was highlighted in Kosovo when a British general refused the orders of SACEUR.<sup>60</sup> Thus, ultimately, NATO forces fall under national authority, which means that “all aspects of operations and administration remain the responsibility of national governments and their militaries.”<sup>61</sup>

However, despite some disputes between member states, consensus among them has enabled the alliance to achieve remarkable feats compared to any other multilateral defense pact. Because of this consensus, NATO is a highly developed organization that features interoperability, supranational defense policy, coordination of the economics of defense, and information sharing.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the alliance shares common infrastructures that enable members’ militaries to share spaces and to forward deploy to one another’s territory as needed. And even though national sovereignty is final, states have willingly delegated operational control of their forces to NATO commanders, often during military exercises to practice joint operations.<sup>63</sup> Military exercises are a fundamental part of the NATO alliance, as they “mirror current operational requirements and priorities” and enable forces “to practice and evaluate collective training of staffs, units and forces to enable them to operate effectively together, to demonstrate Military Capability.”<sup>64</sup> These features of the alliance not only improve interoperability across forces but also integrate and provide transparency regarding its members’ military forces and political processes.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Elizabeth Becker, “U.S. General Was Overruled in Kosovo,” *The New York Times*, September 10, 1999, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/09/10/world/us-general-was-overruled-in-kosovo.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability,” 714.

<sup>62</sup> Wallander, 716.

<sup>63</sup> Wallander, 714.

<sup>64</sup> “Exercises & Training,” NATO, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://shape.nato.int/exercises.aspx>.

<sup>65</sup> Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability,” 715.

Thus, an examination of NATO indicates that modern multilateral collective defense institutions consist of like-minded states, rallied around a specific cause, committed to one another and to improving the interoperability of their forces, but not necessarily beholden to each other or to the institution itself. NATO provides a continuous venue for each of its members to engage with one another on security-related issues. This amount of engagement alone is beneficial to building and maintaining ties with one another. The institution also has a robust political and military element consisting of various multinational headquarters continually working together to reach consensus and maintain security and sovereignty of all its member states. But membership in such an institution does not necessarily mean an obligation to subordinate one's sovereignty to the group. In fact, NATO's verbiage in Article V, consensus requirements, and national chain of command supremacy make NATO quite amenable to the individual states' interests. In short, multilateral collective defense institutions are a grouping of states with shared values that consult frequently, advance military interoperability and capacity, and respect each other's autonomy.

## **B. THE THREAT OF THE SOVIET UNION**

The dynamics of the postwar period are essential to understanding how geopolitical forces and fear gave rise to NATO. During the final stages of WWII, American strategists were already preparing for a postwar competition against the Soviet Union. To some extent, even the use of atomic weapons against Japan was analyzed through an anti-Soviet lens. The United States wanted to end the war before Soviet advances against Japan to prevent it from making claims within the region during the postwar negotiation process. Also, the United States wanted to make clear that it held military supremacy in the postwar world.

However, the Soviet Union held a significant military advantage in Europe, worrying American planners regarding the feasibility of protecting Western democracies against Soviet invasion. In the immediate aftermath of WWII, after its impressive feat of beating back the German advance at the cost of millions of lives, Russia had finally

established an industrial base comparable to that of modern military powers.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, the Soviets controlled large portions of Eastern Europe, providing a buffer against attacks aimed at their homeland.<sup>67</sup> The Soviets enjoyed superiority in ground forces and maintained an imposing presence in the region.<sup>68</sup> There were real fears that the Americans would struggle to defend Western Europe if Soviet forces decided to invade.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, because of Pearl Harbor and similar actions of aggressor states in the previous half century, strategic military thinking had a deep-rooted belief that conflicts start with massive surprise attacks by aggressors.<sup>70</sup> Western Democracies viewed Russia as an aggressor in the postwar period.<sup>71</sup> This thinking forced American planners to adopt a deterrence strategy that was backed by nuclear power. In 1949, Winston Churchill stated that “It is certain that Europe would have been communized and London under bombardment some time ago but for the deterrent of the atomic bomb in the hands of the United States.”<sup>72</sup> In short, the Soviets posed the dominant military threat to the rest of Europe. They demonstrated an unimaginable resolve and resistance by defeating Nazi Germany, established an industrial base that could compete with Western powers, held superior force numbers, were protected by buffer states, and were seen as an aggressor state by the United States, forcing Americans to commit themselves to the region with standing forces and threat of nuclear response.

In addition, Soviet aggression in the postwar period forced a sense of urgency amongst American military planners and decision makers, providing the momentum necessary to establish a defense pact like none before. Instead of normal power politics, Soviet moves to consolidate control of Eastern Europe in the postwar negotiations were viewed by Americans and British as an attempt to advance communism at the expense of

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<sup>66</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2003), 54, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230379435>.

<sup>67</sup> Freedman, 55.

<sup>68</sup> Freedman, 49,51.

<sup>69</sup> Freedman, 51.

<sup>70</sup> Freedman, 32.

<sup>71</sup> Freedman, 47.

<sup>72</sup> Freedman, 50.

democracy.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Western states felt threatened, as there was no way to determine where Soviet advances and ambitions would end. Furthermore, a series of events between 1947 and 1950 led Western Europe to fear for its physical and political security.<sup>74</sup> The Soviets aided a coup in Czechoslovakia enabling a communist takeover, established a blockade against West Berlin, successfully tested a nuclear weapon, and were perceived by U.S. leadership to have directed the invasion of South Korea. The North Korean invasion was even thought to be a precursor to Soviet aggression in Europe and forced the United States to increase troop commitments there.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, the Korean War forced European states to increase their defense spending and override their reluctance to build up their own militaries.<sup>76</sup> The Soviets' testing of a nuclear weapon and the Korean War occurred after the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty; however, these actions exacerbated Western fears and led NATO to integrate and coordinate its defense forces through a centralized headquarters, enabling the institution to become what it is today.<sup>77</sup>

Finally, the ideological differences between communism and capitalism meant a zero-sum game where the losing side's way of life and values were at ultimate risk. Largely shaped by the writings of George Kennan, Americans perceived the Soviets as an existential threat. Capitalist and socialist systems were incompatible. Kennan warned that Soviet ideology viewed capitalism as evil, and its followers felt it was the responsibility of the proletariat to assist in capitalism's inevitable destruction.<sup>78</sup> The Soviets viewed themselves as the sole socialist regime within a misguided world and believed it was their duty to engage and overthrow hostile political forces beyond their borders. Kennan argued that the Soviets believed that capitalist societies were by their nature antagonistic towards the socialist regime and the interests of Soviet peoples. In his opinion, the Soviet Union

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<sup>73</sup> Freedman, 55.

<sup>74</sup> "Milestones: 1945–1952 - Office of the Historian (NATO)," Office of the Historian, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato>.

<sup>75</sup> Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945–1952 - Office of the Historian (NATO)."

<sup>76</sup> Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability," 713.

<sup>77</sup> Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945–1952 - Office of the Historian (NATO)."

<sup>78</sup> George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct by 'X,'" in *Soviet Conduct in World Affairs*, ed. Alexander Dallin (Columbia University Press, 1960), 858, <https://doi.org/10.7312/dall92896-013>.



could never be a trusted member of an international society that contained differing political and economic systems, as opposition to socialism could not be officially recognized or given any amount of credibility by the Soviet Union. Thus, any diplomatic dealings with the Soviets could not be trusted.<sup>79</sup> This dynamic between the United States and the Soviet Union, capitalism and communism, provided the rationale for unprecedented balancing in Europe.

The fragility of European states in the postwar period made them extremely vulnerable; coupled with Soviet ideology, capacity, and aggression, the West feared for its very existence. Largely shaped by Kennan, the United States adopted a containment strategy, whereby it would challenge Soviet actions until the socialist regime collapsed on itself. In Europe, NATO was established as the means to this end. Its establishment reassured European allies of American commitment to their defense and signaled to the Soviets that any aggression towards U.S. allies meant an immediate American response. The dynamics of the Soviet threat in the immediate postwar period led to the formation of NATO.

### **C. THE THREAT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

The dynamics of the China threat today are drastically different from those of the Soviet Union. In contrast to the Soviet's advantages in the early Cold War period, China does not maintain an overwhelming military advantage in the region, nor is it surrounded by buffer states. Due to the geography of the Indo-Pacific, maritime forces play a significant role in the region's balance of power. The United States' naval and air power in the region remains potent, and its undersea advantage seems to be secure for the foreseeable future.<sup>80</sup> However, the shift in balance of power in the region is notable. China, awakened by the U.S. military might displayed during the Gulf War and the Taiwan Strait crisis of the mid 1990s, has made substantial investment in capabilities meant to keep

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<sup>79</sup> Kennan, 856,858.

<sup>80</sup> Brendan Taylor, *Dangerous Decade: Taiwan's Security and Crisis Management*, Adelphi Series 470–471 (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2019), 56.

American power projection in check. Most notably, it has developed long-range missiles capable of targeting carriers and U.S. bases in the region.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, with 335 combat ships, China now has the most combat ships of any nation in the world.<sup>82</sup> Thus, the military gap between these two countries has closed substantially in the past 20 years. Chinese analysts now believe that China's military holds the advantage within the first island chain but still acknowledge American supremacy beyond it.<sup>83</sup> However, despite these developments, China's military advancements do not yet provoke the same nature of concerns that Soviet conventional dominance in continental Europe did during the early Cold War period.

Furthermore, China not only lacks buffer states, but is also incredibly isolated compared to the Russian Soviet state. Except for Pakistan, which maintains ties with the United States as well, and North Korea, a pariah state, China is surrounded by countries that are concerned about its rise. Even though its relations with Russia have improved, they pale in comparison to those of the Soviet Union and its satellite states, as well as the United States and its allies. Additionally, there remain areas of tension between China and Russia, such as China's expanding presence in the Arctic and Central Asia, areas typically assigned to Russia's sphere of influence, that will keep the two states from fully aligning with one another.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the countries surrounding China did not just experience a world war that devastated their quality of life. These are secure states that do not have the same vulnerabilities as the European nations did in the early Cold War. In fact, China's two largest neighbors, Russia and India, are behemoths with nuclear weapons themselves. In contrast to the Soviet satellite states, states surrounding China do not act as buffers and instead constrain it.

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<sup>81</sup> Taylor, 52.

<sup>82</sup> Taylor, 55.

<sup>83</sup> Minghao Zhao, "Is a New Cold War Inevitable? Chinese Perspectives on US-China Strategic Competition," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 12, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 384, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/poz010>.

<sup>84</sup> Meia Nouwens and Helena Legarda, "China's Rise as a Global Security Actor: Implications for NATO," December 2020, 9.

And though China is acting more assertive of late, it champions the sovereignty of states and does not aim to subvert market-based economies. Due to China's history with Western and Japanese imperialism, it has been a strong advocate and defender of state sovereignty. John Garver argues that by upholding this norm, China ensures its own security, as it erodes the U.S. and the UN's ability to intervene in areas deemed to be domestic issues by China.<sup>85</sup> By defending sovereignty, Beijing not only gains the support of unpopular regimes across the globe, it also continues to reinforce non-interventionist ideals that greatly benefit Beijing on issues like reunification and the treatment of its non-Han Chinese inhabitants. Beijing's non-interventionist ideals have even led entrenched U.S. allies like the Philippines to reassess their position on China when they are being criticized by the United States.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, Beijing largely adheres to its non-interventionist values. It currently does not display a desire to promote authoritarianism abroad.<sup>87</sup> It instead chooses to further its own interests by establishing good relations with whichever regime is in charge of countries that are of interest to China.<sup>88</sup>

In addition, China has long since abandoned its communist roots in all but name alone. Its industrial policies and state-owned enterprises are not far removed from the development state practices used by countries like Japan and South Korea during their periods of economic development. As it stands, China's economic system is more than compatible with market-based economies as evidenced by the amount of trade it conducts globally. Since 2015, China has been the world's largest trading nation in goods.<sup>89</sup> It benefits from capitalism and globalism more than any other country. Overhauling such a system would be detrimental to China's interests. Therefore, China's rise does not indicate

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<sup>85</sup> John W. Garver, *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People's Republic, Revised and Updated*, Reprint edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 554.

<sup>86</sup> Joshua Eisenman and Eric Heginbotham, eds., *China Steps Out: Beijing's Major Power Engagement with the Developing World*, 1st edition (New York ; London: Routledge, 2018), 72–73.

<sup>87</sup> Andrew J. Nathan, "China's Challenge," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (2015): 158, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2015.0012>.

<sup>88</sup> Nathan, 157.

<sup>89</sup> "China Remains World's Largest Trading Nation in Goods: Customs," CGTN, January 29, 2021, <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-01-29/China-remains-world-s-largest-trading-nation-in-goods-customs-Xr9Viim84U/index.html>.

a threat against states' livelihoods. For this reason, and because of China's non-interventionist values, China is less threatening than the Soviet Union was because it does not pose an existential threat to states. With the exception of Taiwan and some peripheral territories, China does not aim to force its rule and way of life on other states and peoples.

Also contrast to the Soviet Union, which was hostile to the international system adopted by Western states, China is an active member of the international system and global community. As T. J. Pempel and Helge Hveem argue, "China has been a vigorous joiner of virtually any and all global and regional institutions."<sup>90</sup> It is an active member in the UN and the second-largest financial contributor to its peacekeeping operations.<sup>91</sup> China is also a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and G20 and participates in ad hoc multilateral cooperation efforts, such as the anti-piracy operations in the Guld of Aden.<sup>92</sup> Further cementing China's commitment to the international system is that China has largely abided by these various institutions' accords, resolutions, and rulings.<sup>93</sup> Regionally, China is a member of the Six Party Talks (now paused), ASEAN Plus 3, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and countless other groupings.<sup>94</sup> At times, China has indeed conducted itself as a global and regional stakeholder invested in the current international system. However, China does often strongly reject any multilateral agreements perceived to be aimed against it.<sup>95</sup> It has also demonstrated a willingness to develop and promote alternative institutions that compete with the entrenched institutions of the postwar world. For instance, after failed attempts to increase its voting rights in the IMF and WTO to a level reflective of its economic weight, China, feeling slighted by the Western powers and Japan, has created alternative global

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<sup>90</sup> Robert S. Ross and Jo Inge Bekkevold, eds., *China in the Era of Xi Jinping: Domestic and Foreign Policy Challenges*, Illustrated edition (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016), 214.

<sup>91</sup> "United Nations Peacekeeping: China," United Nations, accessed October 27, 2021, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/china>.

<sup>92</sup> Ross and Bekkevold, *China in the Era of Xi Jinping*, 214.

<sup>93</sup> Ross and Bekkevold, 200.

<sup>94</sup> Yeo, *Asia's Regional Architecture*, 9.

<sup>95</sup> Ross and Bekkevold, *China in the Era of Xi Jinping*, 201.

and regional financial institutions that directly contest organizations like the IMF.<sup>96</sup> But overall, China remains an active member of the international system and global community.

This involvement in the international community and China's economic attractiveness has disincentivized states from actively balancing against China. Strong economic incentives constrain states' behavior regarding China. China's reliance on the U.S. market for its exports and its purchasing of U.S. debt instruments restrains both states' actions against one another, as any significant rise in tensions that prompted divestment would result in "mutually assured financial destruction."<sup>97</sup> Likewise, Australia is reliant on the Chinese market for its mineral exports.<sup>98</sup> India is equally dependent, as China has emerged as its largest trading partner in fiscal year 2020–21.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, China has surpassed the United States as Japan's and South Korea's largest export market, and both states as well as the United States have heavily invested in production capacity in China to save on manufacturing costs.<sup>100</sup> These economic interdependencies and China's conduct within the international system complicate balancing against it.

In addition, China does not shy away from using more mischievous tactics to further prevent states from actively balancing against it. It has utilized cyber warfare, disinformation campaigns, elite capture, economic pressure, legal warfare, financial donations, and media investments aimed at shaping public opinion to influence positions and decisions of states.<sup>101</sup> The difference in threat between China and the Soviet Union can be best examined by each one's impact on NATO. Whereas the Soviet Union's tactics solidified the trans-Atlantic bond, China's tactics have created rifts within the alliance. With BRI and the establishment of the 17+1, China has targeted certain NATO and

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<sup>96</sup> Ross and Bekkevold, 201.

<sup>97</sup> Ross and Bekkevold, 217.

<sup>98</sup> Ross and Bekkevold, 224.

<sup>99</sup> Sumanth Samsani, "India-China Economic Ties: Impact of Galwan," ORF, February 04, 2021, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-china-economic-ties-impact-galwan/>.

<sup>100</sup> Ross and Bekkevold, *China in the Era of Xi Jinping*, 220.

<sup>101</sup> Nouwens and Legarda, "China's Rise as a Global Security Actor: Implications for NATO," 7.

European Union member states—many of which are former Soviet states with fragile economic and social conditions—while excluding others.<sup>102</sup> This exclusiveness creates divisions within the alliance regarding the threat China poses and thus makes the alliance’s ability to find consensus on a China policy more difficult—though there has been movement towards consensus on a China policy more recently.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, China’s diplomatic and economic tactics are so effective that the states most impacted by China’s actions in the South China Sea, an area where China asserts itself most aggressively, remain unable to mount a unified opposition to Beijing’s territorial claims.<sup>104</sup> Thus, U.S. initiatives aimed at countering Chinese transgressions continue to be a difficult sell to states both in and out of the Indo-Pacific region.

This analysis is not any indication of what China’s rise means for the global order, nor is it meant to diminish China’s potential as a competitor. China is now a more formidable challenger than the Soviet Union ever was to the Western world. A policy of containment awaiting a Chinese collapse is not feasible.<sup>105</sup> The Soviet Union never came close to matching the GDP of the United States. But in 2020, China’s total GDP was just over seventy percent of U.S. GDP, and if measured by purchasing power parity, China’s GDP exceeded that of the United States.<sup>106</sup> Its economy is integrated into the global economy and provides goods for much of the world. As was highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, a shortage in Chinese goods means economic hardship and demand crises for many.<sup>107</sup> This type of leverage was never held by the Soviet Union. China also leads in key economic sectors, many of which are emerging technologies with dual-use

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<sup>102</sup> Simran Sawhney, “The Belt and Road Initiative: What Does It Mean for NATO?,” NAOC, July 16, 2018, <https://natoassociation.ca/the-belt-and-road-initiative-what-does-it-mean-for-nato/>.

<sup>103</sup> Nouwens and Legarda, “China’s Rise as a Global Security Actor: Implications for NATO”; Jens Ringsmose and Sten Rynning, “China Brought NATO Closer Together,” War on the Rocks, February 5, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/02/china-brought-nato-closer-together/>.

<sup>104</sup> Eisenman and Heginbotham, *China Steps Out*, 13–14.

<sup>105</sup> Campbell and Sullivan, “Competition Without Catastrophe,” 98.

<sup>106</sup> “Top 15 Countries by GDP in 2020,” Global PEO Services, July 23, 2020, <https://globalpeoservices.com/top-15-countries-by-gdp-in-2020/>.

<sup>107</sup> Willy C. Shih, “Global Supply Chains in a Post-Pandemic World,” *Harvard Business Review*, September 1, 2020, <https://hbr.org/2020/09/global-supply-chains-in-a-post-pandemic-world>.

capability—5G, AI, and quantum computing.<sup>108</sup> In addition, unlike the inflexibility of the Soviet Union, China has shown the ability to adapt its ideology to suit its present needs.<sup>109</sup>

Furthermore, there are legitimate concerns that as China continues to increase its status it will become more reminiscent of the great powers of old. There remain vastly different opinions on what China's rise means for the global order. Academic Nadège Rolland offers a likely scenario whereby China “would focus on developing deep interdependencies, created in the shadow of the country's economic and military dominance, making it extremely difficult for other states to challenge the system from a position of strength.”<sup>110</sup> This likely, but still hypothetical, outcome is reminiscent of the U.S.-led world order today. Though concerning to the United States, its allies, and any nation satisfied with the current “American-led” global order, a more multipolar world that largely maintains the institutions and rules that have led to unprecedented standards of living is not as threatening as the world the Soviet Union aimed to create during the Cold War. It seems China is simply less threatening to its region, and it therefore does not incentivize states to form a multilateral collective defense institution in the same way the Soviet Union did in the early Cold War period.

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<sup>108</sup> Aaron Mehta, “NATO Struggles with Its China Conundrum,” *Defense News*, December 4, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/smr/nato-2020-defined/2019/12/03/nato-struggles-with-its-china-conundrum/>.

<sup>109</sup> Campbell and Sullivan, “Competition Without Catastrophe,” 98.

<sup>110</sup> Nadege Rolland, “China's Vision for a New World Order: Implications for the United States,” 2020, 4.

### III. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

With regard to defense-related multilateralism in the Indo-Pacific, history matters, for some states more than others. This chapter provides a historical overview of U.S.'s, India's, Japan's, South Korea's, and Australia's security cooperation as well as multilateralism at large in the Indo-Pacific from the postwar period until China became a regional threat in 2008. This overview provides context for how path dependencies and legacies of recent history may impact the decision making of these states today. For instance, wartime aggression and postwar reconstruction have had significant impacts on Japan's security cooperation. Additionally, the Cold War, the non-alignment movement, the clout of a U.S. security guarantee, fears of abandonment, and protecting one's own investments and interests have all played a role in the security decisions Indo-Pacific states have made and continue to make today. Multilateralism began to be encouraged and pursued by the United States and other hopeful countries in the post-Cold War world. In addition, the United States began to pressure its allies to increase ties with one another. During the time period covered in this chapter, many of the connections and cooperation mechanisms that Indo-Pacific states continue to build upon today were established; however, in certain cases, the factors that contribute to the lack of a NATO-like institution arose as well.

#### A. UNITED STATES

As it did in Europe, the end of WWII and the defeat of Imperial Japan created an exogenous shock to the Pacific region, which enabled the United States to establish new institutions and regional security arrangements.<sup>111</sup> Shortly after its independence, in 1947, the Philippines approved basing rights to the United States. By August of 1951, a mutual defense agreement had been established between both states. Shortly after, in September of 1951, the United States signed two more defense agreements—the Australia, New Zealand, and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) and the security treaty between the

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<sup>111</sup> Yeo, *Asia's Regional Architecture*, 27.



United States and Japan. A few years later, in October of 1953, the United States quickly established a mutual defense treaty with South Korea following the conclusion of the Korean War. The following year, the United States signed a mutual defense treaty with the Republic of China. This collection of U.S. bilateral alliances, quickly assembled in the early Cold War period, became known as the “hub-and-spokes system,” where the United States acted as the hub and its partners the spokes.<sup>112</sup>

In addition, the United States and Thailand established defense ties as early as 1950; however, compared to the other alliances, this relationship was less defined. Similarly, the United States and India flirted with defense relations in response to Chinese aggressions in 1962, but India’s non-alignment movement and the United States’ rapprochement with China in the late 1960s proved to be too much of a barrier to formal ties.<sup>113</sup>

The early Cold War period alliances remain in place today with the exception of two. In 1979, the United States established diplomatic ties with the People’s Republic of China. Thus, the bilateral defense agreement between the United States and the Republic of China on Taiwan was terminated by the United States shortly thereafter. Similarly, after New Zealand declared itself a nuclear-free zone, the United States suspended its treaty obligations in September of 1986. This suspension only extended to New Zealand, as both Washington and Canberra continue to honor their commitments to one another.

In contrast to the Cold War period, the end of the Cold War has led to multilateral cooperation efforts throughout the Indo-Pacific region. These efforts included both economic and security related initiatives; however, at this time U.S. leadership believed that multilateral security initiatives undermined its bilateral alliances.<sup>114</sup> Thus, the United States did not actively contribute to defense multilateralism in the initial aftermath of Cold War. It instead continued to pursue bilateral defense ties. In the early 1990s, the United States established defense relations with India. However, nuclear tests by India in 1998 paused the cooperation between the two countries.

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<sup>112</sup> Yeo, 28.

<sup>113</sup> Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 10.

<sup>114</sup> Yeo, *Asia’s Regional Architecture*, 67.

Until the turn of the century, the U.S. bilateral alliances remained largely independent of one another; however, the George W. Bush Administration began efforts to further increase cooperation between American allies in the Indo-Pacific region. The Bush presidency saw a rapprochement with India, as it did not share the concerns that the previous administration held about India's nuclear weapons program. Thus, though not a "spoke" like many of the United States' other regional partners, India became tied to the U.S. alliance system during this period. Furthermore, to quell Chinese hegemonic ambitions, Asian-Pacific planners within the Bush administration encouraged allies to increase their capabilities and interoperability with both the United States and one another.<sup>115</sup> Planners such as Michael Green, then director of Asia affairs on the National Security Council staff, stated that their intention was to create, "not a NATO per se, but a federated set of capabilities and interoperability."<sup>116</sup> Due to this American strategy, the region experienced a rise in trilaterals and multilateral military training. The initiative to reinvent the hub-and-spokes system in Asia established a foundation of multilateralism that future U.S. administrations continued to develop, leading some scholars to argue that the "pivot" to Asia happened well before it was publicized.<sup>117</sup>

## **B. INDIA**

To understand India's defense cooperation, one must first understand the reasoning for its non-alignment policies. Memories of 200 years of colonial rule weighed heavily on India's post-independence policymakers. They therefore sought a foreign policy that would maintain India's autonomy.<sup>118</sup> Non-alignment was adopted by many newly independent Asian states and championed by Jawaharlal Nehru, who, as both the prime minister and foreign minister, held immense control over India's foreign policy strategies.<sup>119</sup> Non-

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<sup>115</sup> Nina Silove, "The Pivot before the Pivot: U.S. Strategy to Preserve the Power Balance in Asia," *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016): 74, [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00238](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00238).

<sup>116</sup> Silove, 65.

<sup>117</sup> Silove, "The Pivot before the Pivot."

<sup>118</sup> Sumit Ganguly and Manjeet S. Pardesi, "Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy," *India Review* 8, no. 1 (February 10, 2009): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14736480802665162>.

<sup>119</sup> Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 20.

alignment was rooted in non-interventionist ideals, which called for states to stay out of other's domestic affairs. Non-intervention was a norm that emerged in the postwar period and was of particular interest to many Asian leaders, as they associated non-intervention with resistance to being influenced by major powers—a concern most prevalent amongst newly independent and formerly colonized states.<sup>120</sup>

These ideals played a significant role in shaping collective defense agreements in the region. Regional collective defense efforts in South and Southeast Asia largely failed in the early Cold War period because Asian leaders deemed such concepts to be in direct conflict with non-interventionist and non-alignment ideals. Protection by superpowers was perceived by Asian elites to be a return to colonialism and dependency.<sup>121</sup> Nehru again acted as the champion and led efforts to delegitimize collective defense initiatives pushed by major powers. Upon receiving an invitation, from British foreign secretary Anthony Eden, to a conference aimed at gauging interest in a collective defense institution—Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)—in South and Southeast Asia, Nehru replied that such an organization was counter to the collective peace initiatives found in the UN Charter.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, the 1955 Bandung Conference, attended by newly formed Asian and African states, including India, established that membership in a regional collective defense organization was in fact counter to proper international relations conduct.<sup>123</sup> Nehru believed that defense pacts fostered feelings of insecurity, limited the freedoms of the state, and were provocative in nature.<sup>124</sup> He found the thought of India's participation in such an agreement reprehensible. He warned that countries recently freed would humiliate themselves by joining an institution that relegated non-powers to “camp followers” without freedom and dignity.<sup>125</sup> Ultimately, defense pacts of the early Cold

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<sup>120</sup> Acharya, “Ideas and Power: Non-Intervention and Collective Defense,” 36.

<sup>121</sup> Cecil V. Crabb, *The Elephants and the Grass: A Study of Nonalignment* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 67.

<sup>122</sup> Acharya, “Ideas and Power: Non-Intervention and Collective Defense,” 51.

<sup>123</sup> Acharya, 57.

<sup>124</sup> Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 22,56.

<sup>125</sup> Acharya, “Ideas and Power: Non-Intervention and Collective Defense,” 58.

War period conflicted with Nehru's ideological vision of international relations, "which rejected power politics, denounced colonialism, advocated, non-exclusionary international and regional cooperation, and demanded equality and justice for the newly independent states."<sup>126</sup>

However, events throughout the Cold War pressured India to abandon its initial idealistic approach to world affairs and instead utilize a non-alignment strategy more grounded in realist thought. After the 1962 Sino-Indian war, India demonstrated its willingness to bend on strict adherence to the ideals of non-alignment. As a result of the war, it "tilted" towards the United States and signed an air defense agreement and further agreed to consultations in the event of another Chinese attack.<sup>127</sup> In 1964, after Chinese nuclear tests, Nehru reevaluated his opposition to defense spending and diverted more funds to India's security.<sup>128</sup> During the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, India could no longer rely on U.S. support given the U.S.'s rapprochement with China, and thus, fearing Chinese and Pakistani military cooperation, India once again "tilted" towards a superpower—this time the Soviet Union.<sup>129</sup> Both states agreed to consultations in the event of an attack on either party and signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation with an option for renewal after 20 years. At this time, though non-alignment rhetoric was integrated into Indian foreign policy, it had transformed from an overly optimistic and strict policy to one that afforded the flexibility to "tilt" when necessary. Non-alignment as no alignment died, and instead became a policy that prioritized diversification and prevented overreliance on any single power.<sup>130</sup>

The conclusion of the Cold War witnessed rapprochement between the United States and India, as well as the advent of Indian engagement with several of the United States' allies. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and a global shift towards a more

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<sup>126</sup> Acharya, 48.

<sup>127</sup> Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 10.

<sup>128</sup> Ganguly and Pardesi, "Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy," 8.

<sup>129</sup> Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 10.

<sup>130</sup> Ganguly and Pardesi, "Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy," 8; Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 297.

unipolar world, Indian non-alignment lost much of its purpose, and the country had no choice but to engage and improve relations with the lone superpower.<sup>131</sup> During this same period, India also abandoned its self-reliance economic model and began to open its economy to the rest of the world.<sup>132</sup> Indeed, the end of the Cold War forced India to reconsider its inward-looking tendencies. In 1995, India signed its first defense accord with the United States allowing the two to perform military exercises and training with one another.<sup>133</sup> But, just four years later, in 1998, India conducted five nuclear tests, earning it strong condemnation by U.S. policy makers, who then enacted sanctions and paused U.S.-Indian military engagement. However, the Bush administration was less concerned over India's nuclear status and once again engaged India, as it viewed India as a strategic ally against China.<sup>134</sup> The Bush administration met with its India counterparts regularly, particularly to discuss security and defense issues.<sup>135</sup> The military exercises suspended because of India's previous nuclear tests began once again. In 2005, the countries agreed to renew their defense accord and promised to work towards increased cooperation in areas related to defense.<sup>136</sup>

During this period, the Bush administration was simultaneously encouraging India and its allies in the region to strengthen their interoperability and cooperation.<sup>137</sup> As a result, India began to engage more with regional states such as Japan and Australia. In 2007, all four states participated in a Japanese-proposed quadrilateral security dialogue and the naval exercise Malabar. The quadrilateral did not endure—but reemerged several years later, but due to the increased defense engagement at this time, all participants in the

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<sup>131</sup> Ganguly and Pardesi, "Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy," 11,12.

<sup>132</sup> Douglas A. Irwin, "India's Trade Reforms 30 Years Later: Great Start but Stalling," PIIE, July 22, 2021, <https://www.piie.com/blogs/trade-and-investment-policy-watch/indias-trade-reforms-30-years-later-great-start-stalling>.

<sup>133</sup> Paul Smith and Tara Kartha, "Strategic Partners or an Emerging Alliance? India and the United States in an Era of Global Power Transition," *Comparative Strategy* 37, no. 5 (October 20, 2018): 445, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2018.1526574>.

<sup>134</sup> Smith and Kartha, 445.

<sup>135</sup> Smith and Kartha, 445.

<sup>136</sup> Smith and Kartha, 446.

<sup>137</sup> Silove, "The Pivot before the Pivot," 78.

quadrilateral dialogue managed to establish or increase defense relations with one another.<sup>138</sup> By 2007, India-U.S. defense relations and multilateralism with like-minded states were on the rise, signaling that India was beginning to become a willing “spoke” of the U.S. led hub-and-spoke alliance system. However, a major “formal alliance” in the form of a mutual defense treaty was still lacking.

### C. JAPAN

Japan’s postwar defense centered on the asymmetrical relationship it shared with the United States military. Despite burden-sharing disputes with U.S. leadership throughout the Cold War period, Japan heavily relied on the United States for its security. As a result, Japan’s expansion of its Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) was slow and focused on internal development rather than external balancing, as it was legally limited by its constitution and democratically limited by the anti-militarism sentiment that took hold within Japan following its defeat in WWII. These two factors, coupled with the U.S. security umbrella, allowed Japanese leadership to pursue economic development in lieu of defense buildup. The post-Cold War period witnessed more Japanese defense engagement with states other than the United States and with regional security groupings, as this engagement provided Japan the necessary legitimacy to expand the JSDF, a desire of both Japanese and U.S. leadership. However, the constitutional limitations placed on JSDF and the military wariness of both the populace and many of Japan’s elites has continued to restrict Japan’s ability to expand the size and scope of activities of the JSDF to include collective self-defense.

In the early Cold War period, the United States looked to Japan as a bulwark against communism in the Pacific. Its original postwar intent to keep Japan demilitarized was replaced with the need to transform Japan into a capable ally in the region.<sup>139</sup> The United States initially attempted to reintegrate Japan into regional defense initiatives via a multilateral defense grouping; however, with minimal interest from the engagement-shy

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<sup>138</sup> Silove, 78.

<sup>139</sup> Jeffrey P Richter, “Japan’s ‘Reinterpretation’ of Article 9: A Pyrrhic Victory for American Foreign Policy?,” *IOWA LAW REVIEW* 101 (February 21, 2016): 1234.

Japanese and even less interest from third-party states like Australia and the Philippines which still viewed Japan as a wartime aggressor, this strategy failed.<sup>140</sup> Instead, the United States and Japan signed a bilateral security agreement in 1951, which affirmed U.S. commitment to Japan but also ensured the United States' ability to operate its military forces from Japanese territories for the "maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East."<sup>141</sup>

Throughout the Cold War, the United States continued to pressure Japan to build up its defense capacity and assume more responsibility for its own and regional defense against the Soviets. Initially, Prime Minister Yoshida, confident in the United States' commitment to Japan's defense because of U.S. actions in the Korea War, utilized Article 9 of the constitution as a means to keep Japan out of foreign conflicts and reliant on the United States for its defense, allowing the majority of Japan's resources to go towards economic development.<sup>142</sup> In the 1960s, the United States, burdened by a prolonged conflict in Vietnam, again called on Japan to take on more responsibility for its own and regional defense, a justifiable request given Japan's recent economic success.<sup>143</sup> In response, Japan began to pursue a more independent defense posture, but, cognizant of the Japanese public's anti-militarism, wider Asia's fears of a resurgent Japanese military, and Japanese elite's fears of entrapment in American-initiated regional conflicts, the Japanese government did so modestly by limiting its defense spending to 1 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) and concentrating on capabilities and developments associated with homeland defense.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Cha, "Powerplay," January 1, 2010, 181–82.

<sup>141</sup> "MOFA: Japan-U.S. Security Treaty," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed August 13, 2021, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>.

<sup>142</sup> Richter, "Japan's 'Reinterpretation' of Article 9: A Pyrrhic Victory for American Foreign Policy?," 1235.

<sup>143</sup> Yukinori Komine, "Whither a 'Resurgent Japan': The Nixon Doctrine and Japan's Defense Build-up, 1969–1976," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 3 (July 2014): 93, [https://doi.org/10.1162/JCWS\\_a\\_00447](https://doi.org/10.1162/JCWS_a_00447).

<sup>144</sup> Komine, 124–25.

Disputes between the two states over Japan's security role continued through the Carter and Reagan administrations, with the latter seeing more Japanese investment in regional defense, largely due to concerning Soviet actions in Asia. The placement of Soviet troops in the Northern Territories, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and deployment of nuclear missiles and bombers to the Far East led to increased ties between Japan and the United States.<sup>145</sup> As a result, Japan participated in its first military exercises outside its geographic area, increased its defense budget, improved its air defense and anti-submarine warfare capabilities, allowed U.S. deployment of F-16s to Misawa Airbase, and agreed to protect sea lines of communication within 1,000 miles of Yokosuka.<sup>146</sup> These commitments made by the Japanese government revealed its willingness to shoulder not only more of its own defense but also region-wide security threats, demonstrating a pivot away from Japan's proclivity to remain uninvolved in international affairs.

In the post-Cold War era, Japan further involved itself in regional and global security affairs, as such actions ensured a continued commitment from the United States on Japan's defense. After being criticized by the global community for insufficient contributions during the Gulf War, Japan's Diet passed laws allowing JSDF to participate in UN peacekeeping operations in a non-combat related capacity.<sup>147</sup> Shortly after, in 1992, Japan contributed its defense forces to UN peacekeeping operations in Cambodia and has since sent troops to Mozambique, Golan Heights, and East Timor as well as supported humanitarian assistance and disaster relief around the globe.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, due to the end of the Cold War and rumors of U.S. troop downsizing in Asia, Japanese policymakers became concerned about the U.S. military commitment to Japan.<sup>149</sup> Similar to its actions

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<sup>145</sup> Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, "The Soviet Factor in U.S.-Japanese Defense Cooperation, 1978-1985," 2021, 73.

<sup>146</sup> Hasegawa, 86, 88, 93.

<sup>147</sup> Leif-Eric Easley, "How Proactive? How Pacifist? Charting Japan's Evolving Defence Posture," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2016.1181148>.

<sup>148</sup> Easley, 71.

<sup>149</sup> Tomohiko Satake, "The New Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation and an Expanding Japanese Security Role: Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation," *Asian Politics & Policy* 8, no. 1 (January 2016): 30, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12239>.



of the late 1970s, Japan, in meetings with the United States, agreed to increase its security involvement and work with the United States to “develop multilateral regional security dialogues and cooperation mechanisms.”<sup>150</sup> As it did in the Cold War, the increased role of Japan in regional security reinvigorated the United States’ commitment to Japan’s security.<sup>151</sup> Thus, Japan was incentivized to act as a global and regional stakeholder, as it strengthened its relationship with the United States—a relationship that had become a routine part of Japan’s domestic politics and was recognized as the cornerstone of Japan’s diplomacy by the Japanese populace.<sup>152</sup> The bilateral alliance was found to be equally important by the Clinton administration, as it was the “linchpin of U.S. security policy in Asia.”<sup>153</sup>

Throughout the 2000s, Japan continued to increase its status as a responsible stakeholder by engaging in regional and global security affairs, but more significantly, it began to establish defense ties with other partners of the United States bilaterally and through minilateralism as well. With encouragement from the United States, Japan began to participate in various trilateral meetings, some of which were upgraded by participating parties to Trilateral Strategic Dialogues—U.S.-Japan-Australia in 2002, U.S.- Japan-South Korea in 2008.<sup>154</sup> Japan also advanced its relationship with Australia by signing a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in 2007, the first agreement of its kind made by Japan with a state other than the United States, and with India, signing a defense cooperation agreement in 2008.<sup>155</sup> Though Japan’s alliance with the United States remained its top priority, it was during this decade that Japan established the relationships and coordination

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<sup>150</sup> Tsuneo Akaha, “Beyond Self-defense: Japan’s Elusive Security Role under the New Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation,” *The Pacific Review* 11, no. 4 (January 1998): 470, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512749808719267>.

<sup>151</sup> Satake, “The New Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation and an Expanding Japanese Security Role,” 29.

<sup>152</sup> Yeo, *Asia’s Regional Architecture*, 39.

<sup>153</sup> Yeo, 75.

<sup>154</sup> Yeo, 135; Silove, “The Pivot before the Pivot,” 79.

<sup>155</sup> Silove, “The Pivot before the Pivot,” 78–79.

mechanisms that led to its increased defense cooperation with like-minded states, quite the reversal compared to its internally focused agenda throughout most of the Cold War.

However, despite Japan's progression towards increased multilateralism and burden-sharing, it must be noted that Japan's defense cooperation continued to be hindered by two major factors: anti-militarist sentiment within the populace and Article 9 of its constitution. Throughout the postwar era, debate over defense and national security has been abundant in Japan and is often shaped by the mistrust many hold against the military.<sup>156</sup> Anti-militarism, prevalent throughout Japan and a persistent feature of Japanese politics, is rooted in memories of militarist takeover in the 1930s and the devastation the Japanese public incurred in its war with the United States.<sup>157</sup> Parts of the Japanese public and even segments of Japan's political and economic elites viewed the military as a "dangerous institution that must be constantly restrained and monitored."<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, the power of Japan's bureaucracy allows it to overrule defense decisions made by Japanese politicians, as was the case when the Ministry of Finance reduced defense spending below the level that the Japanese government had previously agreed to during consultations with the United States.<sup>159</sup> Japan continues to be reluctant to become a military power reflective of its economic weight and is cautious in how the JSDF is utilized in areas unrelated to homeland defense.<sup>160</sup>

The scope of JSDF actions are further restricted by Article 9 of Japan's constitution, which renounces "war as a sovereign right" of Japan and the "use of force as a means of settling international disputes" and prohibits land, sea, and air forces capable of war.<sup>161</sup> Japan's constitution provides an additional legal layer that politicians must work through

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<sup>156</sup> Thomas U. Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Anti-Militarism," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 136, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539024>.

<sup>157</sup> Berger, 120.

<sup>158</sup> Berger, 120.

<sup>159</sup> Hasegawa, "The Soviet Factor in U.S.-Japanese Defense Cooperation, 1978–1985," 88.

<sup>160</sup> Akitoshi Miyashita, "Where Do Norms Come from? Foundations of Japan's Postwar Pacifism1," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 100, <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lci135>.

<sup>161</sup> "THE CONSTITUTION OF JAPAN," Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, accessed September 20, 2021, [https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution\\_and\\_government\\_of\\_japan/constitution\\_e.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html).

to legitimize JSDF operations. It also empowers the elites and public who are critical of Japan's militarism. This dynamic has limited Japan's ability to expand the JSDF and its roles and requires creative interpretation to face the ever-changing geopolitical landscape.

Indeed, since its establishment, Article 9 of the constitution has been reinterpreted numerous times by Japanese leadership to better address Japan's security concerns. As early as 1954, reinterpretation of the "pacifist clause" awarded Japan the right to self-defense.<sup>162</sup> In 1999, legislation drafted in response to Chinese and North Korean provocations permitted preventative military actions to be taken by the JSDF if not doing so could lead to an attack on Japan.<sup>163</sup> This interpretation awarded the JSDF the ability to preemptively act in self-defense against perceived threats. However, at this time, and until 2015, Article 9 prohibited Japanese forces from providing defense to another state and its military, so even though Japan began to engage in regional security groupings and further developed its defense cooperation with states like Australia, it was legally bound by its constitution to not act in the defense of another nation. Thus, for most of its existence—and the entirety of the timeline captured in this section—Japan's constitution prohibited its forces from participating in collective defense. For this reason, participation in a multi-lateral collective defense "institution" was not possible.

#### **D. REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

South Korean defense relations center on its alliance with the United States and the existential threat it faces from the North. These two factors dominated South Korean security decisions during the Cold War period and have limited its defense engagement with third-party states. The U.S.-ROK alliance is a product of the Cold War. Kim Il Sung's invasion of South Korea changed U.S. perceptions of the communist threat in Asia and elicited an American political and military response. The United States went on to control South Korea's forces and assumed responsibility for its defense during and after the war.

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<sup>162</sup> Richter, "Japan's 'Reinterpretation' of Article 9: A Pyrrhic Victory for American Foreign Policy?," 1239.

<sup>163</sup> Richter, 1241.

Kim's actions and the Korean War tied the United States to South Korea's defense in perpetuity with the signing of the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty.

However, this bilateral relationship did not have a strong base in the way many of the other U.S. defense pacts did. In the post-WWII world, U.S. security guarantees were not initially awarded to states along the communist periphery; likewise, South Korea was not included within Acheson's "defense perimeter."<sup>164</sup> South Korea was simply not as important to U.S. planners as states like Japan and the Philippines, which shared historical ties with the United States and held strategic value. In contrast to the Northern part of the peninsula, Southern Korea was utilized by the Japanese for food production rather than industry. Thus, in the immediate postwar period, South Korea was a devastated agrarian state that showed little promise and strategic value. Furthermore, unlike those of Australia and New Zealand, Korean values and way of life were different from those of Western states; therefore, protecting Korea was not even on the United States' radar until the invasion forced its hand.

Values continued to remain a sticking point in U.S.-ROK relations for decades, revealing that the alliance was a product of necessity rather than want. Both the Truman and Kennedy administrations viewed Syngman Rhee as dictatorial, corrupt, and untrustworthy.<sup>165</sup> The U.S. plan EVERREADY was a secret plan devised to overthrow Rhee in the event that he became too aggressive in his attempts to reunify the peninsula.<sup>166</sup> The Kennedy administration equally opposed General Park Chung-hee because he came into power via a military coup and had an equally authoritarian style leadership.<sup>167</sup> The Ford administration and congress cut military aid to the ROK due to Park's human rights

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<sup>164</sup> James I. Matray, "Dean Acheson's Press Club Speech Reexamined," *Journal of Conflict Studies*, August 1, 2002, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/366>; Duffield, "Why Is There No APTO?" 79.

<sup>165</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State, Updated Edition: North Korea, Past and Future*, Updated edition (New York: Ecco, 2018), 30.

<sup>166</sup> Cha, 31.

<sup>167</sup> Cha, 31.

violations.<sup>168</sup> President Carter was disgusted by Park's regime and stated that the South Korean government's "internal oppression is repugnant to our people and undermines the support of our commitment there."<sup>169</sup> In short, the mutual defense treaty established between the states was simply a product of geopolitical forces and lacked the ideological cohesion that other American alliances had.

As a result, South Korea feared abandonment for much of the Cold War, as it heavily relied on the United States' support for its security. Doubting American commitment seems bizarre given the status of the relationship nearly 70 years later; however, there were ample reasons to do so in the early Cold War period. The United States guaranteed security of Japan—a colonizing-aggressor state and loser of WWII—but did not do the same for South Korea, even though it was a victim of Japanese aggression and also had a government established with American support. Furthermore, Washington's aid to South Korea was highly conditional and limited. It curbed military assistance due to fears that Rhee would attempt to restart the Korean War.<sup>170</sup> By contrast, China and the Soviet Union competed with one another in sending aid support to North Korea, aid that did not have strings attached.<sup>171</sup>

Furthermore, ROK's fears were exacerbated in the late 1960s, as North Korea raided the Blue House, captured the USS Pueblo, and shot down a U.S. EC-121 plane. The United States opted for diplomatic solutions instead of military action, enraging Park, who lost confidence in the United States' security commitment.<sup>172</sup> He even threatened to withdraw ROK troops from Vietnam, troops who were provided as a *quid pro quo* in exchange for U.S. assistance in modernizing ROK military forces.<sup>173</sup> Further intensifying Park's fears, President Nixon established his "Guam (Nixon) Doctrine," shifting the

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<sup>168</sup> Peter Banseok Kwon, "Beyond Patron and Client: Historicizing the Dialectics of US-ROK Relations amid Park Chung Hee's Independent Defense Industry Development in South Korea, 1968–1979," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 30, no. 2 (2017): 199, <https://doi.org/10.1353/seo.2017.0009>.

<sup>169</sup> Cha, *The Impossible State, Updated Edition*, 33.

<sup>170</sup> Cha, 31.

<sup>171</sup> Cha, 27–31.

<sup>172</sup> Kwon, "Beyond Patron and Client," 189, 191.

<sup>173</sup> Kwon, 189–90.

primary burden for Asian states' defense onto the Asian states themselves.<sup>174</sup> Nixon also then removed 20,000 troops from Korea, and secretly—Park was not notified—worked towards rapprochement with China, a state closely allied with North Korea. Park questioned whether the United States could be trusted and sent letters to Nixon demanding security assurances and an in-person meeting with him before his trip to China; Park was rebuffed by Nixon on both accounts.<sup>175</sup> South Korea's fears of abandonment were further solidified when Jimmy Carter was elected president, as he campaigned on the full withdrawal of U.S. forces and nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula.<sup>176</sup>

In response to abandonment concerns and lack of trust in U.S. commitment, South Korea began a series of initiatives to increase its military and economic capacities. Park established multiple policies to enable his concept of *chaju kukpang*, which he explained as “acquiring enough national power to independently deter and destroy a North Korean invasion.”<sup>177</sup> He instilled in the citizens that all held a stake in South Korea's goals of self-reliance, sought economic development to establish a domestic defense industry—to include the production of nuclear weapons—and attempted arms negotiations and technology transfer with third-party governments.<sup>178</sup>

These initiatives had profound impacts on the alliance and surprisingly perpetuated the “patron-client” dynamic between the two states. Initially, the United States placed weapons and technology restrictions on South Korea. But, as South Korea expanded its foreign suppliers or domestic production capability—often through reverse engineering—rather than lose out on foreign military sales, the United States expanded its weapon sales to the ROK to include previously banned weapons, the exception being nuclear technologies.<sup>179</sup> When the CIA uncovered Park's attempts at a domestic nuclear program,

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<sup>174</sup> “Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969–1972 - Office of the Historian,” Office of the Historian, accessed July 20, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v01/d29>.

<sup>175</sup> Cha, *The Impossible State, Updated Edition*, 31–32.

<sup>176</sup> Kwon, “Beyond Patron and Client,” 205.

<sup>177</sup> Kwon, 191.

<sup>178</sup> Kwon, “Beyond Patron and Client.”

<sup>179</sup> Kwon, 195.

the United States responded by forcing South Korea to ratify the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).<sup>180</sup> In return for South Korea giving up nuclear development, the United States once again expanded weapon sales to the ROK, reversed its withdrawal plans, increased military assistance, and ultimately provided a stronger commitment to South Korea's national defense.<sup>181</sup> Thus, when South Korea demonstrated a willingness to become more self-reliant or work with third-party states, the United States changed its policies to create a more isolated and dependent South Korea.

The results of Park's self-reliance campaign raise questions about whether the initiative was begun to make South Korea self-reliant or to maximize aid from its patron. The former is understandable given Korea's history as a "shrimp among whales"; however, the latter is more likely. American presence on the peninsula contributed much to North Korean propaganda, as the North viewed itself as the legitimate Korean authority because the South was occupied by foreign "imperialists" that were eroding Korea society.<sup>182</sup> Today, such narratives seem unfounded, but in the early Cold War period, when North Korea was the wealthier state, this ideology took root in the South.<sup>183</sup> Koreans are very sensitive to their history of invasion by former great powers and have thus developed a strong nationalism and ethnic identity.<sup>184</sup> North Korea at this time was viewed by many in the South as the defender of Korean patriotism. Thus, overreliance on the United States was providing legitimacy to South Korea's existential threat to the North. However, given South Korea's internal instability, the omnipresent external threat, and the limited means to defend itself without U.S. forces, a completely self-reliant state was not feasible. The more likely motive of the self-reliance movement was to extract as much military and economic assistance as possible.

Despite being a product of geopolitical forces of the Cold War period, the U.S.-ROK alliance eventually grew to be a strong bilateral relationship built on shared values

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<sup>180</sup> Kwon, 205.

<sup>181</sup> Kwon, 205–8.

<sup>182</sup> Cha, *The Impossible State, Updated Edition*, 40.

<sup>183</sup> Cha, 40.

<sup>184</sup> Cha, 35.

and integrated institutions. South Korea's dictatorships and democracy have both supported the U.S.-ROK alliance. The alliance has become central to South Korean domestic politics and has had the continued support of the elites.<sup>185</sup> After South Korea's economic growth and democratization, the defense burden was more equal, and the relationship was no longer based solely on threat but also on shared values. And though the relationship went through turmoil in the early 2000s due to political differences on North Korea and anti-American movements within South Korea, as a result of democratization, the alliance showed resiliency and persisted, largely due to the laws and combined institutions developed during the Cold War period.<sup>186</sup> Even when tensions were high, South Korea supported U.S. war efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, reaffirming Seoul's commitment to the alliance.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, these wars demonstrated Korea's willingness to contribute to global efforts and provided ROK forces exposure to multilateralism, as they were both fought with U.S.-led coalitions. However, despite this exposure to multilateralism and growing Asian regionalism, both Washington and Seoul remained committed to the bilateral alliance.<sup>188</sup> As a result, South Korean engagement in multilateral defense initiatives was limited and has remained heavily dependent on the United States.

## **E. AUSTRALIA**

Australia's defense relationships were also a product of early Cold War dynamics. It initially believed in the UN and the principle of collective security; however, the Cold War quickly diminished Australia's hopes for collective security and pushed it to petition for a regional security pact.<sup>189</sup> Prior to the Korean War, the United States had tried to establish a multilateral pact in the Pacific, but due to U.S. attempts to include Japan, the

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<sup>185</sup> Yeo, *Asia's Regional Architecture*, 44, 109.

<sup>186</sup> Yeo, 108–9.

<sup>187</sup> "South Korea's Secret War," *The Diplomat*, April 27, 2010, <https://thediplomat.com/2010/04/south-koreas-secret-war/>.

<sup>188</sup> Yeo, *Asia's Regional Architecture*, 111.

<sup>189</sup> W. David McIntyre, "Chapter 9: Pacific Pact," in *Background to the Anzus Pact* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1995), 224, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230380073>.



multilateral grouping was ultimately rejected by Australia and other states.<sup>190</sup> Australia was unable to join NATO, shared fears over communist spread in the region, and held insecurities towards the United States' incoming peace treaty with Japan. Thus, it signed a trilateral agreement—ANZUS—with the United States and New Zealand and agreed to become one of the member states of SEATO. ANZUS and SEATO helped integrate Australia into global affairs and quell its internal fears and insecurities.<sup>191</sup> However, SEATO was disbanded at the conclusion of the Vietnam war, and ANZUS suffered when the United States suspended its treaty obligations to New Zealand in 1986. As a result, ANZUS was transformed from a trilateral to a set of bilateral commitments for Australia.

In addition, Australia maintains informal defense ties with the member states of the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA). In 1971, in response to British retrenchment in region, Australia, Britain, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Singapore established the FPDA as a means to provide defense for Malaysia and Singapore—both newly independent and vulnerable to communist states in the region.<sup>192</sup> Though not a formal collective defense treaty, the FPDA agreements called for consultations by member states in the event of an armed attack against any member. The FPDA also established a Joint Consultative Council, Air Defense Council, and an integrated air defense system.<sup>193</sup> It remains an active defense commitment for Australia today.

Until the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Australia's defense ties had little reason to change. ANZUS provided enough deterrence that Australia had not faced a direct threat since its inception. Furthermore, at the conclusion of the Cold War, the alliance was able to adapt to post-Cold War circumstances. In 1999, the United States aided Australian actions in East Timor, demonstrating that ANZUS was able to support regional needs,

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<sup>190</sup> McIntyre, "Chapter 9: Pacific Pact"; John Foster Dulles, "Security in the Pacific," *FOREIGN AFFAIRS*, 2021, 183.

<sup>191</sup> "Milestones: 1945–1952 - Office of the Historian (ANZUS)," Office of the Historian, accessed February 12, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/anzus>.

<sup>192</sup> Carlyle A Thayer, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements" 3, no. 1 (2007): 79.

<sup>193</sup> Li Jie Sheng, "The Future of the Five Power Defense Arrangements," November 01, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/the-future-of-the-five-power-defense-arrangements/>.

much like NATO had done previously in Europe.<sup>194</sup> Australia has also been an active participant in the U.S.-led coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan, further highlighting the alliance's adaptability and Australia's comfort with multilateralism. However, a rising China and U.S. financial constraints and questions about its commitment to the region posed challenges to the U.S.-Australia alliance.<sup>195</sup> As pointed out in previous sections, it is not surprising that Australia began to increase relations with like-minded states in the region during the latter half of the 2000s. In 2007, Australia established more robust defense ties with both Japan and India and increased engagement in multilateral security frameworks—U.S, Japan, Australia and the Quadrilateral.<sup>196</sup>

## **F. OTHER REGIONAL MULTILATERALISM**

With the exception of ASEAN, multilateral efforts in the early Cold War period were largely unsuccessful and peripheral to U.S.-led bilateral agreements. Following the establishment of NATO, some Asian leaders called for a similar “Pacific Pact” that would include the United States and countries throughout Asia.<sup>197</sup> The Pacific Pact never came to fruition, but to protect against communism in Southeast Asia, SEATO was established in 1954. However, only two member states were located in Southeast Asia—Thailand and the Philippines. The other members included France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, Pakistan, and the United States. The organization did not have an independent structure like NATO, and its potential for collective action was limited.<sup>198</sup> In the 1970s, dissatisfied member states started to withdraw from the organization until it was finally disbanded in 1977 following the end of the Vietnam War.

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<sup>194</sup> Gary Brown and Laura Rayner, “Upside, Downside: ANZUS After Fifty Years,” Parliament of Australia, August 28, 2001, [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/Publications\\_Archive/CIB/cib0102/02CIB03](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/cib0102/02CIB03).

<sup>195</sup> Brown and Rayner.

<sup>196</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery and Bruce Vaughn, “Emerging Trends in the Security Architecture in Asia: Bilateral and Multilateral Ties Among the United States, Japan, Australia, and India,” January 7, 2008, 9–13.

<sup>197</sup> Cha, “Powerplay,” January 1, 2010, 178–81.

<sup>198</sup> “Milestones: 1953–1960 - Office of the Historian (SEATO),” Office of the Historian, accessed February 12, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>.

Other institutions and forums were created by Southeast Asian states in the early 1960s, but only one had staying power.<sup>199</sup> In August of 1967, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, and Singapore signed the Bangkok Declaration and established ASEAN. By the 1990s, the grouping grew to include Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. Throughout the Cold War, ASEAN played a minimal role in Asian international relations.<sup>200</sup> It consisted of regular dialogues and occasional agreements that placed minimal constraints on participants.<sup>201</sup> Not until 1992 was security cooperation even viewed as a goal of the organization.<sup>202</sup> However, despite its limited security development, today, ASEAN is Asia's most successful multilateral institution and has played an influential part in overall institutional development in the region.<sup>203</sup>

In the post-Cold War period, many multilateral institutions have developed and acted as forums for cooperation on security and economic issues, but none possess the collective defense characteristics found in NATO. The most notable institutions include the ARF, SPT, TCS, and APEC. ARF offers both regional and interested states a place to discuss and consult one another over shared political and security issues. Its purpose is to build confidence among its members and stimulate preventive diplomacy.<sup>204</sup> The SPT is a forum where invested states—China, the United States, Japan, North Korea, Russia, and South Korea—can coordinate efforts to dismantle North Korea's nuclear weapons program. The grouping met frequently between 2003–2008 but came to a standstill in 2009 when North Korea declared that it would no longer participate. Since then, each member has called to continue the talks with little progress.<sup>205</sup> The TCS is an international organization created to promote peace and prosperity among the PRC, Japan, and the

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<sup>199</sup> Yeo, *Asia's Regional Architecture*, 53.

<sup>200</sup> Yeo, 54.

<sup>201</sup> Duffield, "Why Is There No APTO?," 74.

<sup>202</sup> Duffield, 73.

<sup>203</sup> Yeo, *Asia's Regional Architecture*, 54.

<sup>204</sup> "ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)," ASEAN, accessed February 12, 2021, <https://asean.org/asean-political-security-community/asean-regional-forum-arf/>.

<sup>205</sup> "The Six-Party Talks at a Glance | Arms Control Association," Arms Control Association, June 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/6partytalks>.

Republic of Korea.<sup>206</sup> Finally, APEC is a regional forum aimed to promote economic growth by developing economic integration across its 21 member states.<sup>207</sup> Although some of these institutions—ASEAN, ARF, SPT—have elements of security cooperation, they are inclusive, informal, and focus on region-wide security concerns and thus do not share similarities with collective defense institutions such as NATO and the various U.S. bilateral agreements.

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<sup>206</sup> “Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat,” Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, accessed February 12, 2021, <https://www.tcs-asia.org/en/about/overview.php>.

<sup>207</sup> “About APEC,” Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, accessed February 12, 2021, <https://www.apec.org/About-Us/About-APEC>.

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## IV. MORE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

This chapter analyzes recent developments within the Indo-Pacific region that increase and decrease the probability of a formalized multilateral collective defense institution. It focuses on the improved relations between U.S. allies and their independent relations with China; the former has witnessed significant advancement, and the latter, deteriorating relations. With this change in regional dynamics, it seems probable that a formalized institution is not far away; however, since no such organization exists, this chapter also seeks to identify the factors that are preventing its formation.

### A. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: UNITED STATES

For the United States, regional developments in the Indo-Pacific center on its changed perception of China, which has led it to pivot away from engagement in favor of competition. China's rise coincided with American blunders that greatly tarnished its reputation regionally and globally. The wars in the Middle East, not the rise of China, were U.S. priorities in the first decade of the 2000s. These wars were costly, consumed American attention, and spurred anti-American sentiment in countries around the globe, to include many U.S. allies. In particular, the invasion of Iraq harmed the United States' global standing, as it was not UN-sanctioned and not supported by many key U.S. allies—including Canada, France and Germany. Going forth with the invasion of Iraq with loose justification and a “with us or against us” attitude changed public opinion on U.S. leadership.<sup>208</sup> In addition, the GFC, solely an American folly, had a similar effect. As the United States' image was declining, China was able to increase its economic weight, becoming the second largest economy in the world and the leading trade partner of most Asian states. The Chinese economy even helped states get through the GFC started by the

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<sup>208</sup> G. John Ikenberry, “The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment,” *Survival* 46, no. 1 (March 2004): 7, 20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2004.9688589>.

United States.<sup>209</sup> It had begun to demonstrate itself to be a responsible stakeholder in the global community just as the United States was doing the reverse.

China leveraged U.S. “decline” and its own rise to deteriorate American influence in Asia and the world at large. As China’s economic might grew, its political and diplomatic influence did as well, making states more sensitive to Chinese interests.<sup>210</sup> This has resulted in a hesitancy of states to challenge China in areas of dispute. China began to more frequently engage in multilateral institutions to solidify its great power status and comfort states suspicious of its rise.<sup>211</sup> It also increased, and continues to increase, its influence in developing countries with investments tied to the BRI, which China then utilizes to push its alternative authoritarian model.<sup>212</sup> These investments are taking place across the globe, in Asia, Africa, South America, and Europe. They do not only threaten American influence in Asia but undermine areas and institutions typically viewed as bastions of American influence, like NATO.<sup>213</sup> Militarily, China has heavily invested in Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities meant to deter U.S. forces from parts of the Western Pacific.<sup>214</sup> This has caused analysts to question “Washington’s ability to prevent local conflicts, protect longtime allies, and preserve freedom of commons in East Asia,” a reality not lost on regional states.<sup>215</sup> China has shown itself to be not only a challenge to

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<sup>209</sup> Karishma Vaswani, “Why Asia Turned to China during the Global Financial Crisis,” *BBC News*, September 12, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-45493147>; Graeme Dobell, “Coronavirus, China and the U.S. New Normal,” *Comparative Connections*, September 15, 2020, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2020/09/coronavirus-china-and-the-us-new-normal/>.

<sup>210</sup> Hugh White, *The China Choice* (Collingwood, Vic.: Black Inc., 2012), 44–45.

<sup>211</sup> Pempel and Lee, *Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia*, 110.

<sup>212</sup> David O. Shullman, “Protect the Party: China’s Growing Influence in the Developing World,” *Brookings* (blog), January 22, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/protect-the-party-chinas-growing-influence-in-the-developing-world/>.

<sup>213</sup> Nouwens and Legarda, “China’s Rise as a Global Security Actor: Implications for NATO.”

<sup>214</sup> Stephen Biddle and Ivan Oelrich, “Future Warfare in the Western Pacific: Chinese Antiaccess/Area Denial, U.S. AirSea Battle, and Command of the Commons in East Asia,” *International Security* 41, no. 1 (July 2016): 7–48, [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00249](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00249).

<sup>215</sup> Evan Braden Montgomery, “Contested Primacy in the Western Pacific: China’s Rise and the Future of U.S. Power Projection,” *International Security* 38, no. 4 (April 2014): 117, [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00160](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00160).

U.S. influence in Asia but a formidable foe to U.S. global leadership and the rules-based-order it established.

Cognizant of China's growing influence at its expense, the United States has begun to prioritize the Indo-Pacific to directly compete against China. As was discussed in the United States historical overview section in Chapter III, during the Bush administration, U.S. policy makers were cognizant of China's rise and its potential to destabilize the region. However, the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> and the ensuing Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) shifted American focus away from Asia. Not until the next administration did China's rise elicit a publicized policy shift. Due to frustrations over his administration's initial China engagement strategy, President Obama announced a pivot to Asia to the Australia Parliament in November 2011, reaffirming the United States as a Pacific nation and American commitment to the region.<sup>216</sup> The pivot offered a strategic commitment to the region's security, prosperity, and human rights.<sup>217</sup> It resulted in increased U.S. forces in the region and arms sales to regional partners and allies.<sup>218</sup> However, the pivot did little to curb Chinese assertiveness, but it ultimately reassured allies in the region and shifted American focus toward Asia.

Building on President Obama's pivot, both the Trump and Biden administrations have prioritized China as the priority security challenge. Trump, who viewed the world more as a competitive arena than a global community, adopted a strategic vision that emphasized a return to great power competition.<sup>219</sup> His NSS stressed the Indo-Pacific region and made clear that China was a challenge to "American power, influence, and interest" and was "attempting to erode American security and prosperity."<sup>220</sup> The administration accordingly took a more combative approach against China, engaging in

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<sup>216</sup> Nicholas D. Anderson and Victor D. Cha, "The Case of the Pivot to Asia: System Effects and the Origins of Strategy: THE PIVOT TO ASIA," *Political Science Quarterly* 132, no. 4 (December 2017): 595-617, <https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.12703>.

<sup>217</sup> Anderson and Cha, 598.

<sup>218</sup> Anderson and Cha, 610.

<sup>219</sup> Uri Friedman, "What Is the Genesis of Great-Power Competition? - The Atlantic," *The Atlantic*, August 6, 2019, 20.

<sup>220</sup> White House, "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," 2.



retaliatory trade practices while also increasing military patrols through disputed waters.<sup>221</sup> And though President Trump's NSS touted an America First National Security Strategy, it acknowledged that "sustaining favorable balances of power will require a strong commitment and close cooperation with allies and partners because allies and partners magnify U.S. power and extend U.S. influence."<sup>222</sup> Given language such as this and the fact that President Trump's strategy was unapologetically guided by the principles of realism, U.S. alliances were viewed by the administration as essential to balancing against a rising China.<sup>223</sup> President Biden's Interim NSS rebrands GPC as Strategic Competition and equally warns of China's capacity to undermine a stable and open international system.<sup>224</sup> Similar to President Trump's strategy, Biden's Interim NSS views U.S. alliances as essential to holding "countries like China to account."<sup>225</sup> To deter Chinese aggression, it emphasizes the need to bolster the United States' network of allies and partners.<sup>226</sup>

Surprisingly, President Biden's approach to China seems more similar to Trump's foreign policy than Obama's, signaling that "being tough on China" has become a strategy adopted by both sides of the political spectrum. During the president's recent trip to Europe, Biden called on both the G7 and NATO to confront Chinese transgressions.<sup>227</sup> President Obama was resistant to ask NATO to address China, but the Trump administration was quite vocal in its desire to get the transatlantic alliance on board with its China strategy.<sup>228</sup> In March, Biden met with the other leaders of the Quad and

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<sup>221</sup> John Power, "US Patrols in South China Sea Hit Record High in 2019," South China Morning Post, February 5, 2020, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3048967/us-freedom-navigation-patrols-south-china-sea-hit-record-high>.

<sup>222</sup> White House, "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," 3, 46.

<sup>223</sup> White House, 55.

<sup>224</sup> White House, "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance," 8.

<sup>225</sup> White House, 10.

<sup>226</sup> White House, 20.

<sup>227</sup> Kevin Liptak and Kevin Sullivan, "NATO Leaders at Summit Back Biden's Decision to Pull Troops out of Afghanistan | CNN Politics," CNN, June 14, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/14/politics/president-biden-nato-summit/index.html>.

<sup>228</sup> Ringsmose and Rynning, "China Brought NATO Closer Together."

reaffirmed American commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, cementing the Quad’s reemergence, initiated during the Trump administration. What was first attempted by the Bush administration, re-started under the Obama presidency, and further encouraged by the Trump and Biden administrations is an American foreign policy centered on developing U.S. alliances to counter a rising China.

Ultimately, there is a now a political consensus on China: its economic opening did not make it democratize, and American strategy has expressed a need to prioritize China, as it has the capacity, unlike any state before it, to challenge the United States, its interests, and the rules-based-order it helped establish. As a result, there are now immense efforts taking place to confront this challenge, many of which rely on partners and allies, creating an environment conducive to multilateral collective defense.

## **B. FACTORS INHIBITING ALLIANCES AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSE: UNITED STATES**

Despite adopting more direct action against China and encouraging its Indo-Pacific allies and partners to increase cooperation with one another and multilaterally, the United States has not publicly called for an “Asian NATO.” All signs indicate that the United States is satisfied with its NATO membership. Even during the Trump presidency, when transatlantic disputes were at their highest, NATO was still highlighted as one of the United States’ great advantages over its competitors in the 2017 NSS.<sup>229</sup> Given the continued American support towards NATO, it is unusual that the United States has not been more vocal at attempting to replicate NATO in Asia. Moreover, instead of actively calling for an “Asian NATO,” the United States has called on the Euro-centric NATO and its member states to help stand up to China.<sup>230</sup> The Quad and U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific are surely being asked to do the same, but the difference in messaging is apparent. Whereas NATO clearly articulated that the “rise of China” was an agenda item for its 2021 Summit, the

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<sup>229</sup> White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” 48.

<sup>230</sup> Ringsmose and Rynning, “China Brought NATO Closer Together”; Sabine Siebold, Steve Holland, and Robin Emmott, “NATO Adopts Tough Line on China at Biden’s Debut Summit with Alliance,” Reuters, June 14, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/nato-welcomes-biden-pivotal-post-trump-summit-2021-06-14/>.

most recent Quad Leaders' Joint Statement lacked any mention of China.<sup>231</sup> This difference in approach suggests that the Indo-Pacific allies are more hesitant to anger Chinese leadership, resulting in curbed messaging that is more ambiguous and less combative towards China; but it also suggests that the United States would rather leverage its existing collective defense institution in Europe than call for the formation of a similar institution in Asia.

Therefore, questioning whether the United States is interested in establishing a NATO-like institution in the Indo-Pacific is valid. The United States maintains immense leverage over its Indo-Pacific allies and could potentially force the creation of a multilateral institution by making its security guarantee contingent on joining one. However, the United States has not tried to strongarm its allies to do such a thing even though analysts and congressional research has “questioned whether U.S. security interests ... are best served by its existing framework of bilateral alliances.”<sup>232</sup> The United States also has the luxury to be more provocative against China because the two states are mutually dependent economically. China cannot coerce the United States as it can Australia because the American market is not easily replaced. Thus, U.S. fear of Chinese reprisal is diminished, more so than is the case with any other Indo-Pacific state. In addition, the U.S. commitment to NATO, its vocal praise for the institution, and the advantages it reaps from its membership demonstrate that Americans do not have the sovereignty concerns that typically come with multilateralism because the benefits largely outweigh the liberties given up. So why the hesitancy to formally campaign on an Indo-Pacific collective defense institution?

Given these factors, American barriers to collective defense in this region, are potentially due to U.S. empathy for allies and complacency with its current defense relationships. The former may be a strategic maneuvering to preserve the United States'

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<sup>231</sup> “2021 NATO Summit,” NATO, accessed June 30, 2021, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/184620.htm>; “Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: ‘The Spirit of the Quad’ | Prime Minister of Australia,” Prime Minister of Australia, March 13, 2021, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/quad-leaders-joint-statement-spirit-quad>.

<sup>232</sup> Chanlett-Avery and Vaughn, “Emerging Trends in the Security Architecture in Asia: Bilateral and Multilateral Ties Among the United States, Japan, Australia, and India,” Summary.

standing with its allies. Forcing allies to join an institution could put them in a vulnerable position with respect to China, as they do not have the same resiliency as the United States; but it would also make Americans seem indifferent to their sovereignty concerns and historical disputes, which could have the reverse intended effect and harm U.S. relationships in the region. Complacency is more unlikely given the United States' campaign to paint China as a strategic rival, but it cannot be ruled out that the United States prefers an integrated hub-and-spoke system of alliances. This dynamic potentially acts as a de facto multilateral mutual defense treaty and still allows the United States to maximize its leverage within its own independent alliances. Thus, it remains to be seen if the United States even wants a multilateral collective defense institution in the Indo-Pacific—a question that is paramount, as the creation of such an institution will undoubtedly require American leadership.

### **C. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIA**

Building on the ties it established in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, India has continued to increase its defense cooperation with the United States and its regional allies. Many scholars attribute this increase to insecurities over China's BRI and Indian Ocean (IO) interests.

Indian engagement with regional states began to blossom during the end of the decade. In 2008, the Japanese and Indian prime ministers signed a "Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation."<sup>233</sup> The defense portion of the agreement regularized meetings by the states' respective defense ministers, as well as by the service chiefs and naval staffs. It also established routine bilateral and multilateral military engagement. Now, India and Japan regularly hold dialogues on defense policy, have established information and logistic sharing agreements, conduct routine 2+2 ministerial meetings and staff talks across all

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<sup>233</sup> "MOFA: Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India (October 22, 2008)," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, October 2008, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/pmv0810/joint\\_d.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/pmv0810/joint_d.html).

three services, and continue to participate in both bilateral and multilateral exercises.<sup>234</sup> Similarly, Indian engagement with Australia, which formally began with the signing of a joint declaration on security cooperation in 2009, has generated equally robust results.<sup>235</sup>

Indian and U.S. defense ties are now at unprecedented levels, but these developments were not without complications. After 2008, Indian and U.S. defense relations slowed as Indian policy makers became more cautious of India's growing relationship with the United States. There were two reasons for Indian skepticism at this time. First, the GFC sowed doubts about the U.S.'s commitment to the region given its economic woes.<sup>236</sup> Second, the Obama administration's initial efforts to improve American-Chinese relations left Indians uncertain of American intentions.<sup>237</sup> With a left-leaning Congress Party and a defense minister—A.K. Antony—already wary of Indian and American defense cooperation, these two factors allowed resistance to American engagement by skeptical Indian policy makers to thrive.<sup>238</sup> However, by its second term, the Obama administration had changed its position on China and viewed it as a competitor.<sup>239</sup> Around the same time Indian congress had shifted to the right after a historical victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by now, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.<sup>240</sup> Both leaders discussed their growing concerns over China during

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<sup>234</sup> Tanvi Madan, "What You Need to Know about the 'Quad,' in Charts," *Brookings* (blog), October 5, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/05/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-quad-in-charts/>; "Japan-India Relations (Basic Data)," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, January 4, 2021, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html>.

<sup>235</sup> Silove, "The Pivot before the Pivot," 79.

<sup>236</sup> Harsh V. Pant and Yogesh Joshi, "Indian Foreign Policy Responds to the U.S. Pivot," *Asia Policy* 19, no. 1 (2015): 91, <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2015.0012>.

<sup>237</sup> Pant and Joshi, 102.

<sup>238</sup> Pant and Joshi, 101,102.

<sup>239</sup> Uri Friedman, "The New Concept Everyone in Washington Is Talking About," *The Atlantic*, August 6, 2019.

<sup>240</sup> Subrata K. Mitra and Jivanta Schöttli, "India's 2014 General Elections," *Asian Survey* 56, no. 4 (August 1, 2016): 605–28, <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2016.56.4.605>.

Modi's visit to Washington in 2014, leading to the third renewal of the U.S.-India defense agreement in 2015.<sup>241</sup>

The Trump administration was able to continue where the previous administration left off and further develop defense relations with India. In 2016, when Prime Minister Modi visited Washington, the United States declared India a "Major Defense Partner."<sup>242</sup> Both have since signed the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), a Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and Industrial Security Agreement (ISA). Now, as a major defense partner, India has increased access to the United States' more sensitive military and dual-use technologies. As a result, India-U.S. defense trade continues to rise, with India being the only non-treaty partner offered some of the United States' more advanced weapon systems, such as its armed drones.<sup>243</sup> Furthermore, President Trump's more vocal criticism of Pakistan as a partner, a constant thorn in the side of Indian-American relations, further drove each state toward one another.<sup>244</sup>

In addition to India's increased bilateral engagement with the United States, Japan, and Australia, each of these states has increased their multilateral engagement with one another as well. All participate in their own respective trilaterals and have begun to engage in a quadrilateral forum once again.<sup>245</sup> This return of the Quad, though still an informal grouping, has provided the legitimacy and lasting power that was lacking in 2007. The

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<sup>241</sup> Pant and Joshi, "Indian Foreign Policy Responds to the U.S. Pivot," 113; Smith and Kartha, "Strategic Partners or an Emerging Alliance?," 446.

<sup>242</sup> "U.S. Security Cooperation With India," United States Department of State, January 20, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-india/>; "U.S.-India Joint Statement on the Visit of Minister of Defence Manohar Parrikar to the Uni," United States Department of Defense, August 29, 2016, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/929270/us-india-joint-statement-on-the-visit-of-minister-of-defence-manohar-parrikar-t/>.

<sup>243</sup> "US Approves Sale of Armed Drones to India," Hindustan Times, June 9, 2019, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/us-approves-sale-of-armed-drones-to-india/story-rPk6N4YIZGZJbqjznrOXwL.html>.

<sup>244</sup> Smith and Kartha, "Strategic Partners or an Emerging Alliance?," 448.

<sup>245</sup> Madan, "What You Need to Know about the 'Quad,' in Charts."

states continue to meet and discuss their visions for the Indo-Pacific region.<sup>246</sup> Of note, in November of 2020, India once again invited Australia to participate in the military exercise Malabar. It had previously stopped inviting Australia due to China-issued demarches following the 2007 event.<sup>247</sup>

Furthermore, India continues to actively engage in more inclusive multilateralism such as the ARF, East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting-Plus (ADMM Plus), but these activities have not indicated movements towards official alliances.<sup>248</sup> Similarly, though engagements between India and South Korea have increased and further developed, the relationship remains about a decade behind the current level of engagement that India shares with the Quad members.<sup>249</sup> Thus, any movement towards an alliance between these two countries at this time is highly unlikely.

These 21<sup>st</sup>-century developments which occurred within a very short timeframe, contrast greatly with the first 60 years of India's statehood. Chinese developments largely within the past decade, have provoked this change in Indian foreign policy. China's unveiling of its BRI greatly unnerved Indian policy makers, who wasted no time in criticizing Beijing's initiative.<sup>250</sup> Analysis of the BRI project has highlighted that the maritime infrastructure developments within the IO are inherently dual-use and would be able to support military operations if needed.<sup>251</sup> These investments have increased Chinese

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<sup>246</sup> "Australia-India-Japan-United States Quad Consultations," Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, September 25, 2020, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/news/media-release/australia-india-japan-united-states-quad-consultations>.

<sup>247</sup> Pant and Joshi, "Indian Foreign Policy Responds to the U.S. Pivot," 107.

<sup>248</sup> Satu Limaye, "India Continues Involvement & Integration with the Indo-Pacific/East Asia in 2018," Comparative Connections, January 14, 2019, <https://cc.pacforum.org/2019/01/india-continues-involvement-integration-with-the-indo-pacific-east-asia-in-2018/>.

<sup>249</sup> Satu Limaye, "India-East Asia Relations: Acting Across the Indo-Pacific, Actually and Virtually," Comparative Connections, January 15, 2021, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2021/01/india-east-asia-relations-acting-across-the-indo-pacific-actually-and-virtually/>.

<sup>250</sup> Indrani Bagchi, "India Slams China's One Belt One Road Initiative, Says It Violates Sovereignty | India News - Times of India," The Times of India, May 14, 2017, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/china-road-initiative-is-like-a-colonial-enterprise-india/articleshow/58664098.cms>.

<sup>251</sup> "China's Belt Road Initiative Exposes Its Ulterior Strategic Motives," The Financial Express, April 23, 2018, <https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/chinas-belt-road-initiative-exposes-its-ulterior-strategic-motives/1141964/>.

naval presence in the IO, raising alarms in Delhi.<sup>252</sup> The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) development of a base in Djibouti has solidified India's fears over Chinese intentions in its backyard.<sup>253</sup> The base, and the various ports developed under the auspices of BRI, allows for continual People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) presence in the IO.

China contends that the PLAN forces patrol the IO to protect its trade from piracy, however, Indian officials remain skeptical. Indian naval analysts argue that PLAN submarine deployments in the IO demonstrate a strategic mission profile that does not appear to support anti-piracy.<sup>254</sup> Further, during a territorial standoff on the Himalayan Doklam Plateau by Indian and Chinese forces in 2017, India observed an uptick in PLAN vessels in the India Ocean, to include warships, submarines, and intelligence-gathering platforms.<sup>255</sup> In 2020, territorial tensions flared once again, but this time, over the Galwan Valley.<sup>256</sup> This was the first fatal clash between Indian and Chinese forces since 1975. Between India's concerns over the BRI, increased PLAN deployments in the IO, and recurring clashes along the disputed border, India's anxieties over Chinese interests and intentions remain high. Much of India's increased defense spending and cooperation with the members of the Quad are a direct result of these concerns.

However, even despite these developments, many in India still caution further engagement with the United States. There remains a strong adherence to nonalignment amongst Indian elites. The policy has once again reinvented itself to now mean strategic autonomy. An independent group of respected Indian analysts and policy makers contend that strategic autonomy has always been the guiding principle and desired objective of

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<sup>252</sup> Mohan Malik, "Dimensions, Detours, Fissures, and Fault Lines," *The American Interest* (blog), February 19, 2018, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/02/19/dimensions-detours-fissures-fault-lines/>.

<sup>253</sup> Abhijit Singh, "Sino-Indian Dynamics in Littoral Asia – The View from New Delhi," *Strategic Analysis* 43, no. 3 (May 4, 2019): 201, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2019.1598083>.

<sup>254</sup> Singh, 200.

<sup>255</sup> Rahul Singh, "From Submarines to Warships: How Chinese Navy Is Expanding Its Footprint in Indian Ocean," *Hindustan Times*, July 5, 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/from-submarines-to-warships-how-chinese-navy-is-expanding-its-footprint-in-indian-ocean/story-QueJp31UtBphNjya2z8L7gM.html>.

<sup>256</sup> Limaye, "India-East Asia Relations."



India's foreign policy.<sup>257</sup> These retired military officers, policy makers, and analysts argue that India requires strategic space and independent agency to maximize its options for development. Non-alignment is no longer a means to keep oneself out of superpower rivalries, but instead a way to ensure that “no other state is in a position to exercise undue influence on us [India]—or make us act against our better judgement and will.”<sup>258</sup> Though the United States as an alliance partner is attractive for India, these policy advisors argued that such a relationship brings great risk for the following reasons: it could potentially antagonize China and make it act more aggressively; an alliance would entrap India in any Sino-American conflict; an American response to Chinese threats tied specifically to Indian interests is questionable; and finally, the historical record of American alliances show an erosion of the allied state's strategic autonomy.<sup>259</sup> This analysis and reinterpretation of non-alignment contrasts greatly with Nehru's ideologically influenced version, but the impact on Indian strategic thinking provides the same outcome: a strong aversion to formal alliances.

#### **D. FACTORS INHIBITING ALLIANCES AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSE: INDIA**

Given past trends and recent developments, there remain two major reasons for India's reluctance to join a major formal defense institution. First, the ideals and principles of non-alignment, though slightly tweaked in response to geopolitical factors, have consistently acted as a means to avoid stronger states' influence. Indians have developed a strong tendency to reject pressures from other states and maintain their own flexibility. Nehru believed that smaller states had the right to abstain from major powers' expectation of them to fall in line.<sup>260</sup> In fact, he stated that India's “general reaction whenever any pressure is sought to be applied upon us by any country, is to resent it and maybe to go against it.”<sup>261</sup> This feeling is

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<sup>257</sup> Sunil Khilnani et al., *NonAlignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the 21st Century* (New Delhi: National Defense College, 2012), 6.

<sup>258</sup> Khilnani et al., 10.

<sup>259</sup> Khilnani et al., 32.

<sup>260</sup> Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 93.

<sup>261</sup> Madan, 43.

undoubtedly related to colonial insecurities, where decisions related to the Indian sub-continent were made “for” Indians, rather than “by” Indians. As discussed in the earlier “Historical Overview” section, these sensitivities prevented Indian participation in any formal alliances or collective defense institutions during the Cold War period. But, given the continual calls for strategic autonomy by Indian policy makers, and continual references to non-alignment ideals, one can argue that non-alignment and thus colonial sensitivities have created an Indian identity that values self-reliance, independence, autonomy and disallows formal alliances. Even when some politicians demonstrate aversion to nonalignment, such as members of the BJP, Indian bureaucracy does its part to prevent “excessive dependence on any single power.”<sup>262</sup> Non-alignment’s influence on Indian identity has created a lingering obstacle to alliance building.

Second, throughout India’s existence, its dealings with China have been tactfully measured. As discussed above, as early as India’s establishment, Nehru was conscious of the need to maintain good ties with its powerful neighbor to the north. He quickly acknowledged the Chinese Communist Party’s legitimacy as the ruler of greater China. In addition, when the United States sought to use India to balance against communist China, Nehru opposed such efforts and reaffirmed that India needed a working relationship with China, as it shared a 2,000-mile border with it.<sup>263</sup> After the 2007 Malabar, India was quick to suspend invitations to Australia after receiving Chinese demarches. Though Australia’s participation in the 2020 exercise demonstrates a less reserved India, many Indian policy makers continue to abstain from overtly criticizing China or acting in way that will elicit Chinese repercussions.<sup>264</sup> Prime Minister Modi’s vision for the Indo-Pacific is inclusive of China, and the language he uses is quite soft compared to that of others, such as the United States.<sup>265</sup> As the keynote speaker at the Shangri La Dialogue in 2018, Modi specifically stated that India’s “friendships are not

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<sup>262</sup> Smith and Kartha, “Strategic Partners or an Emerging Alliance?,” 452.

<sup>263</sup> Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 36, 58.

<sup>264</sup> Pant and Joshi, “Indian Foreign Policy Responds to the U.S. Pivot,” 98; Smith and Kartha, “Strategic Partners or an Emerging Alliance?,” 452.

<sup>265</sup> Wada Haruko, “THE ‘INDO-PACIFIC’ CONCEPT,” March 16, 2020, 11.

alliances of containment.”<sup>266</sup> This was a clear and measured response to Chinese criticism of the Quad.

This hedging by India may also be attributed to past insecurities where India felt abandoned by the international community and its own friends when dealing with Chinese aggressions. Nehru was a firm believer in the UN’s ability to prevent war, but it did not stop Chinese incursion into disputed territory in 1962. Then, the Soviet Union, who, Nehru felt was India’s insurance policy against China, left India to deal with the Chinese on its own.<sup>267</sup> After improving ties with the United States over the next decade, India was once again spurned by a “friend.” Instead of supporting India in 1971, the United States, who, at the time was courting China through Pakistan, sent a carrier strike group to the Bay of Bengal.<sup>268</sup> Though these events happened long ago, they continue to influence India’s foreign policy.

It is thus understandable that India is hesitant to join alliances even when countries such as Japan, Australia, and the United States share its values, visons, and concerns over China. There is a historically supported doubt that will continue to be variable in India’s trust building for the foreseeable future. It is not a surprise that influential Indian analysts and policy makers question U.S. commitments in the event of a conflict with China.<sup>269</sup>

#### **E. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: JAPAN**

Throughout the 2010s, Japan became more willing to undertake a security role proportionate to its economic weight. Tensions with China, particularly those involving the Senkaku Islands, rose and continue to rise to levels not seen since WWII. In response, Japan, cognizant of the changing balance of power in the region, has expanded the defense relationships it established in the decade prior, engaged in more defense-related multilateralism, and, most significant to this thesis, it has reinterpreted its constitution to allow for “collective self-defense.” It has also begun to criticize China more vocally, even calling

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<sup>266</sup> “Prime Minister’s Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 01, 2018),” Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, June 1, 2018, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29943/Prime+Ministers+Keynote+Address+at+Shangri+La+Dialogue+June+01+2018>.

<sup>267</sup> Madan, *Fateful Triangle*, 141–43.

<sup>268</sup> Madan, 221.

<sup>269</sup> Khilnani et al., *NonAlignment 2.0*, 32.

on Japanese businesses to divest themselves from Chinese markets in order to diminish the economic leverage China holds over Japan.

For Japan, the most significant development related to its role as a security partner is its 2014 reinterpretation of Article 9 of its constitution. Due to rising Japanese nationalism, a changing geopolitical environment, and U.S. pressures, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Japan has long yearned to amend Article 9.<sup>270</sup> In 2013, Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said it was his “sacred duty” to do so.<sup>271</sup> However, as outlined in Article 96, an amendment to the Japanese constitution requires a vote of two-thirds or more in both legislative houses, followed by a majority vote by the populace.<sup>272</sup> Historically, no attempt to amend any part of Japan’s constitution has ever succeeded since its establishment.<sup>273</sup> Amending the constitution to allow the JSDF to act as a normal military has been challenging, as public support for doing so remained particularly low throughout Abe’s second term.<sup>274</sup> Furthermore, opposition parties as well as the Komeito party, a partner to Abe’s own LDP, would oppose any initiative to revise Article 9.<sup>275</sup> To circumvent the lack of support, the Abe administration, in keeping with administrations of the past, instead chose to reinterpret the constitution. Reinterpretation is valid unless the Japanese Supreme Court decides to rule on its legality. Seven years later, the court has yet to rule on the 2014 reinterpretation, implying that the court deems it constitutional, making the reinterpretation as good as law.

The Abe administration’s reinterpretation of Article 9 provides JSDF the ability to engage in collective “self”-defense, implementing an evolution needed for Japan to participate

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<sup>270</sup> Richter, “Japan’s ‘Reinterpretation’ of Article 9: A Pyrrhic Victory for American Foreign Policy?,” 1234.

<sup>271</sup> Comparative Connections, “Japan - China Archives,” accessed September 20, 2021, <http://cc.pacforum.org/relations/japan-china/>.

<sup>272</sup> Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, “THE CONSTITUTION OF JAPAN.”

<sup>273</sup> Richter, “Japan’s ‘Reinterpretation’ of Article 9: A Pyrrhic Victory for American Foreign Policy?,” 1243.

<sup>274</sup> Shogo Suzuki and Corey Wallace, “Explaining Japan’s Response to Geopolitical Vulnerability,” *International Affairs* 94, no. 4 (July 1, 2018): 729–30, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iyy033>.

<sup>275</sup> Chaula Rininta Anindya, “The Evolving Security Policy of Japan and the Adherence to Antimilitarism Culture,” *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional* 18, no. 2 (December 16, 2016): 160–61, <https://doi.org/10.7454/global.v18i2.306>.

in a collective defense institution; however, the language used in the reinterpretation does not allow for *carte blanche* defense of an ally. The Japanese government decided that reinterpretation was necessary due to the evolving security environment and shifts in global power balance.<sup>276</sup> In the new interpretation, “not only when an armed attack against Japan occurs but also when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan’s survival...use of force to the minimum extent necessary should be interpreted to be permitted under the Constitution as measures for self-defense.”<sup>277</sup> In short, the reinterpretation shows a progression in Japan’s vision for its role in the region and a step towards collective defense; however, as it stands currently, it seems that the language used in the reinterpretation would prohibit Japan from participating in an institution with a framework like that of NATO, as the JSDF is limited to action only when Japan’s survival is at stake.

Japanese lawmakers’ drive to change the constitution and expand the role of the JSDF was a result of Chinese provocations, American pressures, and Japanese doubts concerning American commitment to the region. In September of 2010, a Chinese fishing trawler and vessels belonging to the Japan Coast Guard collided in the disputed waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands. The fishing captain was detained, and a flurry of political spats between Chinese and Japanese governments ensued. In response, China restricted the export of rare earth metals to Japan, signaling to the Japanese that China would use its economic leverage to further its strategic goals.<sup>278</sup> China had first begun sovereignty claims over the Senkaku Islands in the 1970s; however, tensions remained low until this incident, which set the tone for the next decade. In 2012, the Japanese government further enraged China and enflamed tensions when it purchased three of the islands from a private Japanese owner. China returned the favor a year later when it established an air defense identification zone in the ECS

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<sup>276</sup> “Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan’s Survival and Protect Its People,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, July 1, 2014, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page23e\\_000273.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page23e_000273.html).

<sup>277</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan’s Survival and Protect Its People.”

<sup>278</sup> Ed Dolan, “Ed Dolan’s Econ Blog: China’s Fragile Rare Earth Monopoly,” *Ed Dolan’s Econ Blog* (blog), October 24, 2010, <http://dolanecon.blogspot.com/2010/10/chinas-fragile-rare-earth-monopoly.html>.

encompassing all the islands. China continues to patrol the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands at an increasing rate, with Chinese Coast Guard Vessels entering the contiguous zone around the islands for a record high of 333 days in 2020.<sup>279</sup> Most recently the Chinese enacted a new law in February of 2021 allowing its coast guard forces to use lethal force against foreign vessels within Chinese-claimed waters and the airspace above them; thus, Japan fears that Chinese vessels will invoke this law to intimidate it and neighboring states in contested waters such as the ECS.<sup>280</sup> Tokyo has been quite vocal in condemning the law, and Japan's Ministry of Defense equally highlighted its concerns about the new law in its 2021 Defense White Paper.<sup>281</sup> The dispute over the Senkaku Islands is one of the major areas of contention between the two states, and it is the area in which Japanese and Chinese forces are most likely to directly interact with one another. In addition, the islands hold both strategic and historical value for each state, making the dispute a potential trigger to a conflict much greater than it warrants itself.

Fearing rising tensions with China over the Senkaku Islands, Tokyo aimed to strengthen its alliance with the United States by taking on a larger role in regional security, which then prompted the United States to reaffirm its commitment to Japan's defense, to include the Senkaku Islands. As China advanced its military and tensions over the Senkaku Islands rose, many in Japan worried about whether the U.S. commitment to Japan's defense would be triggered in the event of an attempt by China to seize the disputed islands by force.<sup>282</sup> President Obama visited Japan and encouraged the reinterpretation of Article 9, stating that collective self-defense was "important" to the alliance.<sup>283</sup> In a press briefing with

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<sup>279</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, "A Chilly Summer," *Comparative Connections*, September 15, 2021, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2021/09/a-chilly-summer/>.

<sup>280</sup> Thanh Trung Nguyen, "How China's Coast Guard Law Has Changed the Regional Security Structure," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, April 12, 2021, <https://amti.csis.org/how-chinas-coast-guard-law-has-changed-the-regional-security-structure/>.

<sup>281</sup> "Japan Conveys 'strong Concerns' to China over Coast Guard Law," *The Japan Times*, February 3, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/02/03/national/china-senkakus-east-china-sea-katsunobu-kato/>; "Defense of Japan," *Ministry of Defense of Japan*, 2021, 18, [https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w\\_paper/wp2021/DOJ2021\\_EN\\_Full.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/wp2021/DOJ2021_EN_Full.pdf).

<sup>282</sup> Kirk Spitzer, "Japan Frets over U.S. Support in China Dispute," *Time*, September 14, 2012, <https://nation.time.com/2012/09/14/84857/>.

<sup>283</sup> Richter, "Japan's 'Reinterpretation' of Article 9: A Pyrrhic Victory for American Foreign Policy?," 1249–50.

Abe, he also affirmed that the U.S.-Japan security treaty did indeed cover the Senkaku Islands. In return, shortly after President Obama's visit, the Abe administration released its reinterpretation of Article 9. Since then, the military ties between these two countries have increased. In addition, the United States has quickly adopted Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) initiative and remains a strong advocate of its principles. In response to escalating tensions with China, Japan, in an attempt to strengthen U.S. commitment to its own defense, reinterpreted its constitution to enable a more equal U.S.-Japan alliance and became one of the biggest proponents of FOIP.

Japan has backed its policy statements and promises to be more active in regional security issues by developing its military capabilities and supporting multilateral operations. In an effort to develop a "Multi-Domain Defense Force," Japan has begun investing in space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum.<sup>284</sup> It has also invested in enhancing capabilities within the traditional domains of air, land, and sea with an emphasis on stand-off defense capability, air and missile defense capability, and maneuverability.<sup>285</sup> These investments not only highlight Japan's willingness to shoulder more of a defense burden, but they also clearly signal that Japan is investing in capabilities meant to deter and counter Chinese aggressions. In addition, Japan's commitment to regional security continues to be on display with its support of North Korean sanction enforcement.<sup>286</sup> Not only has Japan been an active participant in these monitoring operations, but it has also allowed aircraft from the United States (permanent presence), Australia (9 times), Canada (5 times), New Zealand (4 times), and France (1 time) to operate in and out of Japan's territory in order to monitor illicit ship-to-ship transfers.<sup>287</sup> The aircraft operated out of a U.S.-owned facility in Okinawa, so logistics support was most likely provided by the United States; however, allowing a coalition of forces to operate out of its territory still shows Japan's willingness to support regional

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<sup>284</sup> "Defense Programs and Budget of Japan," Ministry of Defense of Japan, December 2020, 1, [https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d\\_act/d\\_budget/pdf/210331a.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/d_budget/pdf/210331a.pdf).

<sup>285</sup> Ministry of Defense of Japan, "Defense Programs and Budget of Japan."

<sup>286</sup> "Suspicion of Illegal Ship-to-Ship Transfers of Goods by North Korea-Related Vessels," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, September 9, 2021, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page4e\\_000757.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page4e_000757.html).

<sup>287</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Suspicion of Illegal Ship-to-Ship Transfers of Goods by North Korea-Related Vessels."

security concerns. In addition to regional security cooperation, Japan has expanded its role in global security efforts as well. Beyond the UN peacekeeping operations discussed in Chapter III, since 2009, Japan has provided and continues to provide forces to the multinational anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, further demonstrating its desire to become a responsible stakeholder in global and regional affairs as well as its willingness to participate in multilateralism.

Furthermore, Japan's reimagined security role has led to increased relations with like-minded states both bilaterally and multilaterally. Multilateral operations like the one described above enable countries to develop their defense ties with one another, as they require coordination, deconfliction, information sharing, logistical support, and unified efforts. Likewise, Japan's full-throttle adoption of FOIP has had a similar impact. In its 2021 Defense White Paper, the first section after the defense minister's letter addresses Japan's commitment to FOIP, emphasizing its goal of cooperating with like-minded nations to reinforce FOIP.<sup>288</sup> Tokyo has also utilized various forums and meetings, such as the Quad, European Union's foreign affairs council, and ASEAN to gain support for FOIP.<sup>289</sup>

Indeed, the most notable defense cooperation developments for Japan in the past decade have been its involvement in the Quad and increased bilateral relationships with its members. In addition to developments discussed above regarding U.S.-Japan relations, Japan has substantially increased ties with Australia and India. In 2010, Japan and Australia signed an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), and in 2012, both states signed an information security agreement.<sup>290</sup> In addition, both states' forces continue to improve interoperability by conducting military exercises. According to Japan's Ministry of Defense's Security Cooperation webpage for Australia, the two states have conducted fourteen military

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<sup>288</sup> Ministry of Defense of Japan, "Defense of Japan," 1–2.

<sup>289</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, "The Gloves Come Off," *Comparative Connections*, May 15, 2021, <https://cc.pacforum.org/2021/05/the-gloves-come-off/>; June Teufel Dreyer, "Treading Water," *Comparative Connections*, January 15, 2021, <https://cc.pacforum.org/2021/01/treading-water-2/>.

<sup>290</sup> "Japan-Australia Relations (Basic Data)," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, April 21, 2014, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/data.html>.



exercises with one another in 2021 thus far.<sup>291</sup> Most of these exercises were multilateral and included other states such as the United States and South Korea. However, Malabar 2021, which included all Quad members, is under the India webpage rather than the Australia webpage within Japan's MOD website, indicating that there were more engagements that involved Japanese and Australian forces than the fourteen highlighted within the Australian section.<sup>292</sup> With India, Japan has signed an ACSA (2020), a Defense Equipment and Technology Transfer agreement (2015), and a Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Military Information agreement (2015).<sup>293</sup> The JSDF and Indian Armed Forces continue to conduct military training and exercises together, but not to the same level of Japan's engagement with the United States and Australia.<sup>294</sup>

Aligned values, such as FOIP, and shared concerns over regional security issues have led to Japan increasing defense-related agreements and defense force engagements with Quad members. Though Japan still only shares a mutual defense treaty with the United States, the developments with Australia, India, and the Quad are significant, as they showcase Japan's willingness to branch out of its bilateral relationship with the United States and to partake in multilateralism.

These developments have angered China, but Japan seems less worried about upsetting Beijing compared to other states analyzed in this thesis—India, South Korea, and Australia. After the U.S.-Japan 2+2 meeting, a press release stated that both nations shared concerns over China's behavior, as it was “inconsistent with the existing international order, presents political, economic, military, and technological challenges to the Alliance and to the

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<sup>291</sup> “Security Cooperation (Australia),” Ministry of Defense of Japan, accessed September 22, 2021, <https://www.mod.go.jp/en/australia/>.

<sup>292</sup> “Security Cooperation (India),” Ministry of Defense of Japan, accessed September 22, 2021, <https://www.mod.go.jp/en/india/>.

<sup>293</sup> “Signing of the Agreement Between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services Between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Indian Armed Forces,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, September 10, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_002896.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002896.html); “Japan-India Relations (Basic Data),” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, January 4, 2021, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html>.

<sup>294</sup> Ministry of Defense of Japan, “Security Cooperation (India).”

international community.”<sup>295</sup> The release also stressed shared concerns over China’s human rights abuses. Furthermore, Minister of Defense Kishi Nobuo’s opening passage in Japan’s 2021 White Paper criticizes China’s “unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas.”<sup>296</sup> The paper also touches on China’s most sensitive topic, Taiwan. It mentions that stability regarding the Taiwan situation is important to Japan’s security and must be carefully monitored.<sup>297</sup> These are not off-the-cuff comments made after receiving targeted questions by reporters but approved messages that have been vetted and published with intent, signaling that Japan may have given up on engagement and cooperation with China to settle its disputes. Its Defense White Paper stated as much by acknowledging that “A regional cooperation framework in the security realm has not been sufficiently institutionalized in the Indo-Pacific region and longstanding issues of territorial rights and reunification continue to remain.”<sup>298</sup>

Instead of cooperation, Japan is attempting to divest itself from China and encouraging others to do the same. It recently announced plans to commercialize the mining of rare earth metals, indicating that the 2010 Senkaku incident continues to weigh heavily on Japanese planners.<sup>299</sup> Furthermore, after supply line crises from COVID-19, Japan has begun to provide monetary incentives for Japanese companies to leave China and is encouraging other states to reduce their dependency on Chinese supply lines as well.<sup>300</sup>

A reason for this change could be Japan’s realization that the shifting balance of power in the region needs to be accounted for through internal development and multilateral

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<sup>295</sup> “U.S.-Japan Joint Press Statement,” United States Department of State, March 16, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-japan-joint-press-statement/>.

<sup>296</sup> Ministry of Defense of Japan, “Defense of Japan,” Minister’s Summary.

<sup>297</sup> Ministry of Defense of Japan, “Defense of Japan,” 19.

<sup>298</sup> Ministry of Defense of Japan, “Defense of Japan,” 15.

<sup>299</sup> “Japan to Commercialize Mining of Rare Metals on Seabed,” The Yomiuri Shimbun, January 18, 2021, <https://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0007075035.s>

<sup>300</sup> Simon Denyer, “Japan Helps 87 Companies to Break from China after Pandemic Exposed Overreliance,” *Washington Post*, July 21, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/japan-helps-87-companies-to-exit-china-after-pandemic-exposed-overreliance/2020/07/21/4889abd2-cb2f-11ea-99b0-8426e26d203b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/japan-helps-87-companies-to-exit-china-after-pandemic-exposed-overreliance/2020/07/21/4889abd2-cb2f-11ea-99b0-8426e26d203b_story.html); Kiran Sharma, “Japan, India and Australia Aim to Steer Supply Chains around China,” *Nikkei Asia*, September 01, 2020, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Trade/Japan-India-and-Australia-aim-to-steer-supply-chains-around-China>.

engagement with U.S. allies and partners. Exacerbating this belief are China's A2/AD advancements and the difficulty they pose to U.S. force deployment in the first island chain and the perceived failure of a policy of engagement. Overreliance on the United States for its own security and "playing nice" with China seems to have run its course for Tokyo. Japan, for its part, has begun to enhance its defense capabilities and publicly criticize China's actions. However, as Japan makes clear, the emerging security challenges it faces—especially a rising China—cannot be dealt with by any country alone.<sup>301</sup> Thus, Japan aims to counter these challenges by strengthening its own defense capabilities, expanding the security roles it fulfills, and closely cooperating with countries that share its values.<sup>302</sup> Its reinterpretation of Article 9, increased defense ties with countries like Australia and India, as well as its engagement in multilateral operations and organizations like the Quad demonstrate that Japan is making good on its defense goals.

**F. FACTORS INHIBITING ALLIANCES AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSE:  
JAPAN**

However, despite all these developments Japan has yet to establish defense treaties with any other state and continues to rely on its bilateral relationship with the United States to address its security concerns. The factors that limit Japan's participation in a collective defense institution seem to be domestically driven, not the geopolitical issues or concerns that impede many of the other states analyzed in this thesis. Though Japan remains a major trading partner with China, it has begun to criticize Beijing more frequently and, as pointed out above, has also begun to diversify its trade to lessen its dependence on the Chinese economy. Japan has a sizeable economy of its own and remains a valuable market; thus, economic coercion is not as easily wielded against Japan, as the coercer would be shooting themselves in the foot. Furthermore, insecurities over sovereignty do not seem to play any role in Japan's decision to not join a collective defense institution. It embraces the U.S. alliance and shapes its own defense around it. The factors that seem to be limiting Japan from participating in a collective defense institution remain domestic issues, largely its constitution and its population's pride

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<sup>301</sup> Ministry of Defense of Japan, "Defense of Japan," 15.

<sup>302</sup> Ministry of Defense of Japan, "Defense of Japan," Minister's Summary.

in being a nation that does not make war anymore. Finally, the U.S.-Japan alliance seems to meet Japan's current security needs, and thus disincentivizes it from pursuing additional alliances that would burden Japan with unnecessary security commitments.

Though the 2014 reinterpretation of Article 9 of Japan's constitution is a significant move towards Japan's ability to partake in a collective defense institution, the language used in the reinterpretation still falls short of what would be required to participate in a NATO-like institution; thus, Japan still has legal hurdles that prevent it from engaging in "true" collective defense. As stated previously, the reinterpretation allows JSDF forces to protect a foreign country that shares a "close relationship" to Japan; however, the attack against that foreign country must also threaten Japan's "own" survival. Furthermore, the JSDF is only authorized the minimum use of force necessary to counter the threat. This raises questions about what constitutes a "close relationship" or "Japan's survival." One can assume that the alliance with the United States constitutes a close relationship, but is Japan's relationship with Australia "close" as well?

Furthermore, interpreting what attack against a close ally threatens Japan's survival is difficult to ascertain. An attack against a U.S. Aegis-equipped cruiser conducting ballistic missile defense in the Sea of Japan obviously meets the criteria; however, if a U.S. vessel conducting freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea (SCS) were to be attacked, would this jeopardize Japan's survival? These questions raise concerns over Japan's legal ability to provide defense to an ally in situations where there is not a clear-cut tie to Japan's security. In addition, Japan's inability to escalate a conflict, due to its limitation to use minimum force necessary to overcome a threat, hinders the deterrence value provided by a collective defense institution. NATO successfully prevented a Soviet attack against a single member state because of the deterrence value of escalation. Because Japan is only able to use the minimum force necessary to overcome a threat, aggressors can leverage expandable assets without fear of reprisal against their more protected assets and capabilities.

Thus, Japan is legally unable to truly participate as an equal member of a collective defense institution. As highlighted by Yuichi Hosoya, a member of the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security, the entity that drafted the parameters of the 2014 reinterpretation, "Japan had not authorized 'true collective self-defense' (*honrai no*

*shudan teki jieken*), which is the ability to come to the aid of an ally even if Japan is not itself under any security threat.”<sup>303</sup> In order for Japan to share equal responsibilities as other member states in a collective defense institution, an amendment to its constitution would most likely be necessary, as such activity requires Japan to have a normalized military capable of making war against aggressors, not just defending its own sovereignty. Again, this is no easy task.

Furthermore, who is driving constitutional change influences the Japanese populace’s support for it, which is vital, as amendments require a referendum. Since the 1990s, the Japanese public has been open to revising the constitution; however, when “revisionist” politicians are pushing for the change, the Japanese public opposes such efforts.<sup>304</sup> During Abe’s second tenure, public support for revision of Article 9 dropped for the first time in three decades.<sup>305</sup> Academics Shogo Suzuki and Corey Wallace argue that this was due to “Abe’s personal history as the grandson of Nobusuke Kishi and his reputation as a revisionist.”<sup>306</sup> Also, the Japanese public’s opinion on Article 9 remains high. In polls, “positive evaluation is always well above the number opposed to changing article 9 in the same surveys, suggesting that even those open to changing article 9 recognize its value.”<sup>307</sup> Despite China’s rise and Senkaku transgressions as well as the JSDF’s support in regional security initiatives, the Japanese public’s anti-militarism remains.<sup>308</sup> The skepticism the public holds towards certain officials and the anti-militarist identity that remains potent makes a constitutional amendment unlikely in the near future.

Finally, Japan’s reluctance to join security treaties, including a multilateral collective defense institution, despite the efforts it has put towards increasing engagement with like-minded states as well as its recognition of a changing balance of power in the region signifies that it is still satisfied with the U.S. security umbrella, at least for the time being. Japan’s

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<sup>303</sup> Suzuki and Wallace, “Explaining Japan’s Response to Geopolitical Vulnerability,” 724.

<sup>304</sup> Suzuki and Wallace, 729–30.

<sup>305</sup> Suzuki and Wallace, 729–30.

<sup>306</sup> Suzuki and Wallace, 732.

<sup>307</sup> Suzuki and Wallace, 728.

<sup>308</sup> Anindya, “The Evolving Security Policy of Japan and the Adherence to Antimilitarism Culture.”

engagement with states like India and Australia has grown tremendously in the last decade, yet it has refrained from signing mutual defense treaties with each. With Australia, Japan conducts numerous military exercises, has ACSA and information sharing agreements, and even allows Australian forces to deploy to Japan for real-world operations. This is a relationship that closely resembles the ties Japan and the United States share as well as the ties NATO members share with one another. The only element lacking is the mutual defense commitment. However, instead of solidifying these newly developed relationships with a security treaty, the Japanese have doubled down on the U.S.-Japan alliance and worked towards expanding its own role and capabilities. These developments indicate that Japan still views the emerging challenges within the region as manageable by itself and the United States. Thus, it seems Japan is more interested in internal balancing to enhance the U.S.-Japan alliance, rather than additional external balancing with other middle powers, as the latter would incur additional security commitments, commitments that the anti-militarism crowds within Japan would find difficult to accept.

#### **G. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

More recently, South Korea has increased defense cooperation bilaterally and multilaterally, but such endeavors remain inclusive and related to regional security threats rather than a rising China. The ROK's 2018 Defense White Paper's Expansion of Defense Exchanges and Cooperation section highlights these developments.<sup>309</sup> The list of countries that South Korea is engaging with bilaterally is quite expansive and includes states like China and Russia, both of which have a strategic cooperative partnership with South Korea. The states that have a more elevated special strategic partnership include Indonesia, India, and the United Arab Emirates. However, these relationships pale in comparison to the U.S.-ROK alliance and to the Quad members' bilateral relationships. South Korea's multilateral developments include participation in various organizations that are again more inclusive and more concerned with security cooperation in activities related to region-wide threats such as

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<sup>309</sup> "2018 Defense White Paper," Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, 2018, 186, [https://www.mnd.go.kr/user/mndEN/upload/pblicitn/PBLICTNEBOOK\\_201908070153390840.pdf](https://www.mnd.go.kr/user/mndEN/upload/pblicitn/PBLICTNEBOOK_201908070153390840.pdf).

natural and man-made disasters, terrorism, piracy, and refugee crises.<sup>310</sup> However, the Ministry of National Defense has also used multilateral forums to gain support from the international community on its policies toward North Korea and unification.<sup>311</sup> Most revealing, the document makes sure to place South Korea outside of U.S. regional initiatives meant “to counter the expanding influence of China” by stating that the United States’ Indo-Pacific Strategy is “centered on cooperation with Japan, Australia, and India.”<sup>312</sup> This line is significant, as it not only implies the Quad is meant to counter China’s rise, a fact directly disputed by the Quad members, but also signals that South Korea is not interested in participating in multilateral initiatives that it views are aimed at China.

As during the Cold War, policies clearly continue to emphasize North Korea and improving U.S.-ROK relations. Everything else, including a rising China and multilateralism are secondary. The White Paper highlights that the resolution of the Korean Peninsula issue will include regional cooperation based on ROK-U.S. coordination.<sup>313</sup> This passage and the large amount of writing within the document dedicated to both North Korea and the U.S.-ROK relationship signals that the continued priority for South Korea’s defense is the threat from the North, a threat that is first and foremost coordinated at the bilateral level. Bilateral exercises with the United States remain South Korea’s priority, as they are directly tied to training and certifying operational plans.<sup>314</sup> Between 2017 and 2018, South Korea participated in 207 exercises across its various military services; only 27 of those exercises were classified as multilateral.<sup>315</sup> The bilateral exercises were all U.S.-ROK events, and most likely many of the multilateral events, if not all, included the United States, though a breakdown of participation was not available. Korea’s energy and focus thus continues to build upon its pre-existing alliance in lieu of others, as the U.S.-ROK alliance is fundamental to countering North Korea, the primary threat to South Korea.

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<sup>310</sup> Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, 200–205.

<sup>311</sup> Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, 200.

<sup>312</sup> Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, 8, 12.

<sup>313</sup> Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, 39.

<sup>314</sup> Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, 107, 185.

<sup>315</sup> Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, 101, 102, 105, 106.

Even within policies addressing its primary concern—North Korea—South Korea is not inclined toward multilateralism. A significant factor to South Korea’s potential participation in joining multilateral defense institutions is its tense relationship with Japan. Both states are democracies allied with the United States that share values and common threats, including North Korea. It would seem natural for these two states, along with the United States, to form a multilateral defense pact, but there remain significant tensions between the two over historical disputes and gripes. However, despite these issues and domestic opposition, in 2016, both states agreed to the signing of an information sharing agreement that allowed for collaboration on North Korea nuclear and missile activities.<sup>316</sup> The General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) had been delayed since 2012 but was finally signed when North Korean provocations increased in 2016.

However, a series of events put the GSOMIA in jeopardy, but ultimately, adherence to the document has continued. Disagreement over historical forced labor and comfort women disputes as well as an unsafe interaction between a South Korean warship and Japanese patrol plane led to a significant rise in tensions.<sup>317</sup> Cancelled defense ministerial meetings, trade restrictions, political jockeying, and South Korea’s threatening to leave GSOMIA ensued.<sup>318</sup> This threat was unprecedented, as economic disputes fueled by historical animosities threatened security and stability. But eventually, South Korea relented and remained within GSOMIA. The dynamic between these two states may suffer from rhetoric and pettiness—not acknowledging one another as a partner in official documents, etc.—but for Korea, the relationship is nevertheless more substantive compared to its other “special” and “strategic” partners, which it does not hold historical animosities against. However, the relationship is largely driven by shared concerns over North Korea and is lacking in coordination on China, signaling once again that South Korea’s defense engagement, in security areas not regionally

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<sup>316</sup> “South Korea, Japan Agree Intelligence-Sharing on North Korea Threat,” Reuters, November 23, 2016, sec. Emerging Markets, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southkorea-japan-military-idUSKBN131068>.

<sup>317</sup> Ji-Young Lee and Mintaro Oba, “Hitting an All-Time Low,” *Comparative Connections*, May 14, 2019, <https://cc.pacforum.org/2019/05/hitting-an-all-time-low/>.

<sup>318</sup> Ji-Young Lee and Mintaro Oba, “Cold Economics, Cold Politics,” *Comparative Connections*, September 15, 2019, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2019/09/cold-economics-cold-politics/>.



inclusive, is centered on North Korea; a threat that does not warrant a NATO-like institution given the status of the U.S.-ROK alliance and the asymmetrical advantage it holds.

## **H. FACTORS INHIBITING ALLIANCES AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSE: REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

As South Korea prioritizes the North Korean threat over other regional concerns, it will likely continue to improve the U.S.-ROK alliance at the expense of multilateralism. This is because South Korea's primary concern is not a rising China, island building in the SCS, piracy, or maritime crime—issues that tend elicit multilateralism—but the “sword of Damocles” to the north. North Korea consumes South Korea's attention and shapes its foreign policy and defense relations. South Korea will likely prioritize the U.S.-ROK alliance and its exercises, which increase interoperability and command and control in conflict, over involvement in multilateral engagements and exercises targeting regional concerns that do not present an existential threat to South Korea. And though increased support against North Korea would not hurt, South Korea seems content with the bilateral relationship, as it can handle transgressions by the North without further outside help.

North Korea, unlike a rising China, does not warrant multilateral balancing against it. If it did, without question, South Korea would engage more with states such as Japan, as this has been the case historically. When Korean and Japanese fears of U.S. retrenchment increase, they have typically improved relations and increased cooperation with one another.<sup>319</sup> Even recently, when tensions between South Korea and Japan spiked, President Trump's criticism of military-cost sharing pushed the two states to reconcile their differences, as they shared fears over a decreased U.S. commitment.<sup>320</sup> As long as South Korea feels that the United States is committed to its defense, South Korea's increased engagement with third-party states and multilateralism will be viewed as a luxury, and thus secondary to improving the U.S.-ROK alliance.

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<sup>319</sup> Victor Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1999).

<sup>320</sup> Ji-Young Lee and Mintaro Oba, “Thaws and Tremors,” *Comparative Connections*, January 14, 2020, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2020/01/thaws-and-tremors/>.

South Korea's emphasis on the North also prevents it from engaging in multilateral frameworks that displease China, as good relations with the latter are necessary to overcome threats from the former. Not only is South Korea heavily reliant on China for trade, as China accounts for a quarter of Korean exports, but it also views China as a "major stakeholder in promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula" and hopes "to establish a foundation upon which bilateral relations will be elevated to a new height."<sup>321</sup> This is a fundamental difference in how South Korea views China compared to the other states studied in this thesis. Denuclearization or any significant actions against North Korea almost assuredly require China's cooperation. Likewise, a regime collapse in the North will absolutely require extensive coordination with China. These are threat- and national security-related factors that other nations in the region do not face. South Korea's White Paper and the China section on its Ministry of Foreign Affairs webpage clearly show a diplomatic strategy that focuses on engagement and coordination with China. In fact, judging South Korea solely by its official documents and press releases, it is difficult to discern if it views China's rise negatively at all.

Thus, South Korea continues to distance itself from any initiative or organization that is not totally inclusive and could potentially be perceived by China as a means of containment. When answering a question on South Korea's interest in joining the Quad during a briefing hosted by the Naval Postgraduate School, Ambassador Harry Harris stated that "there is a lot of interest and trepidation here in Korea."<sup>322</sup> He further explained that members of the Quad are like-minded in their concerns about China but emphasized that "Korea is reluctant to criticize China publicly, or to sign onto those declaration and things...that criticize China's bad behavior with their human rights records and their provocative claims."<sup>323</sup> The Moon administration, facing internal pressures to join the Quad from opposition parties, stated that the Korean government "maintains the position that it is possible for us to cooperate with any

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<sup>321</sup> "Korea, Rep. Exports by Country and Region 2019 | WITS Data," WITS, accessed July 23, 2021, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/KOR/Year/2019/TradeFlow/Export>; "Opening Remarks by President Moon Jae-in at Plenary Meeting of National Security Council," Bluehouse, January 21, 2021, <https://english1.president.go.kr/BriefingSpeeches/Speeches/933>.

<sup>322</sup> Naval Postgraduate School, *Virtual SGL with Ambassador Harry B. Harris - Nov. 17, 2020*, 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsYM-bgO\\_qE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsYM-bgO_qE).

<sup>323</sup> Naval Postgraduate School.

consultative body if it conforms to our principles of inclusiveness, openness, transparency, and cooperation, and if it is in our national interests and contributes to regional global peace and prosperity.”<sup>324</sup> In addition, recent high-level meetings by the United States and its Asian allies provide further evidence of South Korea’s hesitancy on China. At the most recent 2+2 meeting between the United States and South Korea, South Korea took a cautious approach in its statements on China and participation in the Quad, both of which were absent from the joint statement following the meeting.<sup>325</sup> This was in stark contrast to the joint statement provided after the Japan-U.S. 2+2 meeting, which very clearly painted China as a threat.<sup>326</sup> In regards to China, there is a clear divergence between South Korea and the various members of the Quad on what China’s rise means for the security of each.

## **I. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: AUSTRALIA**

Australia’s deteriorating relationship with China and increased engagements with U.S. allies, both bilaterally and multilaterally, increases the likelihood that Australia would join in a multilateral collective defense grouping. Since 2007, Australia has continued to build upon its bilateral and trilateral relations, and though the Quad was initially disbanded in 2008, it has since seen a reemergence. Australia views its relationship with the United States, Japan, India, Indonesia, and the ROK as essential to maintaining an Indo-Pacific favorable to Australia’s interests.<sup>327</sup> In addition to the United States, it sees Japanese and Indian actions as central to countering China’s power and influence.<sup>328</sup> This perspective has caused Australia to prioritize its engagement with both states. It views Japan as its closest and most mature partner in Asia, having regular 2+2 talks as well as ACSA and information-sharing

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<sup>324</sup> Scott Snyder and See-Won Byun, “China-Korea Relations Poised for Recovery Despite Intensified Conflict on Social Media,” *Comparative Connections*, May 15, 2021, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2021/05/china-korea-relations-poised-for-recovery-despite-intensified-conflict-on-social-media/>.

<sup>325</sup> “Joint Statement of the 2021 Republic of Korea – United States Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting (‘2+2’),” United States Department of State, March 18, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-of-the-2021-republic-of-korea-united-states-foreign-and-defense-ministerial-meeting-22/>; Snyder and Byun, “China-Korea Relations Poised for Recovery Despite Intensified Conflict on Social Media.”

<sup>326</sup> United States Department of State, “U.S.-Japan Joint Press Statement.”

<sup>327</sup> “2017 Foreign Policy White Paper,” Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, 2017, 4.

<sup>328</sup> Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, “2017 Foreign Policy White Paper,” 25–27.

agreements.<sup>329</sup> Similarly, Australia views India as a strategic partner and has recently upgraded their bilateral Strategic Partnership, established in 2009, to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which then led to their joint signing of the Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation document.<sup>330</sup> Australia also highlights its commitment to trilateral engagement with the United States and Japan and with India and Japan in its 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper.<sup>331</sup> In addition, though Australia played spoiler to the Quad initially, the institution has gained prominence within Australia in recent years. On Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, the Quad has its own dedicated webpage.<sup>332</sup> The page provides an explanation of the Quad's purpose and provides links to all official press releases covering Quad interactions, demonstrating that Australia views this "informal" grouping as something more formal than years past.

In addition to its diplomatic efforts, the Australian Defense Force (ADF) has increased training with the Quad members' militaries. The spectrum of engagements is quite wide, with smaller events like multi-sails and theater security cooperation exercises on one end and major warfighting exercises such as Talisman Sabre, Annualex, and Pacific Vanguard on the other. The large majority of these interactions are multilateral, with most being trilateral events with U.S. forces and another regional partner, often Japan. Of note, historically bilateral and trilateral military exercises that did not include the ADF have recently begun to do so,

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<sup>329</sup> "Australia-Japan Bilateral Relationship," Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed June 29, 2021, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/japan/Pages/australia-japan-bilateral-relationship>.

<sup>330</sup> "India Country Brief," Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed June 29, 2021, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/india/Pages/india-country-brief>; "Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Between The Republic of India and the Government of Australia," Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed June 29, 2021, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/india/Pages/joint-declaration-shared-vision-maritime-cooperation-indo-pacific-between-republic-india-and-government-australia>.

<sup>331</sup> Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, "2017 Foreign Policy White Paper," 40.

<sup>332</sup> "Quad," Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed June 29, 2021, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/quad>.

signaling increased appetite for multilateralism.<sup>333</sup> Also, purely multilateral exercises that focus on warfighting are being conducted by the ADF and its closest allies.<sup>334</sup> These are military training events that are large enough to be considered multilateral but small enough that training can focus on more sensitive areas of warfare such as defensive counter-air, anti-submarine warfare, and live firing rather than more regional security concerns like anti-piracy, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance. These trends show that ADF and U.S. allies and partners in the region are actively seeking opportunities to engage multilaterally, rather than bilaterally, and are doing so to increase interoperability in areas of warfare related to large-scale conventional war.

Australia has not only increased multilateral training but has also participated in multilateral operations in the region, further enhancing its security relations with regional partners. One such operation, Australia continues to support today. Following North Korea's ballistic missile launches in 2017, the UN Security Council unanimously voted to pass Resolution 2371, which prohibited all nations from obtaining coal, iron ore, seafood, lead, and lead ore from North Korea.<sup>335</sup> This resolution increased existing sanctions under Resolution 1718, established in 2006.<sup>336</sup> In an effort to enforce these sanctions, a coalition of countries to include the United States, Australia, England, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and France agreed to send forces to the region in order to monitor illicit ship-to-ship transfers.<sup>337</sup> The ADF was and continues to be one of the more active participants in the

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<sup>333</sup> Task Force 70 Public Affairs, "JMSDF, U.S. Navy Conduct Bilateral 'Annual Exercise' 2019," Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, November 10, 2019, <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/news.aspx/130531>; Task Force 70 Public Affairs, "Nimitz Strike Group Participates in Malabar with Australia, India and Japan," November 17, 2020, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, accessed June 30, 2021, <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/news.aspx/130769>.

<sup>334</sup> "Inaugural Maritime Exercise Pacific Vanguard Concludes off the Coast of Guam," Australian Government Department of Defence, May 31, 2019, <https://news.defence.gov.au/media/media-releases/inaugural-maritime-exercise-pacific-vanguard-concludes-coast-guam>.

<sup>335</sup> "Security Council Toughens Sanctions Against Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2371 (2017) | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," United Nations, August 5, 2017, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12945.doc.htm>.

<sup>336</sup> United Nations, "Security Council Toughens Sanctions Against Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2371 (2017) | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases."

<sup>337</sup> Gordon Lubold and Ian Talley, "Seven Countries Join to Hunt Ships Smuggling Fuel to North Korea," *Wall Street Journal*, September 14, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-u-s-led-coalition-to-track-illicit-fuel-shipments-to-north-korea-1536922923>.

coalition. In support, the Royal Australian Airforce (RAAF) has deployed the P-8A to Japan nine times since its first deployment in April of 2018.<sup>338</sup> The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) additionally provided ship support five times, with the latest deployment being May of 2021. Though no data is available on any port visits by RAN forces in Japan, the RAAF has routinely operated out of Kadena Airbase, located in Okinawa. Kadena Airbase is a U.S.-owned facility, but operating in and out of the base requires approval from Japanese authorities, as they own the surrounding airspace. The RAAF conducting real-world operations from Japan is a significant development in their defense ties, and the operation itself demonstrates a willingness by both parties—and all other participants—to partake in multilateral security cooperation.

In short, Australia's actions show that it is pursuing increased ties with U.S. allies and partners, particularly India and Japan, both bilaterally and multilaterally, signaling a potential willingness to expand beyond its current defense treaties. Australia has established multiple bilateral agreements with like-minded regional states that increase defense cooperation and information sharing. It has increased its participation in multilateral exercises and has acted as a key contributor to multilateral operations in the region. The diplomatic and military trends of Australia show that it is indeed prioritizing increased defense relations outside of its U.S. relationship. However, this relationship-building is not at the expense of Australia's ties with the United States, but rather a multiplier to it. Australia's defense relationships since ANZUS have been relatively stagnant, with increased outreach in the first decade of the new century; however, the past decade has witnessed an Australia more engaged in regional relationship building, underlining its concerns over regional stability and the need to adjust to it.

This adjustment in defense relations can be largely attributed to the deterioration of the Canberra-Beijing relationship. In August of 2018, Australia banned Chinese companies from building 5G infrastructure on Australian soil due to national security concerns.<sup>339</sup> In both 2019 and 2020, Australia was subject to cyber-attacks largely believed to have emanated

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<sup>338</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Suspicion of Illegal Ship-to-Ship Transfers of Goods by North Korea-Related Vessels,"

<sup>339</sup> Graeme Dobell, "Turnbull Tumbles, Trump Mateship, China Frost," *Comparative Connections*, September 15, 2018, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2018/09/turnbull-tumbles-trump-mateship-china-frost/>.

from China.<sup>340</sup> Australia condemned Beijing’s National Security Law on Hong Kong before ultimately suspending extradition to Hong Kong outright.<sup>341</sup> It incurred China’s wrath by calling for further investigations into the cause of the coronavirus outbreak.<sup>342</sup> Due to concerns over Chinese influence in the country, the Australian federal government introduced laws that would provide it the authority to veto any deals made by states, territories, councils, and universities with foreign governments.<sup>343</sup>

No signaling of a changed stance on China is more prevalent than Australia’s renewed interest and participation in the Quad and its 2020 Strategic Update. The Quad has reinstated dialogues, and each state participated in the 2020 and 2021 Malabar exercises despite Chinese criticisms.<sup>344</sup> Former Prime Minister Rudd—the man largely responsible for the initial deterioration of the Quad in 2008—has even acknowledged the shift in political and strategic circumstances.<sup>345</sup> Australia’s 2020 Strategic Update stated that “a ten-year strategic warning time for a major conventional attack against Australia” was no longer assured and that “coercion, competition, and grey zone activities directly or indirectly targeting Australian interest are occurring now.”<sup>346</sup> Australia seems to be less burdened by its cautious approach to China and is instead taking a stronger stance by cooperating further with allies who equally view Chinese ambitions for the region with skepticism. Further evidence of Australia’s change is its decision to purchase American nuclear-powered submarines instead of French diesel-powered ones. The latter are effective in coastal defenses, but the former allow

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<sup>340</sup> Graeme Dobell, “Scott Morrison, Donald Trump, and the Indo-Pacific,” *Comparative Connections*, September 15, 2019, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2019/09/scott-morrison-donald-trump-and-the-indo-pacific/>; Dobell, “Coronavirus, China and the U.S. New Normal,” September 15, 2020.

<sup>341</sup> Dobell, “Coronavirus, China and the U.S. New Normal,” September 15, 2020.

<sup>342</sup> Dobell.

<sup>343</sup> Dobell.

<sup>344</sup> “Australia, India, Japan, and U.S. Kick-Off Exercise MALABAR 2021,” U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India, August 26, 2021, <https://in.usembassy.gov/australia-india-japan-and-u-s-kick-off-exercise-malabar-2021/>; Task Force 70 Public Affairs, “India Hosts Japan, Australia, U.S. in Naval Exercise MALABAR 2020,” Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, November 02, 2020, <http://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/2402561/india-hosts-japan-australia-us-in-naval-exercise-malabar-2020>.

<sup>345</sup> Dobell, “Turnbull Tumbles, Trump Mateship, China Frost.”

<sup>346</sup> Graeme Dobell, “Coronavirus, China and the U.S. New Normal,” *Comparative Connections*, September 15, 2020, <http://cc.pacforum.org/2020/09/coronavirus-china-and-the-us-new-normal/>.

Australia to project power further away from its shore. This defense deal signifies a potential willingness of Australia to be more active in regional security and a definite willingness to defy China’s wishes. In response to the deal, Chinese spokesman Zhao Lijian said it was “utterly irresponsible conduct” that would “seriously damage regional peace and stability, exacerbate an arms race and harm international nuclear nonproliferation efforts.”<sup>347</sup>

The newly formed relationship between the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom because of the recent submarine deal also demonstrates Australia’s willingness to participate in frameworks beyond its bilateral defense relationship with the United States. However, this grouping is extremely new and seems to be focused on technology exchange and joint development programs vice a trilateral defense treaty. Nonetheless, the establishment of such a framework is significant and opens new pathways for Australia to engage in security-related multilateralism, albeit with a narrow set of nations with which it is highly culturally aligned.

#### **J. FACTORS INHIBITING ALLIANCES AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSE: AUSTRALIA**

However, while Australia is increasing engagement with U.S. allies due to Chinese concerns, its economic reliance on China cannot be understated. Politicians and leadership in Australia have viewed China as the inevitable global economic power and as largely responsible for Australia’s economic prosperity; thus, good relations with China are of strategic importance for Australia.<sup>348</sup> In addition to promoting Australia’s economic growth, Chinese trade and investment protected Australia from the Global Financial Crisis.<sup>349</sup> Today, China is Australia’s largest trading partner and accounts for one-third of its exports and about 20 percent of its imports.<sup>350</sup> In addition to trade, financial links between the two states have

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<sup>347</sup> Damien Cave and Chris Buckley, “Why Australia Bet the House on Lasting American Power in Asia,” *The New York Times*, September 16, 2021, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/16/world/australia/australia-china-submarines.html>.

<sup>348</sup> Dobell, “Coronavirus, China and the U.S. New Normal,” September 15, 2020.

<sup>349</sup> Dobell.

<sup>350</sup> Christopher Kent, “Remarks at the Australian Renminbi Forum Melbourne | Speeches,” Reserve Bank of Australia, June 12, 2019, Australia, <https://www.rba.gov.au/speeches/2019/sp-ag-2019-06-12-1.html>.



also grown tremendously in the past decade.<sup>351</sup> As cited in a Comparative Connections article, the *Australian Foreign Affairs* journal found Australia to be “the most China-dependent country in the developed world.”<sup>352</sup> This dynamic has caused Australia to tread carefully and limit any actions that would elicit Chinese criticisms, like participation in the 2007 Malabar, where China issued demarches.

Australia’s economic dependency on China forces it to carefully approach security initiatives that China views as a U.S. containment strategy, such as a formalized multilateral collective defense institution. In July of 2007, shortly after the ARF meeting where Australia, Japan, India, and the United States held exploratory discussions on establishing quadrilateral ties, Australian Minister for Defense Brandon Nelson stated that “we do not wish to have formal quadrilateral strategic dialogue in defense and security matters... We do not want to do anything which...may otherwise cause concern in some countries, particularly China.”<sup>353</sup> After a parliamentary shake-up the next year, newly elected Prime Minister Rudd pulled Australia out of the quadrilateral, as he was unwilling to marry up with Tokyo and Delhi due to their historical baggage with Beijing and its potential impact on Australia’s relations with China.<sup>354</sup> Even within its bilateral relationships, Australia has accounted for Chinese backlash. With Japan, Australia has stressed the significance of its economic relationship with China and has avoided taking sides on any Sino-Japanese disputes.<sup>355</sup> With India, Australia has historically limited its relationship with New Delhi out of fear of antagonizing China.<sup>356</sup>

Australia’s tentativeness to upset China is warranted due to the economic coercion China can easily apply in response to any actions it deems threatening to its interests. Shortly

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<sup>351</sup> Kent.

<sup>352</sup> Dobell, “Coronavirus, China and the U.S. New Normal,” September 15, 2020; “China Dependence,” *Australian Foreign Affairs* (Black Inc., March 18, 2019), <https://doi.org/10/china-dependence>.

<sup>353</sup> Chanlett-Avery and Vaughn, “Emerging Trends in the Security Architecture in Asia: Bilateral and Multilateral Ties Among the United States, Japan, Australia, and India,” 16.

<sup>354</sup> Dobell, “Turnbull Tumbles, Trump Mateship, China Frost.”

<sup>355</sup> Aurelia George Mulgan, “Australia-Japan Relations: New Directions,” *Strategic Insights* 36, no. Australia-Japan relations: New directions (July 12, 2007): 8.

<sup>356</sup> Chanlett-Avery and Vaughn, “Emerging Trends in the Security Architecture in Asia: Bilateral and Multilateral Ties Among the United States, Japan, Australia, and India,” 12.

after some of the deteriorating relations discussed in the previous section, China responded with veiled—and not so veiled—threats against Australia’s economic prosperity. After Australia’s call for an independent investigation into the COVID-19 outbreak, China’s ambassador to Australia stated that the Chinese public was “frustrated, dismayed, and disappointed with what you [Australia] are doing” and insinuated that the Chinese populace would stop sending children to study in Australia and would begin limiting its consumption of Australian goods.<sup>357</sup> China has indeed responded with tariffs and warned its citizens of travel to Australia, leading Prime Minister Morrison to appeal to the World Trade Organization (WTO). During the lead-up to the 2021 G7 Summit, Morrison called on the G7 member states to endorse Australia’s desire to have a binding dispute settlement within the WTO to address the growing use of “economic coercion.”<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Dobell, “Coronavirus, China and the U.S. New Normal,” September 15, 2020.

<sup>358</sup> Colin Packham, “Australian PM Calls for WTO Reform as Tensions with China Mount,” Reuters, June 8, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/australian-pm-call-wto-reform-tensions-with-china-mount-2021-06-08/>.

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## V. CONCLUSION

This thesis has identified that there are positive trends in regional defense cooperation amongst the United States and its allies. Increased defense agreements between members of the Quad, participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises, and increased defense spending by many of the examined states show that their calls for improved relations, multilateral efforts, and a free and open Indo-Pacific are not just rhetoric. States are backing up their stated goals with concrete actions. Exercises such as the 2020 Malabar event, which observed “high-end tactical training, including specific interactions that are designed to enhance interoperability between the Royal Australian Navy, Indian Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defense Force and U.S. maritime forces,” demonstrate an effort by these military services to improve their coordination within more dynamic environments.<sup>359</sup> Furthermore, participation in multilateral exercises such as Sea Dragon, which are solely focused on Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), further demonstrate these states’ increased cooperation due to Chinese provocations.<sup>360</sup> ASW is a mission set that is mostly conducted during large-scale state-to-state conflicts. Coordination with partners on such high-level tactical training and mission sets like ASW vice piracy, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance is significant and reflective of alliance building. However, the factors identified in Chapter IV remain real obstacles to formalized alliances and the feasibility of a multilateral collective defense institution in the Indo-Pacific. This chapter assesses the validity of the thesis hypotheses, provides implications and predictions relative to each state based on the thesis’s findings, highlights areas where further research is required, and concludes by offering policy recommendations.

### A. VALIDITY OF HYPOTHESES

This thesis finds that all three hypotheses outlined in Chapter I help in explaining why, despite a rapidly militarizing China, there are no multilateral collective defense

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<sup>359</sup> Task Force 70 Public Affairs, “India Hosts Japan, Australia, U.S. in Naval Exercise MALABAR 2020.”

<sup>360</sup> Glenn Slaughter, “CTF-72 Concludes Sea Dragon 2021,” Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, January 28, 2021, <http://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/2485127/ctf-72-concludes-sea-dragon-2021>.

institutions in Asia. However, the Indo-Pacific security environment is extremely complex. Parsimonious structural theories therefore do not adequately answer this thesis's question. In addition to the three hypotheses, and based on the analysis provided in Chapter IV, matters such as domestic politics, norms, identity, and legal constructs also influence states' desires and/or ability to participate in a multilateral collective defense institution. To begin to grasp the issues impeding collective defense in Asia, one must have a thorough understanding of the region's states, their people, their history, and their relationships and history with one another, as well as the threat environment and balance of power. It is a complex security environment that requires extensive research and analysis to fully understand. Nevertheless, the below analysis reveals that two of the three hypotheses offer expansive understanding of regional impediments, as they influence most states studied in this thesis. And though the third hypothesis—sovereignty concerns—is not applicable for the majority of states examined, it remains the primary obstacle for India.

### **1. China Considerations**

Though China's provocations have begun to paint a clear picture for what its rise means for the region, it does not pose an existential threat to the states examined in this thesis, and thus does not incentivize a drastic change to the current hub-and-spokes system. Furthermore, China's role in regional security and economic growth continues to make states wary of openly balancing against it in the form of a multilateral collective defense institution. Considerations regarding China thus hold significant weight in explaining why Asia and the Indo-Pacific lack a NATO-like institution.

Regional states like Japan, Australia, India, and South Korea may not like China's rise and its potential to become both a regional and global leader, as it will surely flex its muscles to influence outcomes it desires; however, China does not pose an existential threat to their way of life like the Soviet Union did for democratic and free-market societies during the Cold War. As pointed out in Chapter II, the Soviet Union aimed to spread communism at the expense of democracy. The vulnerability of Europe and parts of Asia ravaged by WWII coupled with the incompatibility of socialism and capitalism led to real fears that all was at risk. Conversely, China's rise does not elicit the same level of concern.

Though China is an authoritarian state that involves itself in the market economy more than others would like, it does not attempt to make other states conform to its model. As Chapter II points out, Beijing champions sovereignty of the state and currently does not display a desire to promote authoritarianism abroad. Compared to the United States, which frequently calls on states to adopt its values and has a history of involving itself in the affairs of other states, to include regime change, China is a non-interventionist power. For all not named Taiwan, China's rise merely represents an erosion of the "American led" rules-based order, not an erosion of the rules-based order per se or a complete upheaval of their way of life. Though for some this will be a tough pill to swallow, especially those closest to the United States, it is not an existential threat. At worst, it may result in a loss of minor, and often uninhabited, territory on a state's periphery. A more likely scenario is a China wielding its economic influence much like the United States does when it freezes banking accounts or applies unilateral sanctions against states and entities that challenge the rules-based order it established. Contrary to the Cold War, this is a reality that some states may not like but can live with. Thus, the incentive to balance against China as if it were the Soviet Union is absent.

Furthermore, aggravating China by joining a defense pact aimed at countering its rise could have economic and security repercussions not yet tolerable for the countries examined. The United States, India, Japan, South Korea, and Australia all have substantial economic ties with China. Though the United States and to a lesser extent Japan and Australia criticize China's transgressions, they continue to trade extensively with it, signaling that their economic interests still outweigh their security concerns. As Chapter II and IV point out, Australia and South Korea are especially dependent on the Chinese market and have curtailed their messaging and actions against China. South Korea is further disincentivized from aggravating China due to its role in peninsular relations. Similarly, India must tread carefully with a state that it shares 2,000 miles of border with. Due to the size of China and its population, the country has immense influence within the region. Could one imagine Mexico or Canada having openly hostile relations with the United States? It would be extremely detrimental to their growth and stability in the western hemisphere. The situation is the same for Japan, South Korea, and India regarding

China. Again, the threat China poses at this time is not threatening enough to elicit a strong balancing and the economic benefits China offers these states further disincentivizes such actions. Finally, the potential repercussions that a cornered China is capable of inflicting on the region makes the decision to openly balance against China less appetizing.

To summarize, China is not the Soviet Union. Despite U.S. attempts to paint competition with China as ideological, it is not. Whereas the Soviet Union was perceived as an existential threat in an unstable bipolar world, China's rise has yet to elicit such fears. If China were to surpass the United States as the global superpower, it would not mean that capitalism and democracies around the world are doomed. For some, the changing balance of power may very well go unnoticed. In addition, the geopolitical environment of today is stable, and states have unprecedented quality-of-life standards, largely because of interdependencies with one another, especially those that are tied to China. In contrast to the dynamics of the early Cold War period, today's geopolitical environment and China are much less likely to provide an impetus for structural changes to preexisting alliance frameworks. The benefits of keeping relatively good relations with China far outweigh the benefits of openly balancing against it at this time. Thus, China considerations significantly influence Indo-Pacific states' reluctance to join a multilateral collective defense institution meant to counter China's rise.

## **2. Path Dependency**

Differing forms of path dependency have influenced states' abilities and willingness to join a collective defense institution. In Korea, the U.S.-ROK alliance receives preferential attention compared to multilateral efforts. Australia and Japan continue to increase their participation in multilateralism but still aim to improve their respective alliances with the United States. Furthermore, decisions made by Japan and India in the postwar period have not led to a strong preference regarding alliance type; however, these decisions have led to norms and identities that will need to be overcome by each state for them to join a NATO-like institution. Path dependency therefore acts as an impediment to Indo-Pacific states' joining a collective defense institution.

The U.S.-ROK alliance, developed and improved upon throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War period to counter the North Korean threat, remains an institution difficult to change while that threat remains. The U.S.-ROK alliance is more integrated than any other defense relationship examined in this thesis. There is a combined command structure that enables the U.S. commander to direct ROK forces during wartime.<sup>361</sup> This dynamic is a result of South Korea's overreliance on the United States for its security during the early Cold War period, when South Korea was still a developing state and paled in comparison to North Korea both economically and militarily. Today, the alliance still relies on combined warfighting capability. Combined military exercises, emphasizing contingencies on the peninsula, are conducted to test and improve upon the combined structure as well as the joint operation plans.<sup>362</sup> As long as North Korea remains the primary threat to South Korea, the ROK will prioritize the U.S.-ROK alliance over multilateralism.

Though Japan and Australia continue to further involve themselves in multilateralism, each retains a strong adherence to its alliance with the United States. This adherence may indicate a hesitation to fully commit to a multilateral-based system. However, given their enthusiasm for participation in the Quad, whereby member states are being invited to participate in exercises that were previously bilateral only, the hesitation seems to be a hedge rather than any kind of indication that bilateralism is preferred by Japan and Australia. Thus, the hedge is more of a pragmatic approach improving security, as the likelihood of a multilateral institution in the near future remains low.

Finally, both India's and Japan's historical experiences and postwar decisions have led to paths that make joining a collective defense institution aimed at countering China less plausible. As Chapter III and IV reveal, India's experiences with British colonization influenced its decision to implement a non-alignment policy during the Cold War. Through the years, non-alignment has transformed into a cultural identity whereby India is very reluctant to join an alliance of any type, as such an action would erode its strategic

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<sup>361</sup> Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, "2018 Defense White Paper," 183.

<sup>362</sup> Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, "2018 Defense White Paper," 185.



autonomy. In Japan, the anti-militarist movement, which manifested as a result of the horrors the Japanese populace endured during WWII, has obstructed attempts by Japanese leadership to expand the Japanese defense force's role and commitments. Though the path dependency hypothesis outlined in Chapter I focused on a state's preference for alliances and agreements made previously, the addition of norms and identities that are rooted in the early Cold War period are equally important factors to consider. Just as successful enduring alliances are difficult to give up in favor of an untested multilateral alliance, feelings and beliefs that manifested long ago and that have become entrenched in society are equally difficult to overcome.

Overall, South Korea's preference to bilateralism is best explained by the path dependency hypothesis; however, Japan and India share some applicability as well. Additionally, the furthering of ties with the United States by Australia and Japan indicates a hedge rather than a preference towards bilateralism, as each state has vocalized and demonstrated a willingness to expand beyond bilateralism.

### **3. Sovereignty Concerns**

With the exception of India, sensitivities surrounding a loss of complete sovereignty by joining a multilateral collective defense institution do not seem to be a prominent obstacle to the establishment of such an institution. Though previously colonized, South Korea has ceded operational control of its forces to a foreign nation. And though the ROK is working to transition to an ROK-led command structure, South Korea and Japan still allow their territory to house American military personnel. While not previously colonized, Japan and Australia both seem to be unconcerned about deferring to the United States. Historically, Japan has leaned heavily on the United States' security umbrella in lieu of building up its own capacity. It and Australia continue to embrace the asymmetrical defense relationships they share with the United States. Furthermore, Japan, Australia, and South Korea have contributed forces to American-led coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan. There does not seem to be information or actions indicating sovereignty concerns in regard to multilateralism for these states.

Conversely, for India, maintaining complete sovereignty and strategic autonomy remains a potent impediment to its ability to establish a formal alliance, let alone its ability to participate in a collective defense institution. As highlighted in the previous section, India's insecurities regarding its colonization led it to embrace and champion non-alignment, which has since transformed into a no-alliance policy. For India, maintaining complete sovereignty outweighs the benefits of alliances given that it views the latter as an erosion of its autonomy when allied with a superpower.

However, as Chapter II highlights, this fear of an erosion of autonomy and sovereignty is misplaced. In NATO, member states' national authorities hold supremacy over the NATO chain of command. Furthermore, states are only obligated to support operations in a manner they see fit. Finally, NATO operates via consensus, meaning any individual state can put a stop to any initiative. Though some states have decided to shape their defense purchases around the will of the collective and allow foreign militaries to operate out of their territories, it is done as a choice, not through force or a loss of autonomy to the collective. Indeed, these types of measures are necessary to incentivize participation in multilateral collective defense institutions.

Therefore, the sovereignty concerns hypothesis is lacking in explanatory power. Though the hypothesis is applicable to India, an Indo-Pacific collective defense institution is not being held up due to a lack of Indian interest. The other states examined in this thesis could very well form an institution without India. Thus, understanding sovereignty concerns contributes to the explanation of why the region lacks a NATO-like institution; however, it is a smaller factor compared to others. Finally, though the United States does not have sovereignty insecurities, it may prefer the leverage it holds in its current bilateral alliances and may not want to cede the influence that comes with it. This hypothesis will be further developed in the Future Research section.

## **B. IMPLICATIONS FOR ALLIANCE BUILDING AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSE**

Based on the analysis above and in Chapter IV, this section provides predictions on alliance building and collective defense for each of the examined states.

## **1. United States**

The question of whether the United States wants a NATO-like institution in lieu of the current hub-and-spokes model, in which the spokes are becoming increasingly integrated, is essential in determining the feasibility of a collective defense institution within the Indo-Pacific. Without U.S. encouragement and backing or an extremely provocative action by China, there is no force mechanism to change the current regional dynamics. In fact, the reaffirmed U.S. commitment to Asia, begun under the Obama administration and continued through the Trump and Biden administrations, indirectly enables the status quo to continue. As states in the Indo-Pacific are reassured of American commitment to the region, they are encouraged to improve relations with U.S. forces and disincentivized to change the status quo. Much like NATO in the early Cold War period, an institution aimed at countering China in the Indo-Pacific today requires American buy-in. Based on the lack of official statements by the United States calling for a NATO-like institution in the Indo-Pacific, one assumes it is not yet a priority for American decision makers.

However, a return to great power and strategic competition may provide the climate necessary to incentivize a change in this priority. Chapter III of this thesis highlights the influence that WWII and the Cold War had on U.S. alliance development that largely remains in place today. The Cold War especially shaped defense relations: the Korean War led to NATO's transformation from a political institution to a political-military alliance, as well as to the U.S.-ROK alliance and a more equal U.S.-Japan alliance, as Japan was encouraged by Americans to rearm itself to help in the fight against communism. Similarly, the U.S.-Taiwan relationship was largely reflective of Cold War dynamics given that the PRC was ruled by a communist party. The return to a climate of competition in today's world may not provide as much of a shock to the global system as the Cold War, as the stakes involved in the ideological differences are not as high, but it may very well generate enough change to manifest a collective defense institution.

The emerging competition with China will undoubtedly elicit a change in U.S. foreign policy initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region, and a reassessment of its alliances may not be a bridge too far anymore, especially if the United States feels it is losing influence

and standing in the region. Competing against a power such as China in its backyard will take substantial resources and efforts. Competition can harden stances and shorten patience. As a result, some of the diplomatic pleasantries that the United States allows its allies in the current environment may erode. In an era of great power competition, the United States may be more willing to use its leverage to force allies such as Japan and Korea to work together. In addition, the United States is more likely to increase the strings attached to its security umbrella, arms deals, or market access when competing for influence against a near-peer adversary. This type of hardened diplomacy could very well result in the establishment of a NATO-like institution if the United States tied its security umbrella to participation in a multilateral collective defense institution. Furthermore, it remains to be seen how a rising China will respond to a U.S. policy that aims to openly compete against it. If the trade war during the Trump presidency is any indication, China will not hesitate to respond in kind to any perceived actions against it. A tit-for-tat environment where China becomes emboldened to act aggressively is not unforeseeable. A more provocative China induced by competition could also impact regional alliances, but rather than the United States pushing for change, regional states such as Japan and Australia could do so, as security threats would begin to take priority over economic interests.

It remains to be seen what a return to competition between superpowers looks like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; however, the impact that competition between the United States and Soviet Union had on defense relations was profound. Though these predictions are speculative, the fact remains that a change in the geopolitical environment such as a pivot from engagement and cooperation between the United States and China to competition may very well result in hardened camps identified by multilateral alliances. The United States and its allies already represent a block of states defending Western democratic values and a free and open Indo-Pacific. The emergence of a formalized institution like NATO as the region becomes more competitive is not a leap. Finally, the United States, more than any other nation, can effect change and influence other states' actions. Once it determines that a multilateral collective defense institution is preferable to its current alliance structure, the factors limiting other states might find a way of resolving themselves as well.

## 2. India

The developments of the past decade demonstrate a positive trend in India's defense cooperation with the United States, Australia, and Japan. However, the factors discussed in the Chapter IV remain real obstacles to formal alliances. For this reason, this thesis finds that India's participation in both a bilateral and multilateral alliance is unlikely. Though research for this thesis has shown that a formal alliance with India is unlikely in the foreseeable future, one must question what conditions would be necessary to overcome India's reluctance. The thesis concludes its India analysis by offering the following possibilities: Indian strategic thinking has an epiphany on the value of alliances; India achieves status comparable to that of the United States and China; or finally, China becomes so provocative that it elicits strong balancing in the form of an alliance.

Changes in the way Indians perceive alliances and their value could generate a movement towards alliance rather than against it. In 1962, Nehru felt abandoned by both the UN and the Soviet Union when both failed to aid India in its fight against China. The League of Nations and UN's failures to prevent conflict prior to the 1962 war lend credence to criticism of Nehru. It was a mistake to think that collective security would prevent war. It was also a mistake to think that a "friend" would go to war on India's behalf, especially against a communist brother. India's lesson from this experience and 1971 was to reject alliances because of dependency fears. However, one could also come to the conclusion that India was abandoned because it didn't have a binding formal alliance. A formal alliance offers more assurances than "having a friend." If India's ally were to renege on its treaty obligation, India would then only be in the same situation it would have been in without an alliance, so why not? Furthermore, Indians have concerns over becoming entrapped by alliances, but having allies can also constrain conflicts. For example, if China was mobilizing forces to support Pakistan against India in a conflict over Kashmir, the United States and Australia could caution China by threatening to intervene if China did so. Nothing would prevent the United States and Australia from doing so without a formal alliance, but with one, the threat becomes more credible. This would apply more pressure on China and potentially constrain the conflict to only Pakistan and India, which is favorable for India.

Furthermore, one of India's biggest concerns over alliances is the erosion of its autonomy due to the influence and weight that major powers wield. However, if India were to become a superpower itself—comparable military, economic, and influential might—then these insecurities may no longer be an obstacle. In fact, being a founding member and leader of a NATO-like institution could be enticing for a new power looking to announce itself to the world. It would be similar to China's Olympics moment.

Finally, current Chinese actions are concerning for India, but not so much that its unwilling to engage with China or hedge. However, if Chinese actions became too provocative, they could act as an exogenous shock to India's strategic thinking and result in a movement towards alliance. It is hard to picture where this line would be for India. India went to war against China and lost badly, yet still did not agree to an alliance with the United States in the immediate aftermath. So, in order for this metric to be met, one would think that Chinese actions would need to be quite alarming and indicate an existential threat to India's way of life.

### **3. Japan**

Though Japan has some domestic factors that currently impede it from signing security treaties with like-minded states or enabling the JSDF to conduct true collective defense, historical precedence may indicate a possibility for Japan to do so in the future. In the initial Cold War period, Japan utilized Article 9 as a shield against U.S. pressures to militarize. It instead focused on economic development. However, as its economy blossomed and the geopolitical security environment became less uncertain, Japan went from having no military at all to having a capable defense force. As the Cold War progressed, Japan modestly increased its defense duties but primarily focused on homeland defense. Once the Soviets acted more aggressively, Japan invested more in security, expanded its capabilities, and promised to patrol waters 1,000 miles from Yokosuka. Furthermore, in the post-Cold War period, Japan slowly expanded its role in both regional and global security initiatives. Again, a country with a constitution that initially prohibited any sort of defense capability now has a sizable and advanced defense force engaged in regional security affairs—surprisingly, without any change to the original text of the

constitution. Tokyo has reinterpreted Article 9 various times to meet the ever-changing geopolitical environment. It has accomplished these changes despite public and political challenges against them, demonstrating that Tokyo is able to enact significant policy change when it determines it is necessary to do so. As a result, one can expect the political savviness of Japanese leadership to enable the JSDF to conduct true collective defense with multiple allies when the geopolitical environment necessitates it. In short, though Japan has factors that impede the security preferences of some of its leadership, they do not necessarily prohibit desired developments; instead, they ensure that Japan's security policies progress at a rate that reflects the changes in the geopolitical climate rather than the desires of revisionist politicians.

Now, the tides seem to be changing towards an environment where Japan will either amend its constitution or further reinterpret Article 9 to allow for true collective defense. As China, and Japan's tensions with it, continue to rise, Japan has begun to pivot away from cooperation and engagement with China. It now attempts to divest itself from China to decrease dependency and with it, China's economic coercion. Japan has also started to further increase its internal defense capabilities and has even indicated an end to its "self-imposed 1% GDP cap for annual defense spending."<sup>363</sup> In addition, Tokyo has embraced multilateralism between like-minded states and has encouraged these same states to help it reinforce FOIP. Furthermore, Japan's bureaucracy plays less of a role in security policy making than it did in the past, lessening the barriers to change and enabling Japan's elected officials more authority in decision making.<sup>364</sup> All of these developments seem to be trending towards an environment whereby Japan is incentivized to drastically change its security policy and embrace a multilateral coalition aimed at containing China. Additionally, Japan is further incentivized to join a collective defense institution because it would quell concerns of its populace and wider Asia over its remilitarization, as the JSDF's actions would be legitimized through the will of the collective, much like the relationship between West Germany's forces and NATO in the early Cold War period.

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<sup>363</sup> Teufel Dreyer, "A Chilly Summer."

<sup>364</sup> Anindya, "The Evolving Security Policy of Japan and the Adherence to Antimilitarism Culture," 159–60.

One ponders what will be the final straw to overcome Japan's reluctance to join a collective defense institution, as the above developments are notable but have yet to do so. This thesis concludes that the actions of the two dominant powers will dictate Japan's future security decisions. If the United States continues to prioritize the Indo-Pacific and embrace the U.S.-Japan alliance without any requirement for collective defense participation, Japan will be secure with the status quo. However, if there is a U.S. retrenchment from the region, Japan will most likely look to develop security treaties with states like Australia, which would also be looking to fill the void left by the United States. Even though Japan has experienced fears of retrenchment in the past, it did not share defense ties and interests with other states to the extent it does now, as it was overly reliant on the United States. However, given the developments of the past decade, Japan now has close relationships with other middle powers that could easily become mutual defense allies given a U.S. retrenchment. As for China, if it surpasses the United States in economic and military might, one expects Japan, the United States, and other regional states, to externally balance against China by signing additional mutual defense treaties or forming a collective defense institution. However, if China remains a near-peer adversary to the United States but begins to act increasingly aggressive, a balancing against it could develop as well. This raises the question, what level of aggression would elicit such a response? It is likely that when China begins to settle territorial disputes or Taiwan unification by force, states in the region, including Japan, will react strongly and likely form a coalition aimed at preventing similar Chinese aggressions against themselves. Thus, Japan's future security developments are hindered by domestic variables but ultimately dependent on the actions of China and the United States.

#### **4. Republic of Korea**

South Korea and the other states examined in this thesis do not align regarding China's rise. As a result, South Korea's multilateral engagement in areas not related to inclusive regional security concerns will continue to be limited by U.S. commitment to the bilateral alliance and a South Korean hesitancy to anger China. South Korea will continue to engage in regional multilateral forums, as they act as a venue to increase its standing as a regional and global stakeholder, but also because the forums have led to increased



diplomatic and political support for Korea's security initiatives for the peninsula. However, bilateral relations with Japan will be limited as long as South Korea feels that the United States is committed to the U.S.-ROK relationship. Likewise, participation in more exclusive multilateral groupings, viewed by South Korea or China as containment of China, will be minimal, as China is too important to South Korea's economic growth and primary security concern, North Korea. Contrary to the Quad members, for South Korea, not only is China not the problem, but it is part of the solution.

American strategy in the Indo-Pacific may result in a more isolated South Korea. The pivot, cementing U.S. commitment to the region, will provide South Korea assurances on the alliance. These assurances will enable South Korea to forgo increasing relations with states like Japan. Thus, U.S. commitment to the region will have an impact inverse to U.S. interests in getting its allies—in this case, Japan and South Korea—to increase defense relations and interoperability. In addition, if American-led regional security cooperation continues to be multilateral and focused on countering a rising China, South Korea may very well choose to abstain from such endeavors. It will need to prioritize threat and assess whether or not coordination with or against China is in its best interest.

The United States may be tempted to pressure South Korea towards multilateralism by making its security guarantee contingent on participation; however, such a move is risky and could push South Korea further into China's camp. Historically speaking, the adversarial relationship between China and South Korea during the Cold War, driven by ideological differences, is an exception, not the rule. The Chinese and Korean peoples have a long history of friendship, support, and shared values. With China now being an economic benefit to South Korea and an essential part of stability on the peninsula, it is not hard to see further rapprochement between the two.

This possibility raises essential questions about the future of South Korea's alliances. What would South Korea's alliances look like after unification of the peninsula? Would ridding itself of the North Korea threat allow South Korea to join counter-China initiatives, as it would no longer need China's support on peninsula issues? Or would the lack of a North Korean threat disincentivize South Korea's relationship with the United States? A future where a newly unified Korea looks to improve relations with China, its

neighbor and historical partner, and turn its security focus towards Japan, a historical adversary with which it has territorial disputes, is not unforeseeable. This requires further analysis, as it is a future that has immense consequences for American interests and strategy in the Indo-Pacific.

## **5. Australia**

Though Australia has become more willing to offend China and incur some pain, the reality of its economic dependence makes Australia very vulnerable to China; thus, a regional formalized treaty perceived by China to be a means to contain it may be a bridge too far for Canberra. Until a decoupling or divestment from China occurs or Australia's geopolitical concerns outweigh its economic gains, Australia will most likely refrain from participating in a formal multilateral defense treaty. Australia's lack of historical and territorial disputes with China makes its threshold for security concerns higher than that of other regional states. Thus, geopolitical concerns outweighing economic gains are unlikely at this time. Similarly, complete economic decoupling between the two states would be a lengthy process. Therefore, Australia will most likely continue to tread carefully around formalized defense pacts that China would undoubtedly take issue with.

Furthermore, even if Canberra were no longer concerned about its relationship with Beijing and wanted to join a multilateral collective defense institution, it would need willing partners to do so. Besides the United States, the countries most aligned with Australia that could be potential treaty partners are Japan and India. As highlighted in Chapter IV, Japan and India have reasons other than China that prevent them from establishing formal defense treaties. Until Japan and India overcome their barriers, Australia is limited in potential treaty partners that would significantly balance against China. This reality may be the reason why Australia has instead opted to strengthen its alliance with the United States and increase relations with powerful states outside of the region, such as the United Kingdom.

It remains to be seen what the recently signed Australia-U.K.-U.S. security agreement will become, but the language used when it was announced focused on equipment and sensitive technology transfers, not trilateral collective defense.

Furthermore, Australia signing an agreement with a European state with which it already has substantial defense ties and the United States, with which it already shares a mutual defense agreement, is significantly less provocative than a multilateral agreement with states like Japan and India, as they are regional powers that share historical animosities and territorial disputes with China. For Australia, maneuvering in response to a rising China is a delicate game that will undoubtedly influence its ability to join an Indo-Pacific alliance for the foreseeable future. For the time being, like Japan, Australia seems to be balancing against China by increasing its own capabilities, strengthening its alliance with the United States, and engaging with like-minded states at levels below formalized defense treaties.

### **C. FUTURE RESEARCH**

Prior to researching, the author assumed that the United States was a proponent of multilateral collective defense institutions and would thus prefer a NATO-like institution in the Indo-Pacific over the current hub-and-spokes system. With the exception of taking on a formal commitment to India's defense, an unlikelihood given India's reluctance to participate in mutual defense treaties, an Indo-Pacific multilateral institution would not require the United States to increase its defense obligations; in fact, it would offer the option to decrease them. The United States already maintains unilateral commitments to the defense of multiple states in the region. A multilateral collective defense institution would lessen this security burden by sharing defense commitments across the institution's member states. Though one can assume—as in NATO—the United States would still provide the lion's share of forces, the institution would act as a force multiplier towards U.S. security initiatives as well. Furthermore, messaging from U.S. leadership consistently praises NATO. As discussed in Chapter IV, President Biden has called on the institution to compete against China. All surface-level signaling indicates that the United States is likely to pursue a multilateral collective defense institution in the region.

However, research conducted for this thesis unveiled that the United States may be equally responsible for the lack of a collective defense institution. Chapter IV proposes that U.S. empathy for allies and/or complacency with the current hub-and-spokes system may be the reason why U.S. leadership is not actively calling for an Indo-Pacific NATO.

However, in light of Cha’s argument about why the United States preferred bilateral alliances in the early Cold War period, one wonders whether the United States still prefers the leverage that it has in its asymmetrical bilateral alliances.

As was pointed out in the “Literature Review” section, Cha argues that the United States’ preference for bilateralism in the early Cold War period was a powerplay by the United States to restrain partner nations from engaging in conflicts that would force U.S. military involvement. Oddly enough, it is now U.S. allies that most likely have entrapment concerns, not the United States. However, the powerplay dynamic may still be relevant. Unlike multilateral frameworks, the bilateral mutual defense treaties with the United States are asymmetrical. This dynamic creates a reliance on the United States that provides American leadership leverage, leverage that can be used to gain support in U.S. initiatives. As an example, whereas NATO members such as France and Germany often push back against American interests—the Iraq War and the Nord Stream 2 pipeline—Indo-Pacific allies seem to be less willing to go against American wishes. This phenomenon may disincentivize the United States from adopting a multilateral framework in the Indo-Pacific because the current hub-and-spokes system is not only sufficient but also provides the benefit of leverage that gives the United States more influence within each alliance. Thus, additional research into U.S. preferences in alliance frameworks is needed to have a complete understanding of why the Indo-Pacific region continues to lack a multilateral collective defense institution.

#### **D. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

If the United States does in fact prefer a multilateral collective defense institution, the following policy recommendations will help in achieving that objective. The recommendations will also highlight how the United States in a multilateral framework can better compete against China in the ensuing era of great power and strategic competition.

- Communicate a preference for a multilateral framework amongst allies.

The first step to enacting a change in the status quo is to communicate a desire to do so. American leadership should begin to verbalize to its allies and partners that a transformation of the current hub-and-spokes system is necessary to better compete against

China. This messaging should be made clear, but it should not be coercive. The United States may be tempted to use its leverage to strong-arm allies to participate in a collective defense institution; however, this tactic would be misplaced and could potentially push states like South Korea and India away. It would be more advisable for U.S. leadership to encourage multilateralism by highlighting the benefits in doing so, using NATO as an example. It should also provide incentives to do so by increasing information sharing and access to U.S. arms. Finally, the United States must make clear that a pivot to a multilateral framework is not a U.S. attempt to disengage from the region but that it is a necessary shift to better address the region's changing security environment.

- Formalize the Quad as a political institution and slowly integrate military involvement.

Next, the United States should aim to formalize the Quad as a political institution meant to increase conversation and cooperation between its member states. The grouping is already progressing to this point; however, a permanent cooperation cell with ambassadorial-level representation should be the stated goal, as it would then reflect NATO's NAC. Starting small and slowly integrating military affairs as the geopolitical climate calls for it would allow states to progress at a speed they are comfortable with. Emphasis on coordination over search-and-rescue and humanitarian efforts should be the initial priority before undertaking more sensitive security-related initiatives. That way, states can participate without fears of escalation in the region. However, when it is determined to be an appropriate time to do so, the militaries should focus on interoperability in warfare, as that is essential to effectively countering China and more reminiscent of NATO. A likely progression could include transforming Malabar into an annual Quad exercise that focuses on warfighting in various domains, standing up maritime coordination cells and information sharing centers, before finally conducting real-world operations together. Command for each member nation's forces could be maintained under national authorities until states are prepared to exercise a combined command structure. NATO was first a political institution without much of its military element until the Korean War forced states to reassess what was needed to counter the communist threat. By taking this approach, the Quad could take a similar path to becoming a collective defense

institution—the major difference being that the mutual defense treaty would come after or during an event that elicits the militarization of the organization.

- Conduct multilateral FOIP-related operations with members of the Quad and interested states. Voice a unified message that supports the current rules-based order at regional forums.

Building on the previous recommendation, an organization like the Quad needs to practice what it and its member states preach. Signaling a commitment to defend the values and beliefs shared by Quad member states and other democracies in the region is important to deter adversarial nations and gain domestic support. The Quad member states support the rules-based order and a FOIP, yet little is done to demonstrate this support in a multilateral framework. Thus, the United States should make every effort to make its freedom of navigation operations (FONOP) in the Indo-Pacific a multilateral venture. A FONOP conducted unilaterally by the United States may be perceived by China as a great power flexing its muscles against a rising state; however, a multilateral FONOP in which a U.S.-flagged ship is trailing an Indian vessel in a formation that includes ships from Japan, Australia, South Korea, and the Philippines sends a message that excessive maritime claims are regionally unpopular and not a product of a struggle between two major powers. It would also demonstrate the collective's willingness to uphold the current rules-based order, signaling that any attempts to alter or erode it will be regionally opposed.

This type of regional participation and a commitment to shared values would have the added benefit of raising domestic support for the operations themselves and the institutions related to them. For example, Japan suffers from an anti-militarist sentiment, but by having the JSDF participate in regionally supported operations that echo the values of the Japanese people, the populace may begin to perceive JSDF actions in a more positive light. Thus, there would not be as much domestic push-back against discussions to increase the role and funding of the JSDF. It is important to gain as much legitimacy as possible when attempting to orchestrate the establishment of a new defense pact and conducting multilateral operations that promote the current rules-based international order is a good way to do just that.

Furthermore, to ensure regional states are not suspicious of a multilateral alliance's motives, the United States and its allies should take every opportunity to voice support for the current rules-based order and make clear what they view as unacceptable behavior as a member of the global community. Prior to regional forums like ARF, the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, etc., the United States and its like-minded partners should meet and devise a unified message to communicate at these forums. Transparent and non-provocative practices, such as those found in the Code for Unplanned Encounters and the Incidents at Sea agreement, should be promoted and adhered to by all. This communication and dedication to non-provocative practices will enable groups like the Quad to be perceived as organizations that enforce and promote a rules-based order rather than a grouping meant to contain China, further increasing the group's legitimacy and attractiveness to non-member states.

- Utilize like-minded nations to create pathways that erode China's economic leverage in the region and maintain technological supremacy.

Expanding beyond defense pacts and their actions, the United States must better compete against China in the economic sector, as it would erode China's economic leverage, a significant barrier for the formation of a multilateral collective defense institution. As Chapter II points out, China's economic leverage greatly diminishes states' incentive to provoke it by joining a multilateral collective defense institution. Thus, the United States must offer regional countries vulnerable to China a better alternative. The United States and its partners should pool resources to achieve this goal and divest themselves from China in areas identified to be critical to national defense. With the economic interdependencies highlighted in Chapter II and IV, complete divestment would be crippling to everyone's economy and counterproductive; however, divestment in critical areas is essential for states' ability to weather Chinese coercive tactics. This process will need to be slow and methodical to prevent economic hardship and a significant rise in tensions. Furthermore, other wealthy like-minded states, such as those in NATO, may be needed to compete against China given its comparative advantages. For example, many states in both Europe and Asia are concerned over the BRI and the influence China gains in countries that partake in it. Therefore, the United States, Japan, and Australia should

engage European nations on their interests to join the Blue Dot Network (BDN).<sup>365</sup> By leveraging more states the BDN would be better situated to compete against China in both Europe and Asia. Partnering with states like India that offer cheaper labor, which could bring costs down to better compete with China, should also be considered as well. These actions will diminish vulnerabilities to China, and thus states' economic and political dependencies on it as well. Without these dependencies, states would be more free to take actions that would elicit a Chinese response, actions such as joining a multilateral collective defense institution.

Finally, it is critical that the United States maintain its advantage in sensitive technologies that have direct military application to ensure it and its allies maintain military supremacy. Breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, telecommunications, nanotechnology, robotics, or quantum computing, all of which China heavily invests in, could have drastic implications for the economic and military balance of power.<sup>366</sup> As above, the United States should aim to establish a consortium of like-minded advanced states to coordinate, cooperate, and share information on these types of technologies. To limit spillage and other unwanted tech transfer, the grouping could establish multilateral committees responsible for enacting and enforcing technology and information-sharing regulations. This level of collaboration would identify technological vulnerabilities and enable states to better protect themselves and compete against China. For example, the rollout of China's 5G technologies created rifts between the United States and some of its allies.<sup>367</sup> If instead the United States had been more proactive with its allies regarding sensitive technologies, it could have identified and communicated the threat of Chinese 5G earlier, and possibly even worked with its allies to create an alternative. This type of coordination is required to keep allies and partners aligned and thus the institutions they are a part of strong and

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<sup>365</sup> "Blue Dot Network," United States Department of State, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/blue-dot-network/>.

<sup>366</sup> James L. Schoff Ito Asei, "Competing With China on Technology and Innovation," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 10, 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/10/competing-with-china-on-technology-and-innovation-pub-80010>.

<sup>367</sup> Joshua McDonald, "Huawei 5G Debate Causes Rift Between Western Powers," February 19, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/huawei-5g-debate-causes-rift-between-western-powers/>.



appealing to outside parties. Given the integrated global economy and technological advancements, a return to great power competition in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires a heavy emphasis in competing in the economic sector. By doing so, the United States diminishes China's greatest leverage, enabling others to resist its lure, and maintains its technological advantage.

## **E. FINAL THOUGHTS**

As this thesis demonstrates, the formation of a NATO-like institution in Asia and the Indo-Pacific will be challenging. There are sizable structural and internal impediments to such action. However, as this thesis also highlights, there have been significant regional developments—most of which have occurred in recent years—that indicate a growing and shared concern about China and an increased appetite for multilateralism, particularly by the United States, Japan, India, and Australia. Though these developments have not yet resulted in a multilateral collective defense institution, they have nonetheless generated state-to-state and military-to-military interactions reminiscent of those found in NATO. Progress towards deepening cooperation, by adoption of the above recommendations, is very much achievable. And though progress may not result in a formal NATO-like institution in the Indo-Pacific, it will better prepare the United States and its allies and partners for the moment when such an institution is needed in the region.

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