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THESIS

**AN EXAMINATION OF INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY
COOPERATION ACTIVITIES TO ENABLE EABO AS A
DETERRENT**

by

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June 2022

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ACTIVITIES TO ENABLE EABO AS A DETERRENT**

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ABSTRACT

With its advanced missiles, sensor systems, and modernized navy, China's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy threatens U.S. conventional military platforms' survivability and freedom of maneuver, reducing U.S. credibility and power projection capabilities throughout the Indo-Pacific. Additionally, China's Belt and Road Initiative strengthens its diplomatic and economic relationships with regional countries, threatening the U.S.-established rules-based regional order. As a result, the United States Marine Corps introduced Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) as both a warfighting concept to combat China's A2/AD capabilities and as a form of deterrence. However, its success depends on U.S. access and freedom of maneuver to sovereign nations' territory. Consequently, the efficacy of EABO is inextricably linked to security cooperation, as it is the Department of Defense's primary means to gain access to foreign territory. This thesis begins by examining the threats to U.S. influence in the Indo-Pacific, EABO and its requirements, security cooperation, and how to best tailor it to support the execution of EABO. It then evaluates the varying degrees of security cooperation activities the U.S. engages in with Japan and Indonesia and the impact those activities may have on the feasibility of conducting EABO from their territory. The findings suggest that security cooperation activities have enhanced the feasibility of conducting EABO from Japan but not Indonesia.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A2/AD	anti-access/area denial
ASCM	anti-ship cruise missile
BMD	ballistic missile defense
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
DCS	Direct Commercial Sales
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
EABO	Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
GCC	Geographic Combatant Commander
GDP	gross domestic product
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
IADS	Integrated Air Defense Systems
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IRBM	intermediate-range ballistic missile
JSDF	Japanese Self-Defense Forces
LCS	Littoral Combat Ship
LCT	Littoral Combat Team
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MEF	Minimum Essential Force
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRBM	medium-range ballistic missile
PLA	People's Liberation Army
SAM	surface-to-air missile
SCS	South China Sea
SLOC	sea line of communication
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
SRBM	short-range ballistic missile

SSBN	nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine
SSK	diesel-powered attack submarine
SSN	nuclear-powered attack submarine
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia
TTPs	tactics, techniques, and procedures
U.S.	United States
USINDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command
USMC	United States Marine Corps
VFA	Visiting Forces Agreement
WEZ	weapons engagement zone

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I have learned an extraordinary amount while writing this thesis. I aim to take this knowledge with me, wherever I go, and apply it to the challenges that my organization and country face during this era of great power competition.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

China's rapid economic, political, and military ascent, combined with its willingness to demonstrate its growing strength in regional affairs, has challenged international norms and relationships, ushering in a new period of great power competition.¹ In the Indo-Pacific, China's military modernization, maritime gray zone tactics, and "active defense" strategy supported by a network of anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities have threatened United States (U.S.) deterrence credibility and freedom of maneuver.

To maintain its security influence and ability to project power, the U.S. has developed and implemented new whole-of-government strategies that emphasize the importance of increased engagement and enhanced relationships with its Indo-Pacific allies and partners. Militarily, the Department of Defense (DOD) has promoted a robust integrated deterrence strategy grounded in new state-of-the-art operating concepts dependent upon the latest technologies and interoperability with allies and partners.² The United States Marine Corps (USMC) introduced one such operating concept—Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO). Per the *Tentative Manual for EABO*, EABO "involves the employment of mobile, low-signature, persistent, and relatively easy to maintain and sustain naval expeditionary forces from a series of austere, temporary locations ashore or inshore within a contested or potentially contested maritime area."³ Moreover, the Commandant of the USMC envisions EABO as a means of "detering

¹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* (Washington, DC, 2021), <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2021-Unclassified-Report.pdf>.

² C. Todd Lopez, "Defense Secretary Says 'Integrated Deterrence' Is Cornerstone of U.S. Defense," *DOD News*, last modified 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2592149/defense-secretary-says-integrated-deterrence-is-cornerstone-of-us-defense/>.

³ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2021), 1–3, https://intelshare.intelink.gov/sites/mcwl/TMEABO/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/sites/mcwl/TMEABO/SiteAssets/TM%20EABO%20-%20First%20Edition%20Rev%2020210415.pdf&action=default.

malign behavior and, when necessary, fighting inside our adversary's weapons-engagement-zone to facilitate sea denial in support of fleet operation [s] and joint force horizontal escalation.”⁴

For EABO to be effective, the U.S. must have access to sovereign territory belonging to U.S. allies and partners, which only they can authorize. Therefore, security cooperation activities, which aid in providing U.S. forces with access to allies and partners' territory, are critical to the successful execution of EABO.

Given the above, this thesis will seek to address the major research question: How can security cooperation activities between the U.S. and its Indo-Pacific allies and partners enable the conduct of EABO as a deterrent to Chinese aggression? Specifically, this thesis will examine the varying degrees of security cooperation relationships between the U.S. and its Indo-Pacific allies and partners in the First Island Chain, namely Japan and Indonesia, to determine the feasibility of the U.S. conducting EABO from their territory.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In the coming decade, China and the U.S. will continue to compete for influence in the Indo-Pacific region, where all elements of national power—diplomacy, information, military, and economics—will be tested. The DOD envisions such competition as a continuum—a combination of “cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict.”⁵ Concerning cooperation, the objectives of many military activities will be to gain physical access and influence in countries that both great powers seek. Though the U.S. already maintains a high degree of access and influence in locations where it permanently bases forces, such as in Okinawa, Japan, and South Korea, those bases lie

⁴ David H. Berger, *Commandant's Planning Guidance: 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2019), 23, https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/%2038th%20Commandant%27s%20Planning%20Guidance_2019.pdf?ver=2019-07-16-200152-700.

⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Competition Continuum*, Joint Doctrine Note 1–19 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2019), v, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_19.pdf.

comfortably within the engagement zone of China's short and medium-range ballistic missiles.⁶

As a result of China's development of such missiles to target the U.S. and its allies and partner's military assets, those bases now amount to a self-optimized target set.⁷ Consequently, they do not meet the expeditionary nature of EABO, which is to change location rapidly to maintain a relative advantage.⁸ Therefore, other allies and partners in the First and Second Island Chains (e.g., the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Guam, Palau, etc.) offer potentially strategic, dispersed locations for EABO. However, guaranteed access to their territory, forces, and logistical capabilities across the competition continuum is a flawed assumption given today's global interdependence. For example, as depicted in Figure 1, China maintains economic influence over many U.S. allies and partners in the region, and Southeast Asian partners have recently prioritized economic development over security concerns.⁹ Still, many of the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific allies and partners view China as a significant military threat.

⁶ CSIS Missile Defense Project, *Missiles of China*, Missiles of the World (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2021), <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/china/>.

⁷ Arthur Corbett, *Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) Handbook* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, 2018), 15, <https://mca-marines.org/wp-content/uploads/Expeditionary-Advanced-Base-Operations-EABO-handbook-1.1.pdf>.

⁸ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*, 1–6.

⁹ Bonny Lin et al., *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific: Study Overview and Conclusions*, RR-4412-AF (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2020), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4412.html.

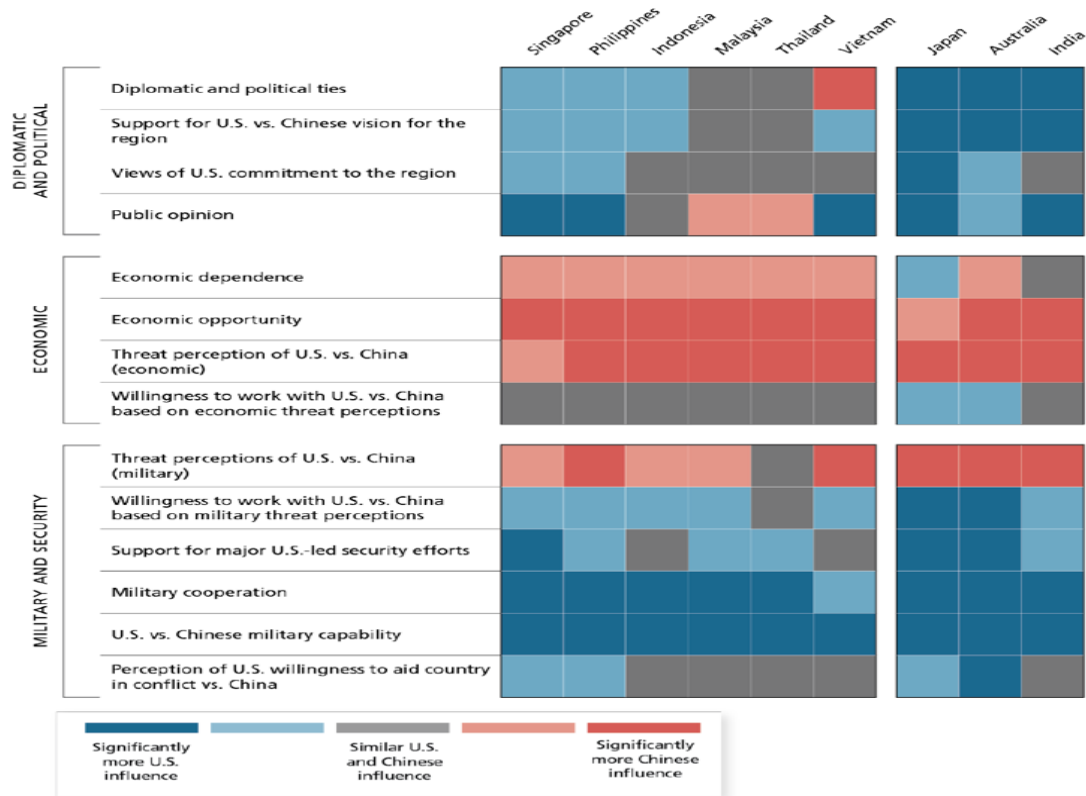


Figure 1. Regional Perspectives of Relative U.S. and Chinese Influence¹⁰

Examining the influence such elements of national power have on relationships in the Indo-Pacific will provide crucial situational awareness to determine the ability to conduct EABO in the future. For example, there is a risk of China economically punishing countries who partner with the U.S. and allow it to implement EABO on their territory. Conversely, supporting the U.S. and its DOD operating concepts could significantly deter Chinese expansion and aggression, especially in the South China Sea (SCS). Therefore, increased frequency and scope of security cooperation activities by the U.S. may reassure allies and partners' perception of U.S. willingness to assist in preventing Chinese expansion and aggression, increasing the potential for guaranteed access and ultimately the success of EABO. Therein lies the significance of this research.

¹⁰ Source: Lin et al., ix.

The overarching goal of this thesis is to examine the varying degrees of security cooperation between the U.S. and its Indo-Pacific allies and partners to better inform the DOD on how they should evaluate, prioritize, and invest in security cooperation activities to support EABO. According to Joint Publication 3-20, *Security Cooperation*, security cooperation is the DOD's primary means for "building security relationships, building partner capacity, and gaining/maintaining access."¹¹ These conditions are necessary for the USMC to conduct EABO effectively. Therefore, this research is significant because it will assess the current security cooperation activities between the U.S., Japan, and Indonesia to determine if they provide the necessary security relationship, partner capacity, and access to enable EABO or if they need to be improved. Thus, the findings of this thesis are relevant and vital to policymakers and professionals engaged in security cooperation activities. Furthermore, it will have broad applicability to military planners within the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility tasked with planning the execution of numerous DOD operating concepts, specifically those within the USMC tasked with planning EABO.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review synthesizes the broader literature on security cooperation activities and EABO. First, I will assess the ways and means in which DOD security cooperation activities materialize. Then, I will survey the EABO concept and one of its primary objectives—to serve as a deterrent. Finally, I conclude with a discussion on the current state of security cooperation activities in Japan and Indonesia.

1. Security Cooperation

In today's era of great power competition, improving upon the network of mutually beneficial relationships with allies and partners throughout the Indo-Pacific is critical to U.S. strategy. There is no shortage of literature, whether from national policy to the USMC's *Tentative Manual for EABO*, that references the strategic importance of increased interoperability and reliance on U.S. allies and partners to maintain the current international

¹¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Cooperation*, Joint Publication 3-20 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2017), II-2, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_20_20172305.pdf.

order and deter aggression. From an overarching strategic level, the *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* and *National Defense Strategy* provide broad direction for U.S. interaction with critical regions, highlighting the Indo-Pacific as one such region for deterring aggression, maintaining regional stability, and ensuring free and open access to common domains.¹² The DOD observes such guidance through its interactions with allies and partners in strategic regions, mainly through security cooperation. According to Joint Publication 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, security cooperation “involves all DOD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests...develop [s] allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide [s] U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to [a host nation].”¹³

From an operational level, the literature points out that the Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) is responsible for interacting with specific allies and partners to achieve strategic objectives. Moreover, aided by the *Guidance for Employment of the Force*, GCCs shape their security cooperation activities to build partner capacity and relationships and facilitate U.S. access.¹⁴ In the context of this research, the GCC at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) is responsible for using and integrating U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and USMC forces within the USINDOPACOM region to promote security cooperation.¹⁵ As highlighted in the DOD’s *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report*, such integration includes pre-staging logistics for contingency responses, planning joint exercises with allies and partners to strengthen interoperability, and agreeing to a more

¹² Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018), <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>; White House, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (Washington, DC: White House, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>.

¹³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Multinational Operations*, Joint Publication 3-16 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2019), I-6, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_16.pdf.

¹⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, I-5.

¹⁵ “USINDOPACOM Area of Responsibility,” U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, 2022, <https://www.pacom.mil/About-USINDOPACOM/USPACOM-Area-of-Responsibility/>.

persistently forward posture.¹⁶ This integration provides the USINDOPACOM GCC with sea denial capabilities to deter aggression and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. As such, the USINDOPACOM GCC sets conditions through designed security cooperation activities for potential EABO.¹⁷

U.S. allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific also are interested in engaging in security cooperation activities because it leverages assets and capabilities that they might lack, ultimately increasing their security posture and credibility. Joint Publication 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, describes this mutually beneficial relationship as one that promotes “mutual national interests, ensure [s] mutual security against real and perceived threats, conduct [s] foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA), conduct [s] peace operations, and promote [s] their ideals.”¹⁸

Though gaining and maintaining access is critical to successful EABO, building partner capacity and enabling allies and partners to project their power regionally is also essential to deterring Chinese aggression. U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel A. J. Werner points out that if “the United States cannot afford (or is unable) to project presence with traditional resources and force structures, partners should be able to represent U.S. national interests, and even act as America’s proxy if necessary.”¹⁹ Elements of U.S. Indo-Pacific allies and partners projecting power are already taking place. For example, a recent RAND report highlights the deepening defense ties, coordination, selling and transferring of defense equipment, defense industrial development, and bilateral training and exercises between Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea.²⁰ Furthermore, the USMC is

¹⁶ Patrick M. Shanahan, *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2019), <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF>.

¹⁷ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*.

¹⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-16*, ix.

¹⁹ A. J. Werner, *Selective Security Cooperation: A Proposed Index to Measure the Value of Partners and Focus International Engagement* (Montgomery, AL: Air War College, 2014), 5, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD1019207>.

²⁰ Scott W. Harold et al., *The Thickening Web of Asian Security Cooperation: Deepening Defense Ties Among U.S. Allies and Partners in the Indo-Pacific*, RR-3125-MCF (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2019), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3125.html.

already participating in EABO exercises with its Indo-Pacific allies and building the partner capacity to conduct such operations.²¹

The unique design of the USMC promotes its ability to facilitate security cooperation activities in the Indo-Pacific, especially when it comes to building partner capacity and maintaining and gaining access. The preponderance of historical literature on *Operational Plan 712: Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia*, the island-hopping campaign during World War II, to the permanent presence and rotational forces of USMC personnel in Japan, Okinawa, and now Darwin highlight the suitability of the USMC to conduct operating concepts such as EABO by building a force capable of conducting forward operations.²² Furthermore, the constant presence of USMC forces that deploy for training and exercises serves as a present-day form of deterrence capable of establishing ad hoc EABO or building allied and partner EABO capabilities.

2. EABO and Deterrence

EABO enables a persistent, mobile, low-signature, stand-in force to operate within the weapons engagement zone throughout the competition continuum.²³ The majority of literature on EABO has surveyed its application in the event of war with China. Most recognize its operational effectiveness in presenting a credible risk to China in case of conflict.²⁴ However, the literature is thinner and less developed regarding EABO as a

²¹ Nicholas Royer, "U.S. Marines, Joint Partners Test Networked Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations from Japan to Hawaii," USINDOPACOM News, 2021, <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2542319/us-marines-joint-partners-test-networked-expeditionary-advanced-base-operations/>; Mallory Shelbourne, "Marine Corps Ready to Conduct EABO Experiments with Allies in Indo-Pacific," USNI News, 2021, <https://news.usni.org/2021/04/20/marine-corps-ready-to-conduct-eabo-experiments-with-allies-in-indo-pacific>.

²² Ian Cameron, "Security Cooperation in the South Pacific," *Marine Corps Gazette*, 2018, <https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview/2131160927?pq-origsite=primo>; Headquarters Marine Corps, *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1992), <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/ref/AdvBaseOps/index.html>.

²³ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*.

²⁴ Shelbourne, "Marine Corps Ready to Conduct EABO"; Philip Athey, "Marines vs. China — the Corps Just Put These Tactics to the Test," *Marine Corps Times*, 2020, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2020/10/19/the-future-marine-fight-against-china-the-corps-just-put-these-tactics-to-the-test/>; Mark F. Cancian, *The Marine Corps' Radical Shift toward China* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2020), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/marine-corps-radical-shift-toward-china>.

deterrent, coupled with the international cooperation needed for it to be effective, raising such questions as “where” and “how” EABO will occur. According to researcher Ben Wan Beng Ho, allied and partner countries along the First Island Chain would be most relevant to operationalize EABO as a deterrent because of their vicinity to maritime chokepoints, provided they permit the deployment of U.S. forces on their territory.²⁵ See Figure 2.



Figure 2. First and Second Island Chains and Chokepoints²⁶

Yet, the literature rarely addresses how to obtain such access to the countries in the proximity of the First Island Chain to support EABO. USMC Colonel George J. David contends this is a major geostrategic flaw, rooted in a pre-World War II view that the Indo-

²⁵ Ben Wan Beng Ho, “Shortfalls in the Marine Corps’ EABO Concept,” *Proceedings*, 2020, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2020/july/shortfalls-marine-corps-eabo-concept>.

²⁶ Source: Zachery Tyson Brown, “Red Star Over the Pacific,” RealClear Defense, last modified 2019, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2019/05/08/red_star_over_the_pacific_114408-full.html.

Pacific is an open area, lacking governance and, therefore, accessible to U.S. forces.²⁷ In addressing this flaw surrounding access, most literature surveys the importance of the DOD's security cooperation activities to build security relationships, build partner capacity, and gain or maintain access. However, Colonel David highlights that the USMC has deemphasized security cooperation, recently divesting its Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group as part of Force Design 2030.²⁸

To enable EABO as a deterrent and solve the problem of access, Colonel David addresses the need to explain how diplomatic and military coordination will function “by, with, and through” an adequately resourced and conceptually oriented Department of State (DOS).²⁹ In his view, the DOS is most capable of identifying the characteristics of the most likely partners to support EABO.³⁰ Yet, there is competing literature on the effectiveness of DOS security cooperation. For example, Max Bergmann and Alexandra Schmitt propose shifting all security cooperation activities to the DOS because they believe disparities between the DOS and DOD have inhibited effective congressional oversight, damaged coordination between diplomacy and defense, and militarized U.S. foreign policy.³¹ On the other hand, Brent Sadler contests that the DOD and DOS need to coordinate more through the DOD to support its operational needs, forward military presence, wartime resiliency, and interoperability.³²

It is evident from the literature that for EABO to serve as a deterrent, the U.S. requires USINDOPACOM and U.S. diplomatic country teams to enhance close security

²⁷ George J. David, “Making It Work: Force Design 2030 and Access,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 2020, 46, <https://mca-marines.org/wp-content/uploads/Making-it-Work-1.pdf>.

²⁸ David, 48.

²⁹ David, 48.

³⁰ David, 48.

³¹ Max Bergmann and Alexandra Schmitt, *A Plan To Reform U.S. Security Assistance* (Washington, DC: The Center for American Progress, 2021), <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2021/03/09/496788/plan-reform-u-s-security-assistance/>.

³² Brent Sadler, “Don’t Shift Security Cooperation to State Department,” The Heritage Foundation, last modified 2021, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/dont-shift-security-cooperation-state-department>.

relationships with America's allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific.³³ However, suppose the U.S. does not establish mechanisms such as basing and staging rights, Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs), Visiting Forces Agreements, and other diplomatic means of cooperation. In that case, the degree of access will be insufficient for EABO to be effective. Therefore, the success of EABO as a deterrent largely depends on security cooperation activities between the U.S. and its Indo-Pacific allies and partners—the more sovereign territory the U.S. can establish access to, the more effective EABO can be.

3. Security Cooperation Activities and Access in Japan and Indonesia

The current literature on security cooperation activities between the U.S. and Japan suggests that the U.S. can conduct EABO from the northern region of the First Island Chain. The two countries have been building a security relationship for over 60 years, and Japan acquires over 90 percent of its defense imports from the U.S.³⁴ Regarding partner capacity, the U.S. currently has over \$20 billion in government-to-government sales with Japan through Foreign Military Sales (FMS), and Japan has requested over \$23 billion in defense articles from the U.S.³⁵ U.S. access is already maintained, as evidenced by the approximately 50,000 U.S. military personnel and state-of-the-art military assets (i.e., the USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group, F-35s at Iwakuni and Kadena, and F-22s with the U.S. Air Force at Kadena) stationed in Japan and the prefecture of Okinawa under a SOFA.³⁶ Furthermore, since 1997, the U.S. and Japan have performed annual exercises designed to increase combat readiness and interoperability and enhance mutual understanding of each country's tactics, techniques, and procedures.³⁷

The literature on how security cooperation activities between the U.S. and Indonesia can enable the conduct of EABO as a deterrent is less developed, as access to

³³ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*.

³⁴ "U.S. Security Cooperation With Japan," Department of State, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-japan/>.

³⁵ Department of State.

³⁶ Department of State.

³⁷ Department of State.

Indonesia has been more restricted than that of Japan. However, the security cooperation activities between the two countries have increased in recent decades, specifically in border security, counterterrorism, and maritime security.³⁸ Regarding partner capacity, the U.S. has almost \$2 billion in active FMS and has authorized more than \$546 million in Direct Commercial Sales. Furthermore, Indonesia has received \$14 million in Foreign Military Financing and more than \$2 million in International Military Education and Training funds.³⁹ Still, Indonesia's prerogative to remain neutral in the competition between the U.S. and China has historically resulted in the rejection of U.S. rotations and deployments.⁴⁰

4. Conclusion

The reviewed literature highlights the importance of security cooperation activities in building security relationships, building partner capacity, and gaining access, all of which are crucial requirements to enabling the conduct of EABO as a deterrent. Security cooperation specifically bridges the diplomatic and military elements of national power; however, it does not guarantee that Indo-Pacific allies and partners will shift their policies and strategies or acquiesce to U.S. needs. Therefore, the issue of access for the expeditionary positioning of U.S. forces to conduct EABO to counteract malign behavior and deter Chinese aggression requires sustained effort, patience, and whole-of-government coordination.

D. POTENTIAL COURSES OF ACTION

The DOD's method for developing a strategy to organize and employ its forces properly is by "integrating ends, ways, and means."⁴¹ Applying this method to this thesis'

³⁸ "U.S. Security Cooperation With Indonesia," Department of State, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-indonesia/>.

³⁹ Department of State.

⁴⁰ Shafiah F. Muhibat, "Indonesia-U.S. Security Collaboration: Still Under the Radar?," *Asian Politics and Policy* 8, no. 1 (2016): 137–54, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12235>.

⁴¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Strategy*, Joint Doctrine Note 2–19 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2019), vii, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn2_19.pdf?ver=2019-12-20-093655-890.

research question would translate to the “ends” being deterrence, the “ways” being stand-in forces, and the “means” being the EABO concept of operations, all of which necessitate security cooperation activities. Gaining and maintaining access is the most critical security cooperation activity concerning EABO; however, establishing security relationships and increasing allies’ and partners’ capabilities contribute to access and cannot be disregarded or downplayed.⁴² Therefore, from a military strategist’s perspective, the default argument would be that the more the U.S. invests in security cooperation activities with a given country, the more access it would gain, better enabling the conduct of EABO as a deterrent. Similarly, from a theoretical standpoint, the independent variables (i.e., security cooperation activities and EABO) increase the dependent variable (i.e., deterrence) by providing better access to U.S. allies and partners’ territory for U.S. forces, specifically the USMC.

However, this default argument varies from country to country, given varying strategic cultures and security threat perceptions throughout the Indo-Pacific. For example, Indonesia has a strategic culture that prioritizes “political self-determination, mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, and equality.”⁴³ Furthermore, the U.S. tends to view security threat perceptions throughout the Indo-Pacific as a “zero-sum geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions,” creating tunnel vision over the diverse diplomatic, economic, and security priorities.⁴⁴ As such, strategic cultures and security threat perceptions affect the potential for security cooperation activities to establish the foundation for EABO. Therefore, I hypothesize that security cooperation relationships are necessary to enable the conduct of EABO as a deterrent. However, current levels of security cooperation activities do not provide adequate U.S. access to do so effectively, necessitating country-specific recommendations and courses of action based on historical evidence and logic.

⁴² Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018), https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp3_0.pdf.

⁴³ “Bandung Conference (Asian-African Conference), 1955,” Office of the Historian, accessed September 13, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/bandung-conf>.

⁴⁴ Akhil Deo, “No Zero-Sum Games,” Asia and the Pacific Policy Society, last modified 2018, <https://www.policyforum.net/no-zero-sum-games/>.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis will use a comparative case study approach to examine the similarities, differences, and patterns in security cooperation activities that the U.S. invests in with Japan and Indonesia. I expect that this approach will produce essential insight and information on how the U.S. can evolve its security cooperation activities to better enable the conduct of EABO as a deterrent to Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific.

Japan and Indonesia were chosen as countries of interest for this thesis because of their varying degrees of security cooperation activities with the U.S. and the impact those activities may have on the respective bilateral relationships and local political dynamics that would define the feasibility of conducting EABO from their territory. Furthermore, from a military perspective, both countries' dispersed geography and proximity to strategic locations along the First Island Chain present a perfect fit for EABO and illustrate the range of possibilities. Japan is the U.S.'s closest and most active ally in the Indo-Pacific, with an already established security relationship, partner capacity, and high level of access; the U.S. has the necessary foundation in Japan to support EABO. Indonesia offers excellent potential for the conduct of EABO because of its dispersed geography and strategic location near the Strait of Malacca, the main shipping channel between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Furthermore, there appears to be a growing opportunity to build upon the security relationship between the U.S. and Indonesia, specifically regarding maritime issues, potentially impacting Chinese gray zone tactics and expansion efforts in the SCS.

My analysis of each country will follow the same analytical framework, only deviating when certain areas are applicable or not applicable to the given country. The framework will include a historical overview of security cooperation between the U.S. and the specific country, an analysis and assessment of their current security cooperation activities, and conclude with recommendations on how they can evolve to best enable EABO.

I intend to consult various government reports, scholarly articles, country documents, and various military publications during my research. This combination of material from the DOS, DOD, and research scholars will provide the best whole-of-

government evidence for examining this thesis' research question and potential courses of action.

This thesis is composed of four subsequent chapters. Chapter II provides necessary background information in preparation for examining the case studies. Chapters III and IV analyze and assess the case studies of Japan and Indonesia individually. Finally, Chapter V consolidates the findings, provides U.S. policy recommendations, and suggests opportunities for future research.

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II. AN OVERVIEW OF CHINESE THREATS TO U.S. INFLUENCE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC, EABO, AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Before examining how security cooperation activities between the United States (U.S.) and its Indo-Pacific allies and partners can enable Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) to deter Chinese aggression, it is first necessary to set forth the context that led to the United States Marine Corps (USMC) introducing the concept and describe it in broad terms. While the U.S. was engaged in the Global War on Terror, China invested in its anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy to expand its sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and confront technologically advanced adversaries.⁴⁵ Its integration of advanced missiles, sensors, and a modernized naval fleet have enhanced China's ability to restrict access and deny freedom of movement, especially in the air and waters near its territory.⁴⁶ Furthermore, it balanced against U.S. military superiority, specifically by threatening the efficacy and survivability of U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups—the centerpiece of U.S. power projection and deterrence.⁴⁷ Evidence that China is strengthening its A2/AD capabilities to extend beyond the First Island Chain, coupled with its expansionist rhetoric and actions such as its desire for reunification with Taiwan and fortification of islands in the South China Sea (SCS), indicates that China is unsatisfied with the current regional status quo and is intent on displacing the U.S. as the leading power in the Indo-Pacific.⁴⁸

The U.S., recognizing the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific through its rebalance policy, is disinclined to yield any influence to China. Accordingly, the U.S. is applying whole-

⁴⁵ Roger Cliff et al., *Entering the Dragon's Lair: Chinese Antiaccess Strategies and Their Implications for the United States*, MG-524-AF (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007), 24, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG524.pdf.

⁴⁶ 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 (2016): 7, <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/628475>.

⁴⁷ Dean Cheng, "The U.S. Needs an Integrated Approach to Counter China's Anti-Access/Area Denial Strategy," The Heritage Foundation, last modified 2014, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-us-needs-integrated-approach-counter-chinas-anti-accessarea-denial-strategy>.

⁴⁸ Yves-Heng Lim, "How (Dis)Satisfied Is China? A Power Transition Theory Perspective," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 92 (2015): 296–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2014.932160>.

of-government efforts to preserve its Indo-Pacific alliance network and maintain regional stability.⁴⁹ Paramount to these efforts is its access to Indo-Pacific allies and partners' territory and maneuverability within the maritime domain. Therefore, the Department of Defense (DOD) published the *Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons* in 2016, which served as a forcing function for U.S. military services to develop domain-specific capabilities to overcome access and maneuver challenges.⁵⁰ In response, the USMC released its EABO concept, which leverages the integrated and distributable capabilities of the USMC and U.S. Navy to deter aggression, set favorable pre-conflict conditions, and, if necessary, fight when confronted with adversaries who possess sophisticated A2/AD capabilities.⁵¹

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides an overview of the threats to U.S. influence in the Indo-Pacific, focusing on China's A2/AD strategy, capabilities, diplomacy, and economic statecraft. The second section examines EABO and its requirements. The third section discusses the general role of security cooperation and how to best tailor it to support the execution of EABO. Finally, the fourth section draws conclusions and implications for the preceding case studies on Japan and Indonesia. The evidence will show that the USMC introduced EABO to overcome the threats posed by China's A2/AD capabilities but that its effectiveness is largely dependent on access to Indo-Pacific allies and partners' territory, requiring increased security cooperation efforts.

A. AN OVERVIEW OF THE THREATS TO U.S. INFLUENCE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Many diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements impact the strategic competition between the U.S. and China. Those most relevant to EABO include the military (i.e., China's A2/AD strategy and its capabilities) and economic instruments of China's national power.

⁴⁹ White House, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, 6–8.

⁵⁰ Michael E. Hutchens et al., "Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons: A New Joint Operational Concept," *Joint Force Quarterly* 84 (2017): 135–36, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/article/1038867/joint-concept-for-access-and-maneuver-in-the-global-commons-a-new-joint-operati/>.

⁵¹ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*, 1–1.

1. The Evolution of China's A2/AD Strategy

While potentially designed for defensive purposes, China's A2/AD strategy now seems to have offensive intent, given China's evolving national priorities and capabilities—a concern for U.S. forces operating within its engagement zone. It is the result of decades-long evolution in Chinese military strategy, which occurred in conjunction with its economic growth. Before the late 1970s, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) military strategy was, in many ways, defensive and was a function of its limited capabilities and dangerous environment. It consisted of using the width and depth of China's mainland and its large population to lure adversaries into its territory and slowly attrite them using ground forces.⁵² However, when China began its economic reforms in 1978, the rise of critical financial centers along its coastline and the threat of invasion by the Soviet Union triggered a shift in its military strategy from defending the mainland to defending its periphery.⁵³ By 1985, as the threat of war with the Soviet Union subsided, the PLA had begun to plan for numerous other contingencies, most notably a potential conflict with Taiwan, and prioritized offensive operations that could project power and quickly end a possible war.⁵⁴ However, these planned offensive operations, which required speed and lethality, revealed the PLA's technological weaknesses, spurring its modernization efforts.⁵⁵

The PLA's modernization was spurred further by the U.S.'s success during the Gulf War. Specifically, the U.S.'s employment of technologically advanced assets on the battlefield gave the U.S. an advantage over Iraq's army.⁵⁶ Chinese military strategists “observed U.S. operations in the first Gulf War and assessed that ‘networked’ precision strike capabilities represented a ‘revolution in military affairs [RMA]’ that China was ill-prepared to deal with in

⁵² Cliff et al., *Entering the Dragon's Lair*, 18.

⁵³ Cliff et al., xiv.

⁵⁴ Cliff et al., 20.

⁵⁵ Paul H. B. Godwin, “Chinese Military Strategy Revised: Local and Limited War,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 519 (1992): 191, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1046762>.

⁵⁶ M. Taylor Fravel, *Active Defense: China's Military Strategy since 1949*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 188–89, muse.jhu.edu/book/64381.

the context of potential conflict with the United States over Taiwan.”⁵⁷ Therefore, aided by its tremendous economic growth, China prepared for local wars dominated by precise, lethal firepower and joint all-domain operations.⁵⁸ China’s double-digit growth in gross domestic product (GDP) between 1989 and 2011 facilitated a rapid rise in its defense spending.⁵⁹ This rise in defense spending permitted China to prioritize, resource, and develop the requisite technologies, systems, and navy to advance its A2/AD capabilities into an “active defense” strategy, capable of neutralizing the U.S.’s conventional military assets and denying it access in China’s area of operations.⁶⁰

China’s active defense strategy provides valuable insight into China’s strategic thinking and prioritization of its A2/AD capabilities. The strategy, characterized as strategically defensive but operationally and tactically offensive, prioritizes forward-edge defense, effective control, and localized war.⁶¹ Forward-edge defense involves the establishment of defensive positions on China’s periphery that are also capable of conducting offensive actions against an invading adversary.⁶² China’s militarization of the SCS is a concrete example of forward-edge defense. Specifically, China has created an advantageous posture to execute offensive operations within the First Island Chain by constructing a network of bases, airstrips, and communication facilities across the Parcel and Spratly Islands. Effective control aims to gain dominance in the information, space, cyber, and air domains to successfully confront a technologically advanced adversary.⁶³ Integrated with its land, air, and maritime forces, China sees these domains as critical enablers for joint operations and power

⁵⁷ Edmund J. Burke et al., *People’s Liberation Army Operational Concepts*, RR-A394-1 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2020), 4, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR300/RR394-1/RAND_RRA394-1.pdf.

⁵⁸ Cliff et al., *Entering the Dragon’s Lair*, 21.

⁵⁹ H. Sonmez Atesoglu, “Economic Growth and Military Spending in China: Implications for International Security,” *International Journal of Political Economy* 42, no. 2 (2013): 91, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24696551>.

⁶⁰ Burke et al., *People’s Liberation Army Operational Concepts*, 3.

⁶¹ Timothy A. Ornelas, “China’s Active Defense Military Strategy,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 2021, 58, <https://mca-marines.org/wp-content/uploads/57-Chinas-Active-Defense-Military-Strategy.pdf>.

⁶² Ornelas, 58.

⁶³ Ornelas, 58–59.

projection.⁶⁴ China may successfully destroy an adversary's operation systems by achieving dominance in these domains, leaving the adversary increasingly vulnerable to follow-on offensive strikes. Lastly, localized war aims to limit a conflict in scope, duration, and means by using joint operations to force a quick and decisive outcome.⁶⁵

Joint operations have also been a significant focus in China's military modernization. In 2015, China consolidated seven of its military regions into five Theater Commands to promote interoperability between its air, sea, and land forces.⁶⁶ The unified command structure under the Theater Commands facilitated joint operations, including integrated joint firepower strikes, anti-air raid operations, amphibious assaults, and maritime blockades, all engineered to localize war and bring a quick and decisive outcome favorable to China.⁶⁷ In addition, China's investment and development in the following A2/AD capabilities support its conduct of joint operations and change in strategic thinking.

2. China's A2/AD Capabilities

During a potential conflict in the Indo-Pacific, Chinese A2/AD capabilities will challenge the U.S. military's ability to project power. For example, U.S. ground forces operating from fixed locations on land will face significant danger from China's robust arsenal of ballistic missiles. In addition, China's anti-ship ballistic and cruise missiles will pose a considerable risk to naval vessels operating at sea. At the same time, its Integrated Air Defense Systems (IADS) will limit U.S. air operations in the region. Lastly, a modernized PLA Navy will compete for sea control and denial, inhibiting U.S. maritime operations. Therefore, understanding the characteristics and capabilities of China's A2/AD capabilities is essential to their mitigation by U.S. forces.

China's short, medium, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs, MRBMs, and IRBMs) and anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) are some of the most threatening A2/AD capabilities to U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific. China has an estimated 200 SRBM launchers

⁶⁴ Ornelas, 59.

⁶⁵ Ornelas, 59.

⁶⁶ Ornelas, 58.

⁶⁷ Ornelas, 59.

and over 600 SRBMs with sophisticated payloads, precision strike capability, and ranges of 300–1,000 km.⁶⁸ Its SRBMs can accurately reach intended targets in Japan and South Korea, leaving U.S. conventional military assets and personnel stationed on those countries' permanent military bases exposed. In addition, China has approximately 150 MRBM launchers and missiles capable of traveling 1,000–3,000 km.⁶⁹ This range places U.S. ground forces and naval assets operating within the First Island Chain at risk of a precision strike within minutes. Most damaging are China's almost 200 IRBMs, most notably its DF-26, which are compatible with nuclear and conventional payloads, equipped with maneuverable reentry vehicles, and have targeting ranges between 3,000 and 5,500 km, making them capable of striking targets with near-precision as far out as Guam in the Second Island Chain.⁷⁰

Furthermore, the road mobility of China's ballistic missiles permits Chinese forces to quickly position them along the coastline or disperse them throughout China's expansive mainland, limiting planned targeting opportunities for opposing forces. Additionally, China's terrain and naturally protected borders limit opposing forces' offensive initiative and provide its missiles defensive cover and concealment, making them difficult to locate and destroy.

China's ASCMs are especially threatening to U.S. maritime forces operating in the Indo-Pacific. Most prominent in China's arsenal is the YJ-83, which, given its abundance, supersonic speed, and ability to be launched from a variety of platforms (e.g., aircraft, naval vessels, and land platforms), creates a complex targeting dilemma for U.S. forces, enhances China's deterrence by denial, and threatens the survivability of U.S. maritime assets operating in or near Chinese waters.⁷¹ Retired U.S. Navy Captain Henry Hendrix stresses the ASCM threat by noting, "U.S. defenses would have to destroy every missile fired, a tough problem given the magazines of U.S. cruisers and destroyers, while China would need only one of its

⁶⁸ Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2020), 59, <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488689/-1/-1/1/2020-DOD-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT-FINAL.PDF>.

⁶⁹ Department of Defense, 59.

⁷⁰ Department of Defense, 59.

⁷¹ Department of Defense, 46–73.

weapons to survive to effect a mission kill.”⁷² Moreover, even if a U.S. maritime asset survived a missile strike, it would be forced to retreat and recover, thus accomplishing the purpose of China’s A2/AD strategy. A depiction of China’s regional missile threats is shown in Figure 3.

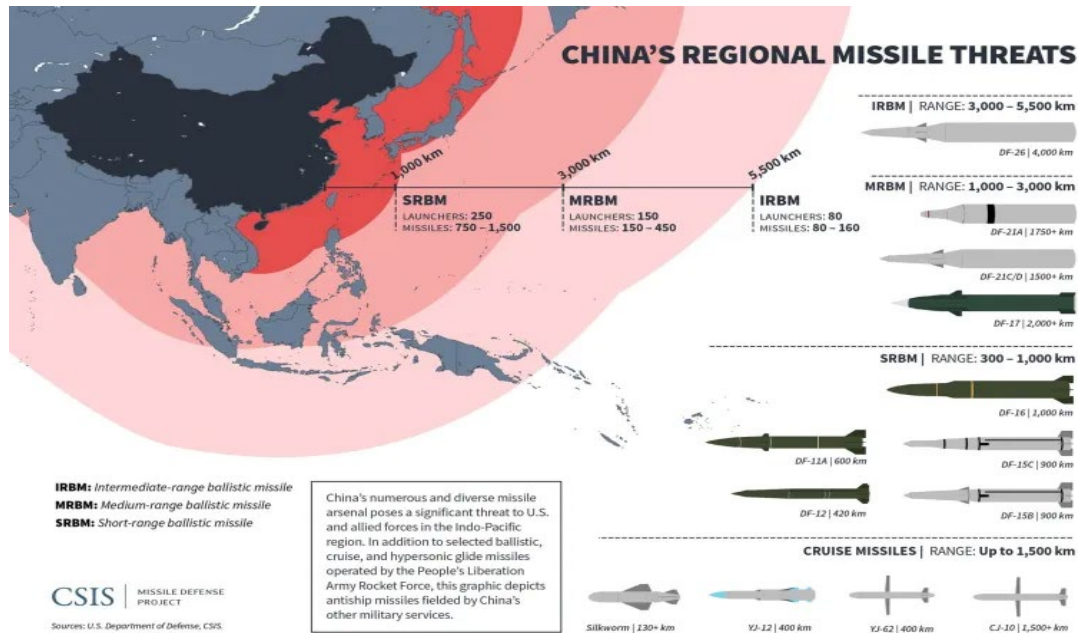


Figure 3. Depiction of China’s Regional Missile Threats⁷³

While China’s ballistic missiles and ASCMs threaten U.S. maritime and land assets, China’s IADS are another A2/AD capability that threatens U.S. air operations in the Indo-Pacific. They consist of early warning radar, aircraft, and various surface-to-air missiles (SAMs).⁷⁴ China’s long-range SAMs, including its CSA-9 and Russian-built SA-10 and SA-20, can intercept low-flying cruise missiles and aircraft up to 556 km from China’s mainland.⁷⁵

⁷² Henry J. Hendrix, *At What Cost a Carrier?* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2013), 8, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/at-what-cost-a-carrier>.

⁷³ Source: CSIS Missile Defense Project, *Missiles of China*.

⁷⁴ Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2020*, 74–75.

⁷⁵ Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2021* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021), 80, <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.

Additionally, China supplements its air defenses with the Russian SA-21 Triumph SAM systems, which provide increased range, improved seeking capability, and advanced radars for countering long-range airstrikes and combat support air operations.⁷⁶ China has placed these systems on its island fortifications in the SCS and on its PLA Navy vessels to extend its targeting ranges and decrease the operational space of opposing forces.⁷⁷ Consequently, China's IADS inhibit opposing forces' aircraft from conducting deep operations and penetrating Chinese airspace while simultaneously allowing China to reposition IAD assets to support varying contingency operations in the Indo-Pacific (e.g., Taiwan or the SCS).

Finally, as China's military forces have made significant improvements over the past several decades, the PLA Navy has greatly expanded and modernized to play an integral role in China's A2/AD strategy. Its approximately 355 ships and submarines and more than 145 major surface combatants, distributed into three fleets, make it the largest navy in the world and afford it the means to integrate many A2/AD capabilities in the maritime domain.⁷⁸ For example, its submarines, surface combatants, amphibious warfare ships, and two aircraft carriers can employ ASCMs, supplement IADS, and conduct anti-submarine warfare operations, restricting U.S. maneuverability inside the First Island Chain.⁷⁹ Moreover, China is replacing its older generations of platforms with more modern multi-role ones capable of defending its near seas and conducting blue-water operations, thus expanding the PLA Navy's range.⁸⁰ This is most notable with China's submarine force, an increasingly important capability in China's A2/AD strategy.

Currently, China has six nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), six nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs), and 46 diesel-powered attack submarines (SSKs).⁸¹ China is expected to maintain a submarine fleet size of approximately 70 submarines

⁷⁶ Department of Defense, 80.

⁷⁷ Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020*, 75–78.

⁷⁸ Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2021*, 48.

⁷⁹ Department of Defense, 49–51.

⁸⁰ Department of Defense, 48.

⁸¹ Department of Defense, 49.

throughout the 2020s, supporting China's desire for both near and far seas protection.⁸² Of the approximate 70 submarines, Chinese procurement trends appear to favor its SSKs, especially given their ability to disrupt sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and attack surface combatants.⁸³ As a result, China is expected to produce 25 or more SSKs by 2025.⁸⁴

China's SSKs, which primarily include the SSG Kilo-class, Song-class Type 039, and Yuan-class Type 039 A/B, are crucial to its near seas protection and overall A2/AD strategy. They can employ a variety of A2/AD-related weapons, including ASCMs and torpedoes, to deny U.S. forces access near China's coast. Additionally, their diesel-powered propulsion system makes them quieter than China's nuclear-powered submarines, providing them increased stealth and freedom of maneuver. As such, China's SSKs can easily blend in with the noise created by coastal shipping vessels operating near China, allowing them to hunt for U.S. naval surface combatants in the area silently.⁸⁵ Additionally, they can easily avoid detection by turning off their engines and resting at the bottom of the seafloor. Moreover, the sheer number of Chinese SSKs permits them to serve as bait for U.S. submarines and U.S. naval vessels, luring them into the range of China's land-based ballistic missiles and China's larger PLA Navy force.⁸⁶

Overall, China's modernization of its PLA Navy has produced a capable green-water navy that can support China's active defense strategy and brings it closer to achieving an effective blue-water navy capable of projecting power globally. In analyzing the modernization of China's military forces, U.S. Navy Admiral Philip Davidson testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that China was "capable of controlling the South China Sea in all

⁸² Department of Defense, 49.

⁸³ Eleni Ekmektsioglou and Matthew Hallex, "Chinese Submarines and U.S. Anti-Submarine Warfare Capabilities," *E-International Relations* (blog), 2011, <https://www.e-ir.info/2011/08/27/the-undersea-balance-in-the-western-pacific-chinese-submarines-and-u-s-anti-submarine-warfare-capabilities/>.

⁸⁴ Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2021*, 49.

⁸⁵ Ekmektsioglou and Hallex, "Chinese Submarines and U.S. Anti-Submarine Warfare Capabilities."

⁸⁶ Ekmektsioglou and Hallex.

scenarios short of war with the United States.”⁸⁷ Figure 4 shows a list of PLA Navy combatants and their home fleet locations.



Figure 4. Major PLA Navy Combatants and Locations⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Philip Davidson, *Advance Policy Questions for Admiral Philip Davidson, USN Expected Nominee for Commander, U.S. Pacific Command*, SASC Review (2018)(statement of Philip Davidson, USN Expected Nominee for Commander, U.S. Pacific Command), 2018, 18, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Davidson_APQs_04-17-18.pdf.

⁸⁸ Source: Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2021*, 54.

3. China's Tools of Diplomacy and Economic Statecraft

While the capabilities of China's A2/AD strategy and growth of its military forces, most notably the PLA Navy, significantly threaten U.S. military supremacy in the Indo-Pacific, China's increased diplomacy and economic statecraft has also challenged U.S. influence in the region. For example, after the U.S.-China rapprochement and China's entry into the United Nations in the early 1970s, China embraced a "good neighbor diplomacy" strategy to improve relations with its regional neighbors.⁸⁹ As a result, China improved its political standing and economic ties with many countries in the Indo-Pacific—all of them, except for Japan, are now economically dependent on China.⁹⁰ This will significantly complicate U.S. endeavors to secure advanced approval from Indo-Pacific allies and partners to conduct EABO in the region, thus highlighting the challenges this thesis explores.

Supported by this increased diplomacy, President Xi announced his Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, increasing China's influence throughout the Indo-Pacific.⁹¹ The BRI strengthened cultural ties between China and other Asian countries and promised economic infrastructure and investment projects to countries on China's periphery and Asia more broadly, facilitating over \$6 trillion in trade between China and partnering countries between 2014 and 2017.⁹² Figure 5 depicts the countries participating in China's BRI and their year of joining, highlighting China's increasing global outreach.

⁸⁹ "What Do Overseas Visits Reveal about China's Foreign Policy Priorities?," China Power Project, 2021, <https://chinapower.csis.org/diplomatic-visits/>.

⁹⁰ Lin et al., *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, ix.

⁹¹ "How Will the Belt and Road Initiative Advance China's Interests?," China Power Project, 2017, <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative/>.

⁹² China Power Project.

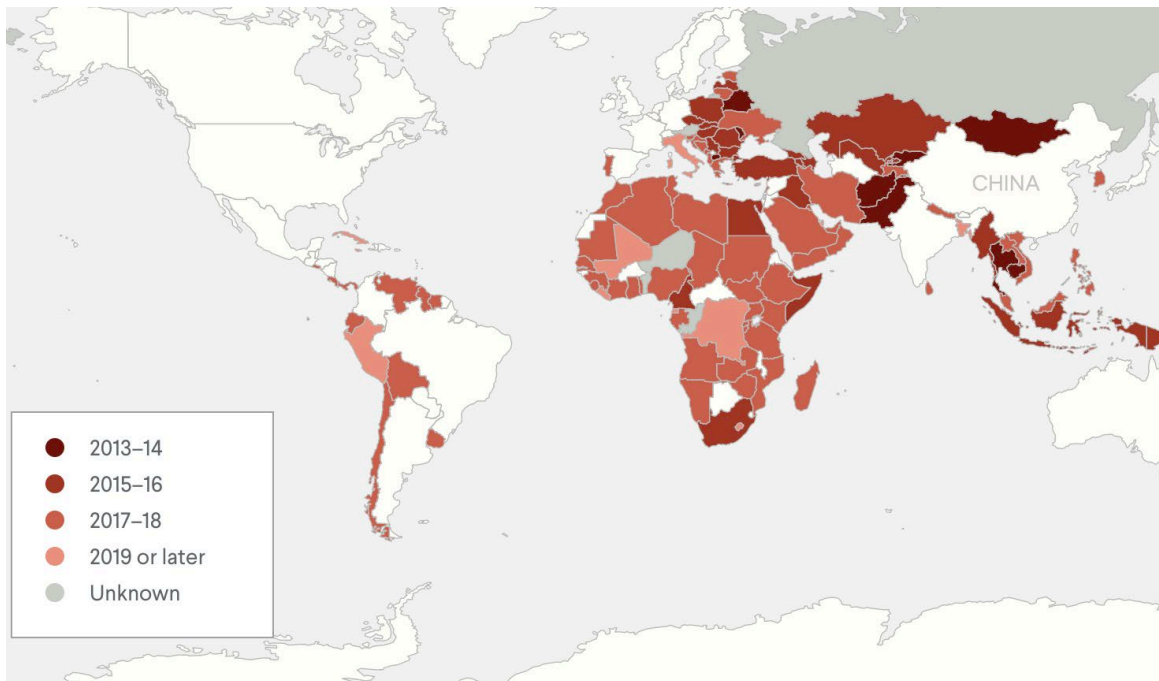


Figure 5. Participating Countries in China's BRI by Year of Joining⁹³

Consequently, China's effective economic entanglement with its neighbors has placed regional countries in a predicament of whether to side with China for economic gain or with the U.S. for security. Any signs of Indo-Pacific countries siding with China risk destabilizing the current U.S.-established status quo or damaging established defense ties between the U.S. and its allies and partners.

Overall, China's A2/AD strategy and modernized capabilities, combined with its increased diplomacy and economic statecraft, support China's recent aggression in international relations and poses numerous threats to U.S. influence in the region. Moreover, China has presented the U.S. with somewhat of a *fait accompli* throughout the Indo-Pacific. Specifically, China's A2/AD capabilities threaten the survivability and freedom of maneuver of U.S. conventional military platforms, thus reducing U.S. credibility and power projection capabilities in the Indo-Pacific. Additionally, China's BRI

⁹³ Source: David Sacks, "Countries in China's Belt and Road Initiative: Who's In And Who's Out," *Council on Foreign Relations* (blog), 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/countries-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-whos-and-whos-out>.

strengthens its diplomatic and economic relationships with other countries in the Indo-Pacific, threatening U.S. influence in the region. Consequently, U.S. military experts have been developing concepts to overcome these threats. EABO is one such operational concept that supports broader DOD deterrence strategy and aims to deter Chinese aggression and overcome its A2/AD capabilities in a conflict.

B. AN EXAMINATION OF EABO AND ITS REQUIREMENTS

The general concept of EABO has precedent in USMC history. In 1908, President Roosevelt published Executive Order 969, which expanded the USMC's responsibilities from naval vessel security to establishing naval installations abroad and providing expeditionary forces from them as required.⁹⁴ During this time, crises in the Caribbean and Central America permitted the USMC to execute its newly assigned responsibilities, culminating in the establishment of an Advance Base School for training Marines to seize and defend expeditionary bases and the creation of the USMC's Advance Base Force in 1913.⁹⁵ Up to and through World War I, the USMC's Advance Base Force continued seizing and defending advanced bases in support of naval operations; however, it was reconfigured to support more combined arms functions and renamed the East Coast Expeditionary Force after World War I.⁹⁶

In 1921, as the U.S. Navy and USMC strategized over a potential war with Japan in the Pacific, Lieutenant Colonel Ellis, then a Major, published *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia*. He recommended that well before a potential conflict ensues, the USMC increase its force structure to support a sizeable Advance Base Force to secure bases west of Hawaii and prevent Japanese expansion.⁹⁷ Unfortunately, as history has shown, military planners did not follow his recommendation. Over the next two decades, Japan's conquest

⁹⁴ Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*, 1st ed., Bluejacket Books (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999), 12.

⁹⁵ Jon T. Hoffman, "Fighting Far from Home," *U.S. Naval Institute*, 2013, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2013/january/fighting-far-home>.

⁹⁶ Hoffman.

⁹⁷ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1992), sec. Introduction, <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/ref/AdvBaseOps/Advanced-Intro.html#intro>.

led it to occupy large swaths of the Indo-Pacific region. Nevertheless, during World War II, the USMC demonstrated its ability to establish forward operating bases on recaptured islands and support air and naval operations through the U.S. island-hopping campaign, ultimately enabling the penetration of Japan's defenses and its eventual surrender.

Today, China's A2/AD strategy and capabilities have revitalized strategic thinking like Ellis's in the form of EABO. Specifically, per the *Tentative Manual for EABO*, EABO is a:

Form of expeditionary warfare that involves the employment of mobile, low-signature, persistent, and relatively easy to maintain and sustain naval expeditionary forces from a series of austere, temporary locations ashore or inshore within a contested or potentially contested maritime area in order to conduct sea denial, support sea control, or enable fleet sustainment.⁹⁸

Thus, the USMC introduced EABO as a warfighting concept capable of neutralizing adversaries' A2/AD capabilities in a conflict and as a form of deterrence by pre-positioning forces in areas of increased competition.

1. EABO as a Warfighting Concept

As a warfighting concept, EABO uses pre-positioned, distributed stand-in forces equipped with sensors and shooters to enable the engagement capabilities of stand-off forces (e.g., carrier battle groups or long-range aircraft).⁹⁹ The *EABO Handbook* further explains that the stand-in force "sets and maintains conditions of sea control and denial from key maritime terrain adjacent to contested straits and waters, and provides continuous situational awareness so that the [stand-off] force never need advance into a situation where the risks are unknown."¹⁰⁰ In a conflict situation with China, stand-in forces conducting various types of EABO throughout the First Island Chain enable the identification and dismantling of dispersed A2/AD capabilities, permitting greater access and maneuverability of traditional naval assets to conduct decisive operations at a reduced risk. For example, survivable stand-in forces operating air defense EABO will utilize their anti-

⁹⁸ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*, 1–3.

⁹⁹ Headquarters Marine Corps, 1–3–1–5.

¹⁰⁰ Arthur Corbett, *Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) Handbook*, 26.

aircraft systems, in combination with ship-based radars, to locate Chinese aircraft attempting to prevent the approach of friendly naval assets. Stand-in forces conducting fire support EABO will then utilize their arsenal of SAMs to destroy the Chinese aircraft, enabling freedom of maneuver for the approaching naval assets. As the naval assets close in on their objective, China will likely employ its ASCMs against them. Utilizing targeting information gathered from friendly naval assets, stand-in forces conducting anti-surface fire support EABO will use their ASCMs to destroy identified PLA Navy threats, increasing the survivability of friendly naval assets and their maneuverability.

Additionally, stand-in forces conducting aviation support EABO from various locations throughout the First Island Chain will support continuous air operations launched from naval assets and established airbases in the region. Specifically, aviation support EABO equipped with refueling, rearming, and repair capabilities will be able to provide aircraft with necessary support from multiple locations, reducing overall flight times and risks posed by China's IADS threats. Similarly, stand-in forces conducting logistical support EABO will facilitate quicker resupply for the other EABO, sustaining the combat power U.S. forces can bring to bear against China during a potential conflict.

Overall, stand-in forces conducting EABO require China to deal with smaller, more dispersed units that it previously may not have cared much about. Their ability to persist independently and reposition with organic mobility capabilities complicates China's decision-making and targeting criteria, eroding the overall objective of China's A2/AD strategy. Indeed, stand-in forces' survivability is significantly enhanced on land; dispersal and concealment are more obtainable, and mobility is less visible. Furthermore, the ability of stand-in forces to facilitate maritime and air operations in a potential conflict with China through the conduct of EABO enhances operational success. Specifically, air defense and fire support EABO offer protection from China's air and missile threats. Anti-surface fire support EABO disrupt PLA Navy operations and facilitate freedom of maneuver for friendly naval assets. Aviation support EABO mitigate threats from China's anti-air capabilities and enable friendly air operations to maintain air dominance. Finally, logistical support EABO provide rapid resupply and sustainment to maintain the initiative.

Figure 6 depicts the stand-in force and stand-off force combination described above. On the right is the enemy, in this case, China, with the dimensions of its A2/AD capabilities, referred to as the weapons engagement zone (WEZ), projecting out from right to left. On the left are friendly stand-off forces, consisting of traditional naval assets, moving from left to right. In the middle are the stand-in forces, conducting operations like EABO within the WEZ to identify and dismantle China's A2/AD capabilities while the stand-off forces move in. It is clear how stand-in forces within the WEZ create multiple targeting dilemmas for the enemy and shield the approaching stand-off forces. Without the presence of the stand-in forces, China's targeting dilemma disappears and allows it to mass fires on vulnerable approaching stand-off forces, resulting in their destruction or retreat.

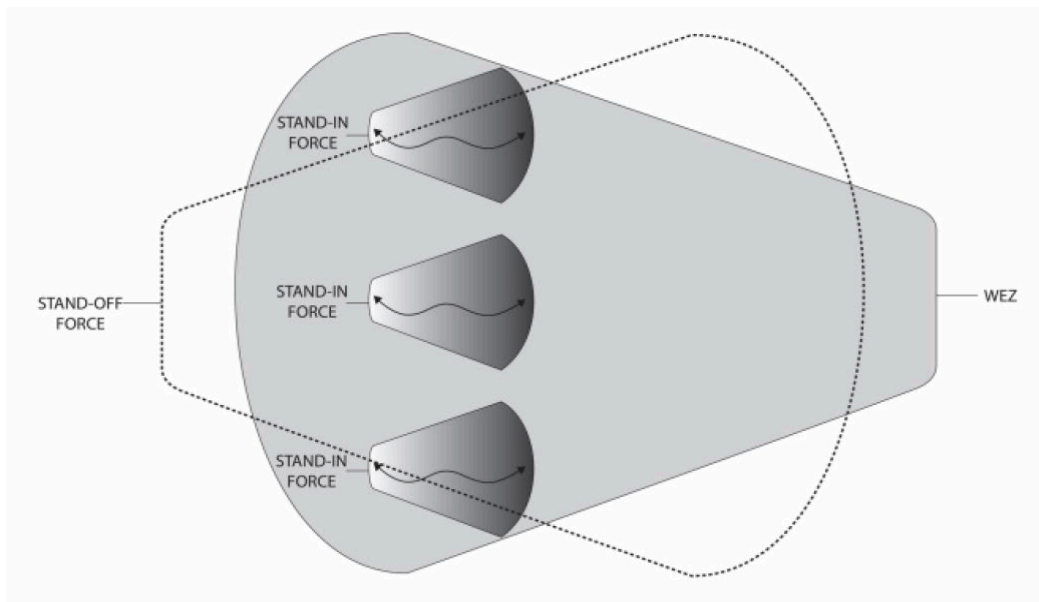


Figure 6. Depiction of Stand-In Force and Stand-Off Force Combination¹⁰¹

This combination of operational concepts is thus extensive. To employ them in their entirety would require the use of existing airfields and territory that can be rapidly converted into forward operating bases, host nation permission to deploy a wide variety of

¹⁰¹ Source: Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*, 1–4.

mobile systems (e.g., SAM systems, surface-to-surface missile systems, radars, etc.), and logistical sustainment agreements between the U.S. and host nation that prioritizes fuel, ammunition, and access to facilities for repairs, among others. Moreover, host nation permission for the U.S. to alternately position its forces and capabilities to different locations on its territory in the event of detection would facilitate the expeditionary nature of EABO, permitting U.S. forces to remain mobile, thus limiting China's targeting opportunities.

While complete implementation of EABO would require all the above, the flexibility inherent in EABO means that even partial acquiescence from host nations would be valuable. Furthermore, facilitating even a subset of such operations through security cooperation activities (e.g., joint exercises, training, transfers of arms and equipment) would enable more rapid implementation of EABO capabilities as political situations evolve in a conflict.

2. EABO as a Deterrent

EABO also should serve to deter adversaries' actions below the threshold of armed conflict. Any deterrence strategy requires an assessment of an adversary's values and imperatives in order to develop the ends, ways, and means to discourage them from taking unwanted actions. As explained in Section B, China values the "active defense" of its mainland and periphery, placing critical importance on its A2/AD capabilities to facilitate a quick outcome to local conflicts. The forward presence of stand-in forces conducting EABO in conjunction with allies and partners enables a persistent, long-term effort to deny China the conditions it has spent decades planning, thus serving as a general form of deterrence. For example, highly mobile, distributed forces operating on allies' and partners' key terrain throughout the Indo-Pacific could generate combat power within the First Island Chain without concentrating those forces on the few known permanent bases in the region.¹⁰² Therefore, the precision-strike capabilities of China's A2/AD strategy and

¹⁰² Thomas G. Mahnken, "A Maritime Strategy to Deal with China," *Proceedings*, 2022, sec. Effective Deterrence, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2022/february/maritime-strategy-deal-china>.

the conditions (e.g., decreased access and maneuverability of U.S. forces) that China views as essential to a positive military outcome are limited. As a result, EABO would undermine China's confidence in its military strategy and would require additional planning to circumvent distributed U.S. forces and weapons, thus strengthening deterrence by denial.¹⁰³

Furthermore, stand-in forces equipped with multi-domain sensors could provide early warning indicators of aggressive Chinese actions, specifically near Taiwan or the SCS, complicating Chinese leaders' decision-making and costing them time.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, stand-in forces could provide increased situational awareness of China's malign activities, specifically to neutral countries in the Indo-Pacific, degrading China's soft-power coercion or resulting in economic sanctions, thus bolstering deterrence by punishment.¹⁰⁵

Overall, EABO provides a persistent, combat-credible deterrent in the Indo-Pacific that signals to allies and partners the U.S.'s increased commitment and resolve to upholding the region's security and overtly makes known to China that the U.S. has the capabilities to use violence if necessary.

3. Requirements for EABO

To carry out their designed mission within China's A2/AD network across the competition continuum, units conducting EABO must remain mobile, sustainable, dispersed, and decentralized while maintaining access to key terrain throughout the Indo-Pacific.¹⁰⁶ However, physical access to Indo-Pacific countries' sovereign territory requires explicit approval from the host nation, something EABO units cannot achieve independently. Therefore, increased security cooperation between the U.S. and its Indo-

¹⁰³ Michael J. Mazarr, *Understanding Deterrence*, PE-295-RC (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2018), 2, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND_PE295.pdf.

¹⁰⁴ Mahnken, "A Maritime Strategy to Deal with China," sec. Inside Forces.

¹⁰⁵ Mazarr, *Understanding Deterrence*, 2.

¹⁰⁶ David S. Rainey, *Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations in the India-Pacific Command Area of Responsibility* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2019), 19–20, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=829868>.

Pacific allies and partners is required to gain the necessary access to support EABO requirements.

a. Mobility

In EABO, as with other military operations, mobility consists of the air, land, and sea means that allow forces to move from place to place during the execution of their primary mission.¹⁰⁷ Because U.S. forces execute EABO within the range of China's A2/AD capabilities, their ability to move between varying locations within the Indo-Pacific region (and generally, within multiple operating positions within one country) quickly is critical to avoid being targeted. Regarding air mobility, the V-22 Osprey, which combines the performance of a helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft, can transport 24 troops at 500 km/h.¹⁰⁸ These capabilities make the V-22 Osprey a model aircraft platform for EABO mobility, given its load capacity, speed, and ability to land in various terrain settings. For land mobility, the Polaris MRZR, which can transport six troops with 500 pounds of gear and tow over 1,500 pounds of equipment, is designed explicitly for expeditionary operations.¹⁰⁹ Its versatility and reliability make it a key land asset for traversing varied key terrain, and its transportability makes it easy to move from location to location. In addition, to support enhanced sea mobility, the U.S. Navy awarded the production of 35 Littoral Combat Ships (LCSs), a smaller version of current amphibious vessels with a maximum draft of 14 feet, effectively allowing them to transit shallow waters.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, LCSs are equipped with different fires packages, permitting them to operate in a high-threat environment while supporting EABO.¹¹¹ Overall, the combination of such

¹⁰⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2016), 156, https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp1_02.pdf.

¹⁰⁸ "V-22 Osprey," Boeing, accessed February 5, 2022, <https://www.boeing.com/defense/v-22-osprey/>.

¹⁰⁹ "MRZR Diesel," Polaris, accessed February 5, 2022, <https://military.polaris.com/en-us/mrzs/>.

¹¹⁰ "Littoral Combat Ship Class - LCS," Department of the Navy, accessed February 5, 2022, <https://www.navy.mil/Resources/Fact-Files/Display-FactFiles/Article/2171607/littoral-combat-ship-class-lcs/>.

¹¹¹ Mallory Shelbourne, "SWOBOSS: Littoral Combat Ships Positioned to Supplement EABO Mission," USNI News, 2022, <https://news.usni.org/2022/01/10/swoboss-littoral-combat-ships-positioned-to-supplement-eabo-mission>.

air, land, and sea assets increases the mobility capabilities of EABO, thus decreasing China's opportunity to target U.S. forces.

b. Sustainability

Sustainability includes the supplies and services required to maintain and prolong operations until completion.¹¹² The modernization and increased activities of the PLA Navy within the Indo-Pacific threaten U.S. SLOCs and resupply activities, requiring EABO to be self-sufficient in their maintenance and logistics needs. To supplement traditional resupply means, the U.S. Navy is exploring the use of unmanned underwater vehicles and unmanned surface vessels.¹¹³ The use of unmanned assets for sustainability would reduce the risk of heavy losses, make locating and destroying sustainability assets more challenging for China's A2/AD capabilities, and provide agility in their employment. Even more relevant to self-sustainability is the concept of expeditionary fabrication. The USMC introduced an expeditionary fabrication package, a 20-by-20-foot transportable manufacturing lab equipped with 3D printers, a laser cutter, and a scanner to make 3D printing deployable.¹¹⁴ Printing replacement parts at the point of need would allow U.S. forces in expeditious locations to operate with shorter supply chains and be more innovative regarding maintenance solutions. Ultimately, concepts like these ensure better self-sufficiency for isolated EABO in an environment where reinforcements may not be practical.

c. Dispersion

Dispersion spreads forces, assets, bases, and operations over a vast area to reduce vulnerability.¹¹⁵ The distributable nature of expeditionary advanced bases and accompanying naval platforms, combined with their ability to support and sustain forces without reliance on permanent land bases, create numerous targeting locations for

¹¹² Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 1-02*, 230.

¹¹³ Karl Flynn, "Unmanned Vessels for EABO," *Proceedings*, 2021, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2021/november/unmanned-vessels-eabo>.

¹¹⁴ Theodore Roach, "Expeditionary Fabrication in the Marine Corps," *Proceedings*, 2021, 92.

¹¹⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 1-02*, 69.

adversaries.¹¹⁶ For example, in the Indo-Pacific, dispersion creates a targeting dilemma for Chinese forces by requiring them to prioritize objectives while simultaneously limiting their ability to mass fires. Furthermore, the different types of expeditionary advanced bases—fire support, aviation support, logistics support, and command and control—reinforce the concept of dispersion and highlight its importance because each can operate independently from varying locations and also synchronize employment to support joint operations.¹¹⁷ Therefore, the more the U.S. can disperse and position its forces throughout the region, the less vulnerable and more effective EABO can be across the competition continuum.

d. Decentralization

Decentralization is the delegation of authority to subordinate commanders.¹¹⁸ The dispersed nature of EABO requires decentralization to accomplish specific, independent objectives while maintaining the ability for EABO to reinforce one another when necessary. Accordingly, delegated authority to subordinate commanders requires leaders to train their forces to respond to the control of external unit leaders to accomplish EABO missions.¹¹⁹ The *Tentative Manual for EABO* notes that doing so will “foster a C2 environment which enables commanders at every level...to cope with uncertainty, exercise initiative, generate tempo, and seize opportunities.”¹²⁰ The USMC specifically designed its Littoral Combat Teams (LCTs) to operate under such conditions. The *Tentative Manual for EABO* describes LCTs as “an infantry battalion with attached fires elements...task-organized to...operate multiple EABs, including fires EABs, FARP EABs, or a combination of these, all operating under the C2 of the LCT headquarters.”¹²¹ Therefore,

¹¹⁶ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*, 1–6.

¹¹⁷ Rainey, *EABO in the India-Pacific Command AOR*, 21–24.

¹¹⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 1-02*, 60.

¹¹⁹ Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for EABO*, 3–8.

¹²⁰ Headquarters Marine Corps, 3–8.

¹²¹ Headquarters Marine Corps, A-2.

commanders can manage multiple EABO under a decentralized command and control structure.

Given that China's capabilities will likely disrupt U.S. command and control, sustainment, and support functions, units like the LCTs are likely to find themselves frequently tasked from outside the immediate chain of command to support adjacent units, placing increased emphasis on understanding the commander's intent and small-unit leadership.

e. Access

While mobility, sustainability, dispersion, and decentralization are essential for the successful execution of EABO, access to sovereign territory belonging to U.S. allies and partners is most important. Joint Publication 3-20, *Security Cooperation*, defines access as “permanent or temporary forward staging or basing facilities, airports, or seaports; the ability to obtain overflight rights, passage through territorial waters, shared information, intelligence, or other resources; and opportunities for forward stationing of forces.”¹²² For EABO purposes, access enables the execution of the numerous operational concepts highlighted in Section C. Specifically, access to multiple forward staging areas facilitates the dispersion of fire support EABO, increasing the number of sensors and shooters capable of conducting offensive actions in support of sea denial or sea control. Access to airports permits aviation support EABO by increasing the number of locations where air assets can rearm and refuel while also reducing their flight times and chances of being targeted, ultimately increasing the effectiveness of air operations. Access to territorial waters and seaports facilitates the transportation of forces and equipment throughout the area of operations while also ensuring the security of SLOCs. Finally, access to facilities provides additional locations to support logistical sustainment and repairs, increasing the sustainability of U.S. forces and their ability to mass combat power quickly.

As also highlighted in Joint Publication 3-20, *Security Cooperation*, access “promotes flexibility in the U.S. defense posture, provides freedom of movement, and

¹²² Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-20*, II-3.

supports freedom of action during military operations.”¹²³ Freedom of movement is also essential to the successful execution of EABO, as it permits U.S. forces to alternately position themselves and their capabilities to different locations on host nation territory. In peacetime, freedom of movement allows forward forces to conduct EABO exercises and pre-stage EABO-related equipment in key areas, increasing U.S. deterrence posture to prevent Chinese aggression. Should deterrence fail, freedom of movement compounds China’s targeting dilemma, increasing the survivability of U.S. forces during combat operations.

Therefore, the mobile, sustainable, dispersed, and decentralized nature of EABO requires enhanced access to new basing facilities, airports, and seaports and permission from the host nation to maneuver freely throughout its terrain and alternately position forces. However, the U.S. does not currently have the enhanced access or freedom of maneuver that EABO requires in any Indo-Pacific country.¹²⁴ At present, there appears to be little desire from Indo-Pacific allies and partners for hosting stand-in forces, granting permanent bases, or permitting unfettered freedom of maneuver, even in countries like Japan and South Korea, where there already exists a permanent U.S. military presence.¹²⁵ Moreover, domestic political pressures, economic interests, and the associated risk of becoming a target of China’s A2/AD capabilities weigh heavily on their decision on whether or not to authorize enhanced U.S. access, especially in peacetime.

In the short term, the U.S. seeks to enhance its access to Indo-Pacific allies and partners’ territory by maintaining a consistent forward, rotational presence throughout the region, strengthening security relationships, and increasing allies’ and partners’ capacity—typically preconditions for gaining access. The logic is that as Indo-Pacific allies and partners perceive China as an increasing threat to their sovereignty and interests, they will be more inclined to grant access. For this reason, an already forward presence will serve as

¹²³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, II–3.

¹²⁴ Renanah M. Joyce and Becca Wasser, “All About Access: Solving America’s Force Posture Puzzle,” *The Washington Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2021): 52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2021.1970335>.

¹²⁵ Joyce and Wasser, 52.

a “self-reinforcing cycle” to receive more access and prevent the U.S. from needing to fight its way into the fight.¹²⁶

In the long term, U.S. military planners and Department of State (DOS) officials must continue to massage the political relationships with Indo-Pacific allies and partners to produce peacetime and contingency access. As China continues exercising the full range of its national power to persuade its regional neighbors to side with it, the U.S. risks losing influence with its Indo-Pacific allies and partners. China’s economic leverage, which most regional countries depend on, currently shows little sign of persuading them to side with China but rather to remain neutral.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, a neutral stance by regional countries threatens the efficacy of EABO because it lessens U.S. access to strategic locations. Security cooperation serves as one such mechanism for enhancing peacetime and contingency access.

C. ENABLING EABO THROUGH SECURITY COOPERATION

EABO clearly provides opportunities for limiting China’s active defense strategy and preventing *fait accompli* situations but is dependent on Indo-Pacific allies and partners approving access to their territory. Security cooperation, by design, aims to build favor and influence with allies and partners, which may facilitate the U.S.’s ability to secure the access that EABO requires. More specifically, security cooperation is DOD’s “activities that enable building security relationships, building partner capacity, and gaining/maintaining access.”¹²⁸ These doctrinal principles support the implementation of U.S. national strategy and serve as a framework for promoting theater-specific operational concepts like EABO.

For example, security cooperation activities aimed at building effective security relationships around shared long-term security goals with Indo-Pacific allies and partners may enable EABO to be conducted multilaterally rather than unilaterally. In addition,

¹²⁶ Joyce and Wasser, 52.

¹²⁷ Lin et al., *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, 38.

¹²⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-20*, II-1.

exercises, training, joint planning, and engagements with key leaders focused on EABO may help Indo-Pacific allies and partners develop an appreciation for the concept and understand the benefits of participating in such operations as a means to accomplishing their shared security goals.¹²⁹ Consequently, domestic political support for EABO amongst Indo-Pacific allies and partners may present itself, facilitating increased access for U.S. forces and a willingness to conduct EABO as part of a coalition response to Chinese aggression.

Additionally, security cooperation activities aimed at building partner capacity may permit Indo-Pacific allies and partners to conduct EABO alongside U.S. forces. For example, the transfer of EABO-related arms and equipment through Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Financing, and Direct Commercial Sales provides allies and partners with the means to conduct EABO and comes with U.S. training and service support. This enhances the capabilities of Indo-Pacific allies and partners and their interoperability with U.S. forces while also serving as a starting point for negotiating further U.S. access.¹³⁰ Moreover, such security cooperation activities allow for the pre-staging of EABO-related arms and equipment on key terrain, providing U.S. forces with already forward EABO assets to “fall in” on in the event of a contingency and when a host country authorizes last-minute access.

Finally, security cooperation activities aimed at gaining and maintaining access set favorable conditions for the execution of EABO. Specifically, security cooperation activities can help Indo-Pacific allies and partners build vital infrastructure (e.g., airfields, seaports, and logistical facilities), secure logistical support and intelligence sharing agreements, and familiarize Indo-Pacific allies and partners with their roles and requirements in support of EABO, all critical elements to the successful conduct of EABO.

However, despite being in most need of access, the DOD is least involved in securing it. The DOS assumes the leading role in coordinating with allies and partners on

¹²⁹ Tommy Ross, “Leveraging Security Cooperation as Military Strategy,” *The Washington Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (2016): 96, <https://www-tandfonline-com.libproxy.nps.edu/doi/abs/10.1080/0163660X.2016.1232637>.

¹³⁰ Joyce and Wasser, “All About Access: Solving America’s Force Posture Puzzle,” 59.

issues such as access, necessitating increased engagement between the two departments to ensure whole-of-government engagement with those countries.

The USMC is in a great position to facilitate security cooperation activities on behalf of the DOD by leveraging its history of engaging in security cooperation. Though not mandated by law to conduct security cooperation, the USMC demonstrated a fondness for it over the course of the 20th century.¹³¹ In 2011, the USMC established the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group to plan, coordinate, execute, and manage all USMC security cooperation activities and programs; however, it has since been divested. Still, there are over two decades' worth of Marines trained in security cooperation and foreign security forces advising—an undeniable asset capable of gaining and maintaining access. Therefore, in addition to a persistent forward presence aimed at gaining increased access levels, using security cooperation and foreign security force advising teams in coordination with host nation security forces can mitigate access vulnerabilities.

D. SUMMARY

The evolution of China's A2/AD strategy, accompanied by its advanced missiles, sensor systems, and modernized PLA Navy, has threatened the survivability of U.S. forces and conventional military assets. Consequently, China has degraded the U.S.'s ability to project power in the Indo-Pacific, raising concerns about U.S. deterrence credibility. To address such concerns, the USMC introduced EABO as both a warfighting concept and a means of deterrence, incorporating emerging technologies to make U.S. forces more mobile, self-sufficient, dispersed, and decentralized. However, the effectiveness of EABO as a deterrent depends upon U.S. access to key terrain throughout the region, which host nations can only authorize. For this reason, improving security cooperation activities with Indo-Pacific allies and partners is critical because building security relationships and increasing partner capacity is usually a precursor to gaining access. The following two chapters will analyze the security cooperation relationships between the U.S. and Japan and the U.S. and Indonesia to determine if they adequately support the execution of EABO.

¹³¹ Brian Kerg, "Cooperate for Sea Control," *Proceedings*, 2021, 58.

III. JAPAN

Chapter II highlighted the importance of United States (U.S.) security cooperation activities in building security relationships around shared security objectives, promoting partner capacity, and gaining access to Indo-Pacific allies and partners' territory in order to conduct Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO). In Chapter III, I specifically examine U.S. security cooperation activities with Japan, the U.S.'s most important ally in the Indo-Pacific, to determine the feasibility of the U.S. conducting EABO from Japan's territory.

Japan's numerous islands located at the top of the First Island Chain place Japan and its prefectures, most notably Okinawa, near likely conflict areas such as Taiwan, Korea, and the East China Sea, making its archipelago strategically invaluable for EABO. Furthermore, Japan shares the use of significant U.S. military resources and equipment and is host to over 50,000 military personnel, who have exclusive use of 85 military-related facilities throughout Japan.¹³² Because of Japan's vital role as an ally and as a forward basing location for U.S. military forces, Japan is an opportune country for the execution of EABO.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an overview of the history of U.S.-Japan security relations. The second section analyzes the extent of current U.S.-Japan security cooperation by examining Japan's security threats and its efforts to address them, U.S. efforts to support Japan and build partner capacity, and the current access granted to the U.S. by Japan. Finally, while considering some limiting factors, the third section draws conclusions on the feasibility of the U.S. conducting EABO in Japan and provides recommendations. The evidence reveals that security cooperation activities between the U.S. and Japan have built a strong security relationship, enhanced partner capacity and interoperability, and gained sufficient access in Japan to support

¹³² Congressional Research Service, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance*, RL33740 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2019), sec. Summary, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/RL33740.pdf>.

EABO. Recommendations for deepening this access are highlighted at the end of this chapter and in Chapter V.

A. THE HISTORY OF U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY RELATIONS

Since the end of World War II, the U.S. and Japan have maintained a robust bilateral security alliance, institutionalized through various agreements, and shared security concerns. Consequently, the U.S. has enjoyed a high degree of access to Japanese territory and opportunities to build partner capacity with Japan's Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), suggesting that the execution of EABO from Japan is promising.

In 1951, the U.S., Japan, and the Allied Powers signed the Treaty of San Francisco, formally ending the legal state of war and re-establishing peaceful relations between all involved countries. Simultaneously, the U.S. and Japan signed the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, which established the framework for the two countries' security relationship and guaranteed the presence of U.S. military forces in Japan. Specifically, the treaty permitted U.S. military forces to remain in Japan to protect Japan's sovereignty while Japan focused on rebuilding its post-war economy.¹³³ Following the Korean War and with the backdrop of an increasingly aggressive Cold War environment, Japan and the U.S. revised the treaty in 1960. The revision allowed the U.S. to establish military bases throughout Japan's archipelago in exchange for security assurances should Japan experience an attack, giving the U.S. its first permanent military presence in Asia.¹³⁴ Additionally, the two countries solidified a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), setting the parameters for how U.S. forces could operate in Japan in accordance with Japanese domestic laws.¹³⁵ Moreover, it gave the U.S. administrative rights over Okinawa, where U.S. military presence was at its highest. However, local Okinawan hostilities and anti-base protests over the presence of U.S. military personnel and the construction of U.S.

¹³³ Lindsay Maizland and Nathanael Cheng, "The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-japan-security-alliance>.

¹³⁴ Maizland and Cheng.

¹³⁵ David Vergun, "U.S.-Japan Alliance Increasingly Strengthened Since End of WWII," U.S. Department of Defense, last modified 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/2306658/us-japan-alliance-increasingly-strengthened-since-end-of-wwii/>.

bases between the 1950s and 1970s led to the return of Okinawa to Japanese control in 1972.¹³⁶ Still, successive Japanese governments continued to favor the presence of U.S. military personnel and bases on Okinawa for Japan's overall national security, raising tensions between the Okinawan public and the Japanese government. As a result, Japanese governments have responded to anti-base protests with legal repression, including jail time.¹³⁷ The anti-base protests in Okinawa remain prevalent today, requiring careful diplomacy when introducing new operating concepts like EABO.

As the Cold War ramped up, increased Chinese and Russian military presence in the vicinity of Japan spurred Japan to expand its role within the U.S.-Japan alliance. As a result, in 1976, Japan and the U.S. established a bilateral Security Consultative Committee, which led to the signing of the first Guidelines for Defense Cooperation in 1978.¹³⁸ The Guidelines for Defense Cooperation initiated joint training and exercises between the U.S. military and JSDF, increasing their interoperability.¹³⁹

Despite Japan's desire for a more significant role in the U.S.-Japan alliance, its pacifist constitution and identity limited its military support, as evidenced during the Gulf War, where Japan only contributed funds to the effort.¹⁴⁰ Specifically, the strong postwar antimilitarism in Japanese society created an ambivalence to the roles the JSDF should partake in overseas.¹⁴¹ Andrew Oros highlights that only a small minority supported "fighting on the front lines in combat with the United States...[and] only 17 percent of those polled thought it was acceptable for the JSDF to 'provide weapons and fuel support

¹³⁶ Kent E. Calder, *Embattled Garrisons: Comparative Base Politics and American Globalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 126–38.

¹³⁷ Andrew Yeo, "The U.S.-Japan Alliance and Anti-Base Movements in Okinawa, 1995–1996," in *Activists, Alliances, and Anti-U.S. Base Protests* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 85, https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cdocument%7C3892204.

¹³⁸ Rachel Hoff, "Next Steps for U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation," *Sasakawa USA*, no. 3 (2016): 3, <https://spfusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Hoff-Next-steps-US-Japan-security-cooperation.pdf>.

¹³⁹ Hoff, 3.

¹⁴⁰ Maizland and Cheng, "The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance."

¹⁴¹ Andrew L. Oros, *Japan's Security Renaissance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2017), 151.

to the U.S. military overseas.”¹⁴² Embarrassed by its lack of participation in the Gulf War, military elites and right-wing conservatives pushed for the Japanese government to reinterpret elements of its pacifist constitution so that Japan could be a more active participant within the alliance.¹⁴³ Consequently, in 1992, Japan instituted new reforms that permitted JSDF to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations.¹⁴⁴ In 1997, the U.S. and Japan published the Joint Security Declaration, expanding JSDF operations to areas surrounding its territory.¹⁴⁵ The Joint Security Declaration expanded defense cooperation between the U.S. and Japan and served as the first official mechanism for U.S. military forces and JSDF to work jointly on security matters extending beyond Japan.¹⁴⁶

The beginning of the 21st Century ushered in a period of increased bilateral security cooperation between the U.S. and Japan. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Japan’s maritime forces provided logistical refueling to U.S. military forces operating in Afghanistan and provided upwards of \$5 billion to the U.S.-led reconstruction efforts in Iraq.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, they lead anti-piracy operations as far away as the Gulf of Aden to protect Japan’s energy imports.¹⁴⁸ In 2015, Japan again reinterpreted elements of its constitution. The reinterpretation permitted JSDF to defend its allies should they be attacked and if a threat was posed to Japan’s security, thus changing the JSDF’s purely self-defense-oriented posture to a somewhat more “collective self-defense” posture.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, this revision led the U.S. and Japan to expand their Guidelines for Defense Cooperation. Specifically, the expansion included providing increased air defense against

¹⁴² Oros, 151.

¹⁴³ Maizland and Cheng, “The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance.”

¹⁴⁴ Maizland and Cheng.

¹⁴⁵ Maizland and Cheng.

¹⁴⁶ Michael J. Green, “The US-Japan Alliance: A Brief Strategic History,” *The Association for Asian Studies*, Education About Asia, 12, no. 3 (2007): 29, <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/the-us-japan-alliance-a-brief-strategic-history.pdf>.

¹⁴⁷ Green, 29.

¹⁴⁸ Oros, *Japan’s Security Renaissance*, 1.

¹⁴⁹ Paul Kallender-Umezu, “Japanese Legislation Frees Military To Assist Allies,” *Defense News*, last modified 2015, <https://www.defensenews.com/home/2015/09/27/japanese-legislation-frees-military-to-assist-allies/>.

adversarial missile systems, supporting each other's logistical needs while engaged in foreign wars, securing sea lines of communication, and preserving freedom of navigation, among others.¹⁵⁰

In addition to the Guidelines for Defense Cooperation, the U.S. and Japan created a cabinet-level Security Consultative Committee in 2002, consisting of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, U.S. Secretary of State, and their Japanese equivalents.¹⁵¹ This committee, also referred to as the “2+2,” further refined alliance cooperation and set common strategic objectives. Most notably was the reconfirmation that the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security covered the East China Sea, including the Senkaku Islands, resulting in advanced joint activities related to supporting freedom of navigation, including training, exercises, and capacity building efforts.¹⁵²

Since revising the Guidelines for Defense Cooperation, the U.S. and Japan have engaged in continuous security cooperation activities to address emerging threats (e.g., China and North Korea) and advance a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” Under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific framework, the U.S. and Japan share the same fundamental interests of maintaining prosperity, security, and the neo-liberal international order throughout the region.¹⁵³ Therefore, the two countries rely on their robust security cooperation portfolio to meet their shared strategic objectives.

B. U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY COOPERATION ANALYSIS

Current U.S.-Japan security cooperation activities indicate a solid security relationship grounded in shared security objectives and a history of building partner capacity and interoperability. As a result, the U.S. has gained sufficient access to Japan, making the feasibility of EABO in Japan promising.

¹⁵⁰ Kallender-Umezu.

¹⁵¹ Congressional Research Service, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance*, 24.

¹⁵² Congressional Research Service, 26.

¹⁵³ Nicholas Szechenyi Hosoya Yuichi, “Working Toward a Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/10/working-toward-free-and-open-indo-pacific-pub-80023>.

1. Japan's Security Challenges and Efforts to Address Them

The devastating results of World War II have had a profound psychological bearing on Japanese society and its view of how the military should be postured, armed, and employed. Specifically, the loss of approximately 25 percent of its military personnel, almost a million of its civilians, and 40 percent of its urban areas, resulted in Japanese society becoming mainly pacifist, adopting a pacifist constitution, and historically lacking any desire for increased militarism.¹⁵⁴

With its pacifist constitution limiting significant military development, Japan faces substantial obstacles in confronting emerging security threats in the region on its own. However, in recent years, most notably under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan undertook initiatives that enhanced its ability to respond unilaterally to such threats. These initiatives also increase opportunities for U.S.-Japan security cooperation activities, ultimately strengthening their security relationship.

North Korea and China are the greatest threats to Japan's security and sovereignty. Since 1993, Japan has dealt with numerous overflights from North Korean missiles, including two missiles flying over Hokkaido as recently as 2017.¹⁵⁵ The reality that such missiles, potentially armed with a nuclear warhead, can reach Japanese territory clearly presents a security threat for Japan and U.S. forces stationed there. Prime Minister Abe, in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly in 2016, stated:

North Korea has launched a total of 21 ballistic missiles. In addition, it claims to have successfully detonated a nuclear warhead in a test on September 9...This series of launches of missiles and a detonation of a warhead does change the landscape completely...We must therefore

¹⁵⁴ Eugen Koh and Tadashi Takeshima, "The Long-Term Effects of Japan's Traumatic Experience in the Second World War and Its Implications for Peace in Northeast Asia," *New England Journal of Public Policy* 32, no. 2 (2020): 2, <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1790&context=nejpp>.

¹⁵⁵ Noboru Yamaguchi, "Changing Threat Perceptions and Japan's Evolving National Security Policy," *Global Asia*, last modified 2018, https://www.globalasia.org/v13no1/cover/changing-threat-perceptions-and-japans-evolving-national-security-policy_noboru-yamaguchi.

respond to this in a manner entirely distinct from our responses thus far. We must concentrate our strengths and thwart North Korea's plans.¹⁵⁶

Similarly, Japan's territory lies comfortably within the range of China's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, presenting similar security concerns should conflict erupt over Taiwan or in the East China Sea. Specific to the East China Sea, China has continuously challenged Japanese sovereignty in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands. In 2016, a People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy surface combatant entered the contiguous zone.¹⁵⁷ In 2018, a PLA Navy submarine and surface ship did the same.¹⁵⁸ In 2020, China's coast guard made incursions around the Senkaku Islands nine times per month, averaging four days per incursion, creating tense conditions between China and Japan's coast guards.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, JSDF air units were deployed 851 times from April 2016 to March 2017 in response to Chinese aircraft incursions in the area.¹⁶⁰ Evidently, China's maritime and air activities near Japan have become increasingly intense, raising the risk of military confrontation.

Japan has enacted numerous initiatives to address these threats, including enhancing its island defenses, advancing its ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems, and strengthening its security cooperation activities. These initiatives are positive steps for Japan in strengthening its national defense architecture and are most conducive for EABO.

Specific to enhancing its island defenses, Japan activated a JSDF observation unit on Yonaguni Island, Japan's westernmost island in its Southwestern region.¹⁶¹ Additionally, Japan deployed JSDF infantry, surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), and surface-

¹⁵⁶ Hiroyasu Akutsu, "Assessing North Korean Security and Military Threats: A Japanese Perspective," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, last modified 2016, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/12/15/assessing-north-korean-security-and-military-threats-japanese-perspective-pub-67743>.

¹⁵⁷ Noboru Yamaguchi, "Japan's New Security Posture and Its Implications for Taiwan," The Asan Forum, last modified 2021, <https://theasanforum.org/japans-new-security-posture-and-its-implications-for-taiwan/>.

¹⁵⁸ Yamaguchi.

¹⁵⁹ Yamaguchi.

¹⁶⁰ Yamaguchi, "Changing Threat Perceptions and Japan's Evolving National Security Policy."

¹⁶¹ Yamaguchi, "Japan's New Security Posture and Its Implications for Taiwan."

to-surface missile units to Amami-Oshima, Miyako Island, and Ishigaki Island.¹⁶² These units are similar to the United States Marine Corps (USMC) LCT described in Chapter II, equipped with anti-air and anti-ship capabilities and employed on key terrain throughout Japan's Southwestern region to gain air and maritime control. Moreover, their functional abilities and deployment on remote islands to serve as an "advance guard" mirrors the strategic thinking behind EABO.¹⁶³ Furthermore, Japan increased its procurement of F-35s from 42 to 147, replacing its original 42 F-35As with F-35Bs, and modified two of its helicopter carriers to accommodate the F-35Bs short take-off and vertical landing capabilities.¹⁶⁴ The acquisition of more F-35Bs and modification to its carriers will enhance the JSDF's ability to achieve air superiority in support of island defense and provide increased dispersion and landing sites for Japanese air assets.

Regarding BMD, Japan is working closely with the U.S. to enhance its sea and land BMD capabilities. The JSDF is increasing its BMD-capable Aegis ships from four to eight and equipping them all with SM-3 missiles and plans to fit all six of its SAM groups with PATRIOT PAC-3 interception equipment.¹⁶⁵ Additionally, the Japanese government has invested in joint research and development efforts to enhance the PATRIOT PAC-3 system to intercept incoming missiles at a longer distance, higher altitude, and greater target velocity.¹⁶⁶ Japan was also planning to install TPY-2 radars and SM3 missiles in its northern Akita Prefecture and on Yamaguchi Island to the southwest to complement its Aegis ships but has since reneged due to public blowback, highlighting the influence public opinion has on Japan's defense initiatives.¹⁶⁷

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly for the concept of EABO, Japan has prioritized strengthening its security cooperation activities. In its National Defense

¹⁶² Akutsu, "Assessing North Korean Security and Military Threats."

¹⁶³ Yamaguchi, "Japan's New Security Posture and Its Implications for Taiwan."

¹⁶⁴ Yamaguchi.

¹⁶⁵ Akutsu, "Assessing North Korean Security and Military Threats."

¹⁶⁶ Akutsu.

¹⁶⁷ Lucy Craft, "Why Japan Scrapped a \$4 Billion Missile Defense Purchase from the U.S.," *CBS News*, 2020, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/aegis-ashore-japan-scraps-us-purchase-missile-defense-outrage-at-home-trump-distracted/>.

Program Guidelines, Japan pledged to “actively leverage its defense capability to work on defense cooperation and exchanges which include joint training and exercises, defense equipment and technology cooperation, capacity building assistance, and interchanges among military branches.”¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, Japan highlighted the importance of the U.S.-Japan Alliance in ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific and stated it would “provide support for [the] smooth and effective stationing of U.S. forces in Japan” to counter threats commensurate with the given political situation.¹⁶⁹ This commitment by Japan is promising for the prospect of EABO from Japan’s territory and has already begun to manifest itself, as will be discussed later.

Altogether, these initiatives have enhanced Japan’s security posture and facilitated more significant pathways for U.S.-Japan security cooperation. However, these initiatives require a substantial increase in defense spending, something Japan has limited to 1 percent of its overall gross domestic product (GDP) since the end of World War II.

Specifically, due to its post-World War II pacifism, Japanese society has historically lacked the desire for increased militarism. For example, when Prime Minister Abe announced the relaxation of restrictions on arms exports in 2014, 60 percent of the public were against it.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, in a July 2015 poll, 62 percent opposed an enhanced security legislation that would have seen Japan increase its defense spending.¹⁷¹ As a result, the Japanese Diet has kept defense spending under 1 percent, despite an increasingly hostile security environment. Figure 7 depicts the disparity between Japan’s increasing defense budget but capped defense spending from 2015 to 2019.

¹⁶⁸ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2019 and Beyond* (Japan: Government of Japan, 2018), 15, https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryoku/pdf/2019boueikeikaku_e.pdf.

¹⁶⁹ Government of Japan, 15.

¹⁷⁰ Oros, *Japan’s Security Renaissance*, 151.

¹⁷¹ Oros, 151.

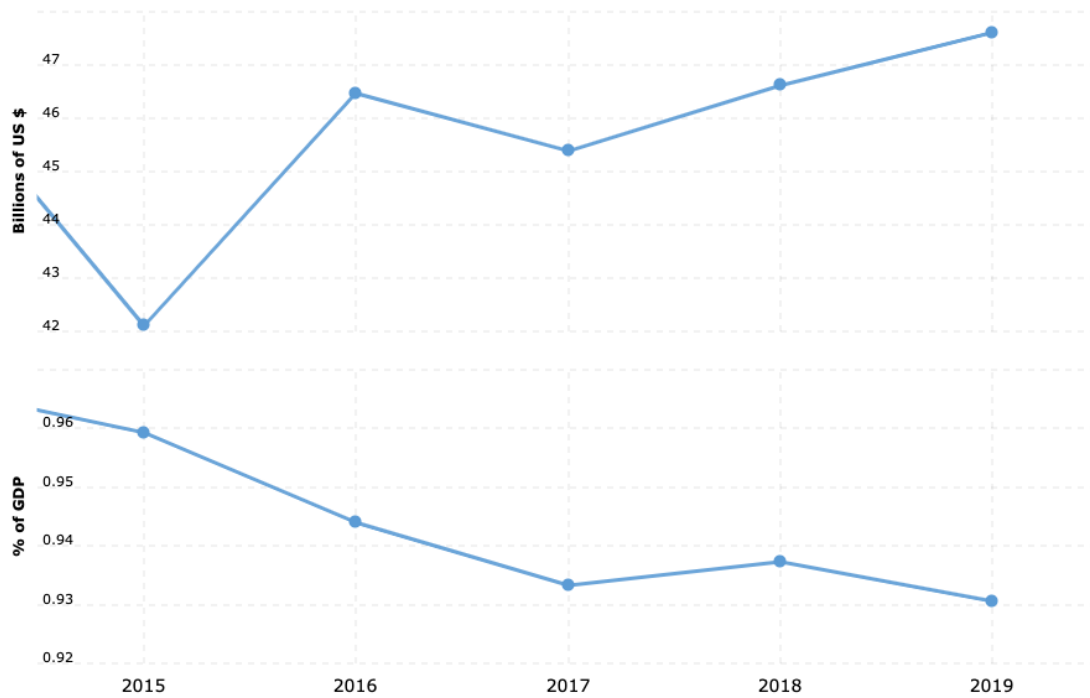


Figure 7. Japan's Overall Defense Budget and Defense Spending, 2015–2019¹⁷²

Hiroyuki Sugai notes, “this trend means that Japan’s defense budget has not been directly responding to its security environment, but has been pursuing the implicit restriction that Japan’s defense budget shouldn’t exceed one percent of the GDP.”¹⁷³ Moreover, this trend puts into question whether Japan can actually support the acquisition of its desired 147 F-35s, their associated maintenance costs, and other high-tech military-related purchases. Moreover, if Japan aims to increase its security cooperation activities, will the JSDF have the operating costs to conduct enhanced training exercises focused on dispersed island defense? Ultimately, Japan may have to reconsider its historical 1 percent cap on defense spending if it wants to realize its newly established initiatives and desired acquisitions.

¹⁷² Source: “Japan Military Spending/Defense Budget 2015–2019,” MacroTrends, accessed May 2, 2022, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/JPN/japan/military-spending-defense-budget>.

¹⁷³ Hiroyuki Sugai, *Japan’s Future Defense and Equipment Policy* (Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence: Brookings, 2016), 31, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/201610_japan_future_defense_hiroyuki_sugai.pdf.

There are indications suggesting that Japan is reconsidering its 1 percent cap on defense spending and overall defense capabilities. In April 2022, Prime Minister Kishida and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) proposed to increase Japan's defense spending to 2 percent.¹⁷⁴ This proposal comes at a time when roughly 70 percent of Japan's society favors strengthening the country's defense capabilities, suggesting public opinion will not be a significant hurdle as has historically been the case.¹⁷⁵

Additionally, the proposal called for developing counterstrike capabilities in concert with the U.S. that can target enemy bases.¹⁷⁶ Within the Diet, counterstrike capabilities are interpreted as acceptable and in accordance with Japan's constitution. Specifically, members of the Diet argue that:

Our stance is that we basically follow a defense-only policy in a steady manner. And when exposed to various threats, Japan will use its defense capabilities to soundly protect ourselves from these threats. For instance, if a series of attacks is aimed at Japan, we as the organization in charge of security ought to consider the use of our striking capabilities to attack enemies' military bases and strategic bases for the sake of self-defense.¹⁷⁷

Public support for this proposal is vital, and heavy opposition would likely see it fail. However, a 2017 public opinion poll of one thousand Japanese citizens found that "over 75% agreed that Japan needs 'the capability to attack enemy bases,' with 30% of those approving a 'preemptive strike.'"¹⁷⁸ Therefore, it is conceivable that continued provocations by North Korea and increased incursions into Japanese territorial waters by the Chinese could lead to public support for counterstrike capabilities. However, JSDF suggested "a gradual, transparent introduction of these capabilities, combined with public dialogue and engagement, to inform the public on the nature of the weapons and reduce

¹⁷⁴ Colin Clark, "Japan's Push to Double Defense Spending Ties Directly Back to Ukraine," *Breaking Defense*, last modified 2022, <https://breakingdefense.sites.breakingmedia.com/2022/05/japans-push-to-double-defense-spending-ties-directly-back-to-ukraine/>.

¹⁷⁵ Shogo Suzuki and Corey Wallace, "Explaining Japan's Response to Geopolitical Vulnerability," *International Affairs* 94, no. 4 (2018): 713, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iyy033>.

¹⁷⁶ Clark, "Japan's Push to Double Defense Spending Ties Directly Back to Ukraine."

¹⁷⁷ Kelly C. Wadsworth, "Should Japan Adopt Conventional Missile Strike Capabilities?," *Asia Policy* 14, no. 2 (2019): 74, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26642288>.

¹⁷⁸ Wadsworth, 75.

fear.”¹⁷⁹ Overall, if Japan agrees to increased defense spending and capabilities, that will likely enhance U.S. access and the feasibility of conducting EABO.

2. U.S. Efforts to Build Partner Capacity with Japan

Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has seen Japan as its most important ally in the region. Accordingly, it has remained committed to building up Japan’s defense capabilities to ensure its stability and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. Furthermore, as the two countries’ regional and global security objectives have become increasingly more aligned, the U.S. has enhanced its security cooperation activities to aid in Japan’s beforementioned initiatives and acquisitions, primarily through arms sales and combined exercises.

Recognizing North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs as a shared security threat, the U.S. provided Japan with numerous high-profile pieces of defense equipment to support its BMD through Foreign Military Sales (FMS). Specifically, in the past five years, the U.S. provided Japan with 13 E-2D Hawkeye early warning aircraft, four Aegis weapon systems, and various missiles (e.g., UGM-84 Harpoons, AIM 120 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles, and SM-3 Block IIA Ballistic Missile Defense interceptor missiles), totaling \$11.5 billion.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the U.S. has deployed seven Aegis BMD-capable vessels near Japan and emplaced an undisclosed number of PAC-3 units on its bases.¹⁸¹ The shared emphasis on BMD is critical for coordination and interoperability between the two countries. It facilitates information sharing to create a common operating picture, increasing the effectiveness of target identification, tracking, and interception, and also advances joint C5ISR-T (Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting), enhancing interoperability.¹⁸² Such partner-building efforts not only curb the threat from North

¹⁷⁹ Wadsworth, 75.

¹⁸⁰ Congressional Research Service, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance*, 37.

¹⁸¹ Congressional Research Service, 35.

¹⁸² Congressional Research Service, 35.

Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs but are invaluable for maritime security and EABO, where defense against missiles will be crucial to its successful execution.

In support of Japan's initiative for greater island defense, the U.S. provided \$16.2 billion in various air assets through FMS to the JSDF over the past eight years.¹⁸³ Specifically, the air assets include 42 F-35Bs, 17 V-22 Ospreys, four KC-46A Pegasus aerial refueling tankers, and three RQ-4 Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles.¹⁸⁴ These assets enhance the JSDF's ability to maintain air superiority over its islands and potentially provide Japan the ability to project power in the East China Sea. Moreover, these assets increase interoperability between U.S. military forces and the JSDF. According to U.S. defense officials, JSDF have "more equipment in common with the U.S. military than does any other allied military."¹⁸⁵ Increased interoperability is essential for EABO, as U.S. military forces and JSDF will both require rapid mobility and air support throughout Japan's numerous islands. In addition, since these systems are the same—in many cases—like those the U.S. will be using, common requirements for maintenance, parts, and petroleum, oil, and lubricant storage and distribution will further facilitate EABO.

The U.S. has also approved \$16 billion in Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) for Japan to acquire additional aircraft, electronics, missiles, and maintenance parts.¹⁸⁶ These purchases by Japan will augment its aircrafts' attack capabilities and increase its missile arsenal, ultimately enhancing its island defense capabilities.

Overall, the U.S. has provided over \$43 billion in arms sales to support Japan's BMD and island defense initiatives, ultimately strengthening the two countries' security relationship and interoperability. Additionally, every item the U.S. has provided Japan through FMS and DCS is suitable for EABO, suggesting a shared appreciation for the operational concept. Moreover, the mission and organization of the USMC's LCT and the JSDF's posture in the southern Ryukyus are similar in concept. For example, they are both

¹⁸³ Congressional Research Service, 37.

¹⁸⁴ Congressional Research Service, 37.

¹⁸⁵ Congressional Research Service, 37.

¹⁸⁶ Congressional Research Service, 38.

tasked to facilitate air and maritime superiority and are equipped with anti-air and anti-ship capabilities. Lastly, both countries' recent combined exercises further validate this shared appreciation for EABO.

Japan and the U.S. have historically participated in several bilateral and multilateral exercises to enhance interoperability and showcase the strength of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Since the signing of the Guidelines for Defense Cooperation in 1978, U.S. military forces and the JSDF have been conducting joint exercises to enhance interoperability. For example, exercise YAMA SAKURA has been conducted annually for over 40 years, focusing on multi-domain operations and joint command and control between the U.S. Army, USMC, and the JSDF.¹⁸⁷ In addition, exercise KEEN SWORD has been an annual field exercise conducted since 1997, increasing the combat readiness and interoperability of U.S. military forces and the JSDF.¹⁸⁸ These two exercises have been instrumental in determining roles and responsibilities within the alliance and have provided the framework for the enhanced joint operations both countries are conducting today. Specifically, in December 2021, the USMC and its JSDF counterparts, along with the U.S. Navy, conducted exercise RESOLUTE DRAGON, the largest joint military exercise between both countries.¹⁸⁹ The exercise was explicitly oriented toward EABO and rehearsed how the USMC and JSDF's chains of command would operate while conducting the concept.¹⁹⁰ Most recently, in February 2022, the U.S. Navy, USMC, U.S. Air Force, and the JSDF conducted exercise NOBLE FUSION, a joint and combined naval expeditionary exercise. This exercise, too, focused on EABO-oriented tasks, including lethal sea-denial operations, seizing key terrain, and securing freedom of movement within the First Island Chain.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Bruce Klingner, "The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance Must Act Now to Deter China from Attacking Taiwan," The Heritage Foundation, last modified 2022, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/the-us-japan-security-alliance-must-act-now-deter-china-attacking-taiwan>.

¹⁸⁸ Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation With Japan."

¹⁸⁹ Klingner, "The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance Must Act Now to Deter China from Attacking Taiwan."

¹⁹⁰ Klingner.

¹⁹¹ Klingner.

The recent conduct of EABO-oriented exercises by the U.S. military and the JSDF highlights a shared appreciation for the concept and may imply that Japan will authorize the execution of EABO from its territory. Furthermore, reports of a U.S.-Japan combined operation plan for a Taiwan contingency, where Japan would allow the USMC to establish EABO on its southwest islands, further suggests Japan supports EABO.¹⁹² According to the plan, the USMC would “deploy high-mobility artillery rocket systems to a temporary base while the [JSDF] provided logistical support of ammunition and fuel.”¹⁹³

3. Gaining/Maintaining Access

The strength of the U.S.-Japan security relationship, combined with both countries’ shared emphasis on building partner capacity, has resulted in significant access for U.S. forces. As outlined in the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, Japan permits the U.S. to build and occupy military facilities, establish lines of communication, and utilize various weapon systems on U.S. bases throughout Japan.¹⁹⁴ This has manifested in seven primary locations: Misawa Air Base in northern Honshu, Iwakuni Air Base in south-central Honshu, Yokota and Atsugi Air Bases near Tokyo, naval bases in Sasebo and Yokosuka, and a multitude of military bases on Okinawa. These permanent bases have led to the stationing of over 50,000 U.S. service members, DOD civilians, and their accompanying family members in Japan.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, these permanent bases have permitted the U.S. to deploy its most technologically advanced platforms (i.e., the USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group, F-35s at Iwakuni and Kadena, and F-22s with the U.S. Air Force at Kadena) to Japan.¹⁹⁶ Figure 8 shows a list of U.S. military bases in Japan and their locations.

¹⁹² Klingner.

¹⁹³ Klingner.

¹⁹⁴ “Agreement Regarding the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, sec. Article III, accessed March 25, 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/2.html>.

¹⁹⁵ Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation With Japan.”

¹⁹⁶ Department of State.



Figure 8. U.S. Military Bases and Locations in Japan¹⁹⁷

In addition to permitting the U.S. to build and occupy military facilities, Japan pays well over half the costs associated with the permanent basing of U.S. military forces, recognizing the critical role U.S. bases play for Japan's national security. Specifically, under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, Japan agrees to pay "61% of annual utility costs and roughly 75% of training relocation costs" to maintain the U.S. presence in

¹⁹⁷ Source: Congressional Research Service, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance*, sec. Summary.

Japan.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, Japan pays approximately \$4 billion annually for U.S.-JSDF military training.¹⁹⁹

Furthermore, the authorized use of U.S. military facilities and areas on Okinawa and its nearby territorial waters enhance freedom of movement for U.S. forces to conduct EABO. For example, in the recent EABO-oriented exercise NOBLE FUSION, JSDF and U.S. forces maneuvered and employed various aviation, fires, and amphibious assets to and from the numerous beaches on Okinawa.²⁰⁰ Moreover, in the Northern Training Area, the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) deployed its High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems to the beach and established control over key littoral terrain.²⁰¹ In total, the U.S. military bases on Okinawa account for over 15% of its land and are strategically located on flat, advantageous terrain.²⁰² Figure 9 depicts all U.S. military facilities and areas on Okinawa and its nearby territorial waters.

¹⁹⁸ Eric Johnston, “As Negotiations Stall, How Much Does Japan Actually Pay to Host U.S. Forces?” *The Japan Times*, 2020, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/12/16/national/how-much-does-japan-pay-to-host-u-s-forces/>.

¹⁹⁹ Kent E. Calder, *Pacific Alliance: Reviving U. S. -Japan Relations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 11, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=3420598>.

²⁰⁰ Cameron Carawan, “U.S. Forces, JGSDF Dominate Air, Land and Sea during Exercise Noble Fusion,” U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, last modified 2022, <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2926369/us-forces-jgsdf-dominate-air-land-and-sea-during-exercise-noble-fusion/>.

²⁰¹ Carawan.

²⁰² “U.S. Military Base Issues in Okinawa,” Okinawa Prefectural Government, accessed May 27, 2022, <https://dc-office.org/basedata>.

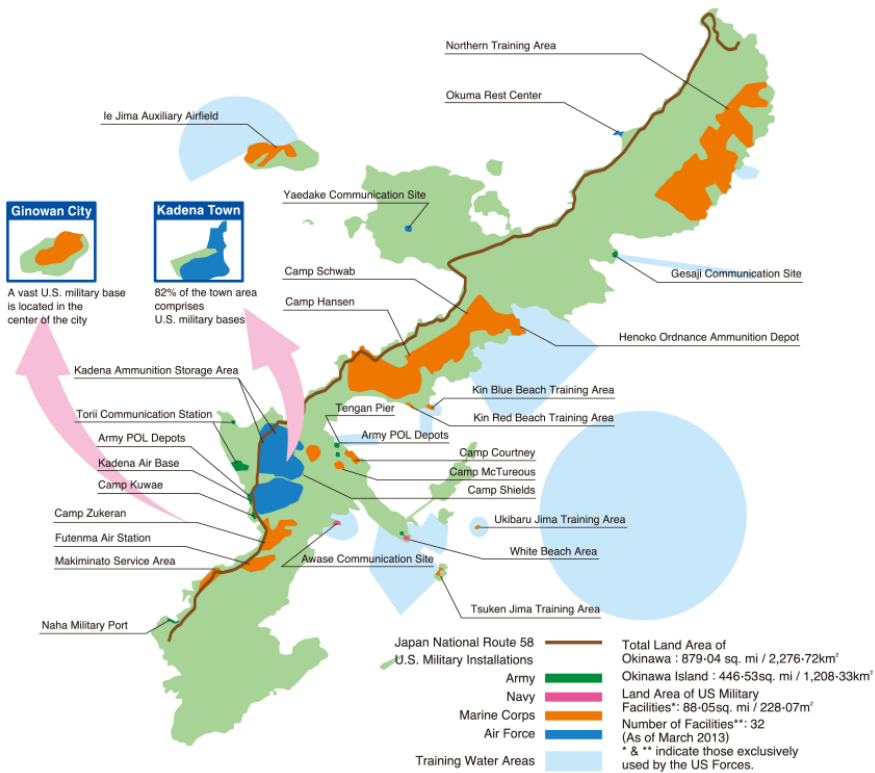


Figure 9. U.S. Military Facilities and Areas on Okinawa and Its Nearby Territorial Waters²⁰³

Finally, the signing of the SOFA in 1960 has provided near unfettered freedom of movement for U.S. military forces and their accompanying equipment throughout Japan. For instance, Article V of the SOFA grants U.S. naval vessels and aircraft the freedom to access any port in Japan without paying a tax or toll and transit Japanese airspace.²⁰⁴ Additionally, the 31st MEU and the Unit Deployment Program have continuously relied on the SOFA to deploy to and from Japan and conduct training and exercises from designated bases—all with minimal coordination with the Japanese government.

As such, the U.S. maintains a great deal of maneuver and logistical access in Japan. However, this access may not be enough to execute EABO from Japanese territory unless in

²⁰³ Source: Okinawa Prefectural Government.

²⁰⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Agreement Regarding the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan,” sec. Article V.

the direct defense of Japan. For example, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security states: “For the purpose of contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East, the United States of America is granted the use by its land, air and naval forces of facilities and areas in Japan.”²⁰⁵ As such, the U.S. must consult with the Japanese government and receive authorization to operate from bases in Japan if conducting combat operations in defense of another country. This could potentially undermine the U.S.’s ability to effectively respond to a Taiwan crisis, where EABO from Japan would be critical to Taiwan’s defense.

Additionally, the unfettered freedom of movement provided by the SOFA is for staging, basing, training, and deploying to other areas. It does not account for an operational concept that uses authorized Japanese territory as potential missile launch sites or attack positions. Given the public opposition over bases and U.S. military presence in general, especially on Okinawa, it is unlikely that public opinion will support the risk of becoming targets of China’s missiles unless it is in direct defense of Japan’s national security. With that said, Japanese citizens do see China as a long-term threat to Japan’s security and are not necessarily against increased interoperability and collective self-defense.²⁰⁶

Overall, the U.S. maintains a great deal of access to Japanese territory, perhaps more than it has with any other country. It has the requisite access to execute EABO from Japanese territory, especially in defense of Japan, but there are legal limitations that limit the conduct of EABO from Japanese territory in defense of other countries. However, ensuring smooth and effective U.S. access is a priority for Japan, as mentioned in its most recent National Defense Program Guidelines.²⁰⁷ Therefore, as Japan continues to build up its island defense capabilities and the U.S. continues to exercise EABO in concert with the JSDF, enhanced access may present itself.

²⁰⁵ “Japan-U.S. Security Treaty,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed May 27, 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>.

²⁰⁶ Suzuki and Wallace, “Explaining Japan’s Response to Geopolitical Vulnerability,” 715.

²⁰⁷ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2019 and Beyond*.

C. FEASIBILITY OF EABO IN JAPAN

1. Findings

The current security cooperation portfolio between the U.S. and Japan indicates that it is feasible to conduct EABO from the northern region of the First Island Chain. The two countries have been building a strong security relationship for over 60 years, and Japan is the U.S.'s most important and active ally in the Indo-Pacific. Regarding partner capacity, the U.S. supplies Japan with over 90 percent of its defense articles and conducts regular annual exercises in tandem with the JSDF.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, the U.S. has provided Japan with over \$43 billion in arms sales in recent years, primarily through FMS and DCS. Moreover, all the arms sales are suitable for EABO, further indicating the feasibility of EABO from Japanese territory. Additionally, the combined execution of EABO-related exercises by the U.S. military and the JSDF suggests that Japan supports the operational concept and likely desires a mutual understanding of EABO tactics, techniques, and procedures in order to conduct similar operations in support of its island defense initiative. The U.S. already maintains a great deal of access to Japanese territory, as allowed by the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security and the current SOFA. Thus, Japan is an excellent country option for the conduct of EABO.

2. Limitations

Despite a strong history of U.S.-Japanese security cooperation, some limitations may impede the execution of EABO. First is Japan's pacifist constitution. As previously mentioned, following World War II, Japan became strongly anti-militarist.²⁰⁹ Under Article 9 of its Constitution, Japan instituted a defense budget not to exceed 1 percent of GDP and reshaped its military to focus purely on self-defense, resulting in overwhelming public support.²¹⁰ Moreover, despite a deteriorating regional security environment that has seen

²⁰⁸ Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation With Japan."

²⁰⁹ Tadashi Anno, "Japanese Domestic Politics and Security Cooperation with Australia: The Limits of 'Normalisation,'" *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 65, no. 1 (2011): 26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2011.535502>.

²¹⁰ Anno, 26.

Japan assume a more significant role in security efforts, pacifists have routinely maintained enough votes to thwart any LDP efforts to revise Japan's Constitution that favored increased military activities and spending.²¹¹ Therefore, pacifism in Japan continues to play a significant role in limiting its ability to conduct military operations, especially ones seen as offensive or that may provoke attacks against Japan's territory and citizens.

Second, public antipathy over the SOFA spurs anti-base protests and limits further U.S. military access. Under the SOFA, U.S. military forces are subject to U.S. laws and administration. Consequently, when U.S. service members commit serious crimes, they are exempted from Japanese prosecution and cleared to stand trial in U.S. courts. For example, after U.S. service members raped an Okinawan girl in 1995, Japanese authorities were unable to prosecute them, triggering thousands of Okinawans to protest the forward presence of U.S. forces on Okinawa, demanding a reduction in base allocations on the island, and calling for revisions to the SOFA.²¹² Evidently, Japanese citizens view the SOFA as detrimental to their culture and legal system. Subsequent anti-base protests have become a key topic in Japanese domestic politics and have resulted in the relocation of some U.S. forces and bases away from Japanese territory, thus limiting U.S. military access.

The LDP, which has had almost continuous control over Japanese domestic politics since 1955, is crucial to overcoming such domestic limitations. The LDP has been a steadfast supporter of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, historically pushing for greater bilateral defense cooperation with the U.S., despite left-wing opposition.²¹³ Furthermore, it recognizes the importance of U.S. bases for Japan's national security. For example, Andrew Yeo notes that the LDP's "strategy of co-optation and legal coercion against anti-base movements is to maintain a strong U.S.-Japan alliance...[because] U.S. bases serve a critical role in Japan's national security strategy."²¹⁴ Currently, opposition parties to the LDP are in disorder,

²¹¹ Anno, 26.

²¹² Yeo, "The U.S.-Japan Alliance and Anti-Base Movements in Okinawa, 1995–1996," 76.

²¹³ Weston S. Konishi, *The Democratic Party of Japan: Its Foreign Policy Position and Implications for U.S. Interests*, R40758 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009), 1, https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20090812_R40758_18e3da5a76ed5bb6ad05563dfb57cfea53a062df.pdf.

²¹⁴ Yeo, "The U.S.-Japan Alliance and Anti-Base Movements in Okinawa, 1995–1996," 85.

suggesting further LDP dominance in Japanese domestic politics.²¹⁵ As such, the LDP is likely to promote sustained or increased U.S. military access, especially given the deteriorating security environment in Japan's periphery.

3. Recommendations

The DOD should consider the following recommendations for enhancing security cooperation activities with Japan to ensure the conduct of EABO from Japan's territory.

- *Continue/Increase FMS to Japan in EABO-related assets.* Increasing the sales of EABO-related assets like fighter aircraft, missiles, transporter erector launchers, anti-missile systems, and radar to Japan assists its BMD and island defense initiatives, making it more capable of protecting its territory from North Korea and Chinese missile threats. Furthermore, given the likelihood that Japan will support the U.S. in contingency operations in the region, supplying Japan with EABO-related assets increases the availability of capabilities and lends to greater interoperability between both countries.
- *Regularly conduct bilateral EABO-oriented exercises with the JSDF.* Given the recent conduct of EABO-oriented exercises with the JSDF, U.S. military planners should regularly schedule such exercises into their annual exercise calendar in order to improve interoperability. As retired USMC Lieutenant General Nicholson stated, "each day U.S. and Japanese forces are not working and training together is an opportunity lost."²¹⁶ By regularly conducting bilateral EABO-oriented exercises, both countries better comprehend and inform their defense strategies and demonstrate to either friend or foe the strength of the U.S.-Japan alliance—ultimately strengthening deterrence. Moreover, as partners in the region witness the

²¹⁵ Congressional Research Service, *Japan-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2021), sec. Summary, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/RL33436.pdf>.

²¹⁶ "USMC Force Design 2030: New Deterrence Strategy Views from Japan," Sasakawa USA, 2021, <https://spfusa.org/event/usmc-force-design-2030-new-deterrence-strategy-views-from-japan/>.

effects of such bilateral operations, they may be inclined to join in future exercises, making them more multilateral and thus, building appreciation for EABO throughout the region.

- *Align U.S. and JSDF roles, missions, and capabilities.* Should the security environment in the vicinity of the First Island Chain deteriorate, U.S. forces conducting high-end combat operations, including EABO, will likely operate in concert with the JSDF. Therefore, given the region's complex and vast geography, a pre-planned understanding of both countries' military roles, missions, and capabilities is required. For example, the JSDF should prioritize the protection of civilians living on the southern islands and support non-combatant evacuations while U.S. forces remain focused on EABO-like operations. Following the protection of local citizens, then the JSDF should conduct joint operations with U.S. forces. Retired JSDF Lieutenant General Isobe recommended codifying this understanding by revising the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines.²¹⁷
- *Develop a command structure that creates a truly combined force.* Currently, the U.S. and Japan conduct bilateral operations under their respective chains of command. The U.S. and Japan should establish a permanent joint headquarters to enhance interoperability, planning, and timely operations. The effectiveness of such a joint headquarters was apparent during Operation Tomodachi, where the timely collaboration between the U.S. and Japanese significantly reduced the severity caused by the earthquake.²¹⁸ Furthermore, a joint headquarters will streamline joint and combined C5ISR-T, which will be critical for EABO and the JSDF's island defense operations.

²¹⁷ Sasakawa USA.

²¹⁸ Sasakawa USA.

- *Increase Key Leader Engagements through tabletop exercises.* Tabletop exercises should be conducted more often between U.S., JSDF, and Japanese civilian key leaders to enhance understanding of their respective roles and missions for various contingencies, improve communication, and create measurable objectives when conducting training and exercises. Such efforts will be instrumental when performing complex, dispersed operations like EABO.
- *Harden American and Japanese military bases in Japan.* Despite EABO's deemphasis on permanent basing, U.S. bases in Japan serve as critical staging areas and launching points for U.S. forces to deploy throughout the region. Echoing the recommendation of retired USMC Lieutenant General Chip Gregson, the U.S. should invest in hardening American and Japanese military bases in Japan to ensure the rapid mobility and sustainment of U.S. force and the JSDF.²¹⁹ He further highlighted Israel's Iron Dome defense system as an example of the kind of measures that the U.S. and Japan should implement.²²⁰ Furthermore, hardening and dispersing petrol, oil, and lubricant storage throughout U.S. and Japanese bases will protect critical logistics and supplies needed for dispersed operations
- *Seek Department of State (DOS) and Japan's Ministry of Defense Messaging Support.* Coordinating with the DOS and Japan's Ministry of Defense on developing a locally focused messaging strategy or other diplomatic inducements outside of the military element of U.S. national power may persuade local communities, especially in the southern islands, to support EABO.

²¹⁹ Sasakawa USA.

²²⁰ Sasakawa USA.

IV. INDONESIA

Like Japan, Indonesia is an archipelagic country with suitable characteristics for conducting Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO). Located at the bottom of the First Island Chain, Indonesia consists of some 17,500 islands composed of densely forested mountainous terrain, coastal plains, and shallow seas.²²¹ For this reason, Indonesia is a sought-after geographical location for EABO because it provides numerous sites for the dispersion and mobility of United States (U.S.) forces. Additionally, Indonesia is home to the Strait of Malacca, the Sunda Strait, and the Lombok Strait, strategic maritime chokepoints responsible for one-third of the world's oil trade and one-half of the world's liquified natural gas trade.²²² Therefore, Indonesia also provides opportune positioning for EABO to support sea denial and sea control. Figure 10 shows Indonesia's archipelagic layout and maritime chokepoints.



Figure 10. Indonesia and Its Maritime Chokepoints²²³

²²¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Indonesia," The World Factbook, last modified 2022, sec. Geography, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/indonesia/#geography>.

²²² "The Strait of Malacca, a Key Oil Trade Chokepoint, Links the Indian and Pacific Oceans," U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=32452>.

²²³ Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration.

However, Indonesia's policy of nonalignment in international affairs, combined with lingering anti-U.S. sentiment stemming from the two countries' history, limits U.S. access to its territory—an obvious concern for the feasibility of EABO. At the same time, the rising threat of China and its recent incursions into Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the vicinity of the Natuna Islands threaten Indonesia's sovereignty.²²⁴ This may lead to increased balancing behavior by Indonesia, expanded bilateral relations between Indonesia and the U.S., and the possibility of increased levels of access for EABO.

This chapter examines the feasibility of the U.S. conducting EABO in Indonesia. It is divided into three sections. The first section provides an overview of the history of U.S.-Indonesia security relations. The second section analyzes the extent of U.S.-Indonesia security cooperation by specifically examining the two countries' security relationship, their efforts to build partner capacity, and the current access granted to the U.S. by Indonesia. Finally, the third section draws conclusions on the feasibility of the U.S. conducting EABO in Indonesia and provides recommendations. The evidence will show that while Indonesia maintains a security relationship with the U.S. and participates in building partner capacity, it does not grant the necessary access to facilitate EABO. At best, some suggestions for marginal steps forward might help facilitate such operations should political conditions allow.

A. THE HISTORY OF U.S.-INDONESIA SECURITY RELATIONS

Security relations between the U.S. and Indonesia have been inconsistent over time, leaving the strength of the two countries' relatively young security relationship untested. However, the agreement on a strategic partnership between the U.S. and Indonesia in 2015 is the result of their enduring security relationship and suggests there is potential for deepening security cooperation.²²⁵ Might such improvement be conducive for EABO?

²²⁴ Maria Siow, "South China Sea: What Does Beijing Want in Indonesia's Natuna Islands?," *South China Morning Post*, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3125084/south-china-sea-what-does-beijing-want-indonesias-natuna-islands>.

²²⁵ Congressional Research Service, *Indonesia*, IF10247 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2020), 1–2, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10247/9>.

Following Indonesia's independence in 1945, the U.S. grew increasingly concerned with Indonesia's relations with the Soviet Union. Under President Sukarno's rule until 1965, Indonesia was the largest foreign recipient of Soviet aid, ultimately limiting U.S. security cooperation efforts.²²⁶ Regime change in 1965 brought President Suharto, an anti-communist general, to power and initiated U.S. rapprochement with Indonesia that led to the U.S. becoming the key partner to Indonesia's military, providing aid, equipment, and training up to the end of the Cold War.²²⁷ Despite prioritizing its nonalignment policy in international affairs, the 1980s and 1990s saw Indonesia engage in security cooperation with the U.S. through International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programs, increasing diplomatic and military relationships between the two countries.²²⁸ However, concerns over human rights violations committed by Indonesia's military, the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), in the late 20th century caused the U.S. to suspend security cooperation until the early 2000s, spurring concern from Indonesian security planners about U.S. reliability.²²⁹ It was not until the U.S.-led Global War on Terror that security relationships between the two countries were revived, albeit only to a limited extent.²³⁰

As the most populous Muslim-majority country in the world, the increased frequency of domestic terror attacks in Indonesia led it to participate in the U.S.'s Regional Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program and engage in additional U.S. security cooperation activities, specifically military and law enforcement counterterrorism training.²³¹ By 2010, the U.S. normalized military relations with Indonesia through their "Comprehensive Partnership," a high-level bilateral engagement on issues like democracy,

²²⁶ Ann Marie Murphy, "US Rapprochement with Indonesia: From Problem State to Partner," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32, no. 3 (2010): 365, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25798864>.

²²⁷ Murphy, 365.

²²⁸ Alexander Sullivan, *Strengthening U.S.-Indonesia Defense Ties* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2014), 4, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/184914/CNAS_IndonesiaCountry_Sullivan.pdf.

²²⁹ Jonah Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific: Indonesia*, RR-4412/3-AF (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2021), 41.

²³⁰ Congressional Research Service, *Indonesia*, 2.

²³¹ Sullivan, *Strengthening U.S.-Indonesia Defense Ties*, 4.

civil society, security, and trade.²³² In 2015, Indonesia and the U.S. upgraded their Comprehensive Partnership to a “Strategic Partnership,” extending cooperation to include regional defense and maritime security issues, among others.²³³ Therefore, despite ideological differences at the beginning of the Cold War that impeded U.S.-Indonesia security relations, momentum has been building between the two countries since the early 2000s, resulting in a deepening strategic partnership. This strategic partnership has seen Indonesia vote more closely with the U.S. on security initiatives at the United Nations Security Council.²³⁴ In 2019 and 2020, Indonesia had a 97 percent and 96 percent voting coincidence with the U.S., casting only one opposite vote in 2020.²³⁵ These results suggest Indonesia agrees with the U.S.-led regional security order. Furthermore, these results showcase the effectiveness of U.S. security cooperation activities in influencing Indonesia’s support for U.S. foreign policy objectives.

B. U.S.-INDONESIA SECURITY COOPERATION ANALYSIS

Current U.S.-Indonesia security cooperation activities indicate an enduring security relationship with similar security objectives and a shared desire for increased partner capacity. However, despite these positive indicators, increased access for U.S. basing or operations beyond exercises focused on securing Indonesian territory has not manifested. This lack of access raises concerns about the feasibility of EABO in Indonesia.

1. Indonesia’s Security Challenges and Efforts to Address Them

Indonesia faces a variety of internal issues, nontraditional external concerns, and traditional external threats. Specifically, Indonesia views the threat of returning Islamist militants, episodic unrest within its borders, continued transnational crime, and incursions

²³² “U.S. Relations With Indonesia,” Department of State, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-indonesia/>.

²³³ Congressional Research Service, *Indonesia*, 2.

²³⁴ “Voting Practices in the United Nations,” Department of State, accessed February 8, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/voting-practices-in-the-united-nations/>.

²³⁵ “Report to Congress on Voting Practices in the United Nations for 2020,” Department of State, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/voting-practices-in-the-united-nations/>; “Voting Practices in the United Nations for 2019,” Department of State, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/voting-practices-in-the-united-nations/>.

into its EEZ by China as its primary security threats. However, Indonesia's defense spending does not sustain, let alone modernize, its forces to effectively combat its own narrow security threats, providing opportunities for the U.S. to increase its security cooperation activities with Indonesia and strengthen the security relationship.

Internally, Indonesia has seen deepening religious cleavages increase Islamist militancy and motivate Islamist radicals to leave Indonesia to fight alongside the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).²³⁶ This concerns the Indonesian government because fighters have returned to Indonesia with the knowledge and resolve to conduct terrorist attacks, as evidenced by the 2016 attack in Jakarta.²³⁷ Consequently, under President Joko Widodo, Indonesia has exercised more authoritarian measures to stop Islamist militancy, undermining its democratic achievements.²³⁸ For example, President Widodo attempted to silence Islamist opposition before his 2019 election by banning the transnational Islamist organization, the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, from college campuses and using law enforcement against Islamist supporters.²³⁹ According to the Varieties of Democracy project, which measures and provides data on the degree of democracy in countries, Indonesia's civil society has experienced a decline in its overall autonomy from the state, negatively impacting Indonesia's liberal principles of democracy.²⁴⁰ President Widodo's efforts to stop Islamist militancy and promote his pluralist political philosophy are partly responsible for this decline. Figure 11 depicts Indonesia's civil society and liberal democratic regression between 2000 and 2020. The Core Civil Society Index measures the degree to which citizens can "freely and actively pursue their political and civic goals" in

²³⁶ Sullivan, *Strengthening U.S.-Indonesia Defense Ties*, 5.

²³⁷ Joshua Kurlantzick, *Keeping the U.S.-Indonesia Relationship Moving Forward* (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 2018), 12, <https://www.cfr.org/report/keeping-us-indonesia-relationship-moving-forward>.

²³⁸ Edward Aspinall and Marcus Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections: Nondemocratic Pluralism in Indonesia," *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 4 (2019): 104, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0055>.

²³⁹ Aspinall and Mietzner, 109.

²⁴⁰ "Indonesia Country Graph," Varieties of Democracy, accessed February 11, 2022, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/CountryGraph/.

a specific country.²⁴¹ The Liberal Democracy Index measures the extent to which that country achieves the ideals of liberal democracy. These indices draw together scores of multidimensional and disaggregated datasets and are coded by multiple independent experts. The Varieties of Democracy project is affiliated with the University of Gothenburg in Sweden and is widely cited in the field.

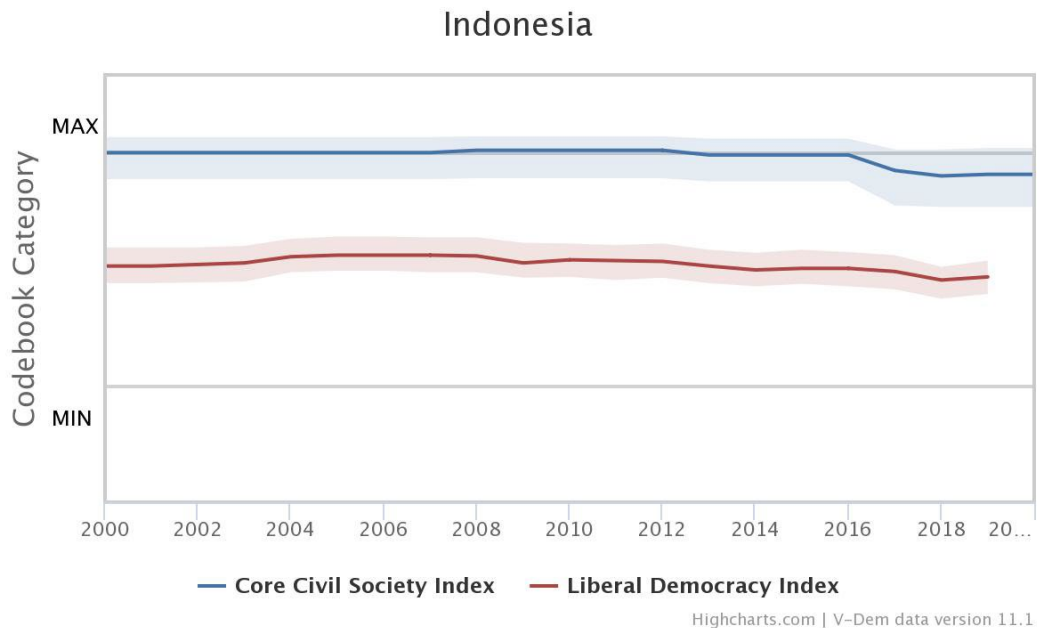


Figure 11. Civil Society and Liberal Democracy Regression in Indonesia between 2000–2020²⁴²

President Widodo and his government have done little to correct Indonesia’s democratic regression, prioritizing economic development despite deepening religious cleavages.²⁴³ President Widodo believes that a more modern economy will enhance Indonesia’s liberal principles of democracy in the future.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Varieties of Democracy.

²⁴² Source: Varieties of Democracy.

²⁴³ Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, “Indonesia: Jokowi Sidelines Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 32, no. 4 (2021): 72, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/815938>.

²⁴⁴ Mujani and Liddle, 72.

The frequent occurrences of maritime security issues (e.g., piracy, trafficking, weapons proliferation, terrorist threats, illegal fishing, etc.) constitute Indonesia's most pressing nontraditional security concerns. However, the TNI, which plays a leading role in domestic policing in addition to national security, is inadequately prepared in both resources and human capital to handle these various concerns.²⁴⁵ Specifically, the lack of ships and personnel in the TNI's navy limits it from proactively patrolling the vast geographical landscape that makes up Indonesia's archipelago and reducing maritime security threats from happening.

The most significant traditional external threat to Indonesia is China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea (SCS). China's active patrolling of its self-proclaimed nine-dash line has seen it make incursions into Indonesia's EEZ in the vicinity of the Natuna Islands, threatening Indonesia's sovereignty.²⁴⁶ In response, Indonesia began constructing military facilities on the Natuna Islands to enforce its borders, maintain maritime security, and protect its natural resources.²⁴⁷ Most notably is the establishment of the Natuna Integrated TNI Unit. This project, once completed, will be capable of hosting numerous platforms from submarines, fighter jets, warships, unmanned aerial vehicles, and various missile systems.²⁴⁸

Indonesia's military expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) does not facilitate its enhanced military modernization to combat the internal issues, nontraditional external concerns, and traditional external threats it faces. Before President Widodo, President Yudhoyono introduced a "Minimum Essential Force" (MEF) modernization plan to increase the size of Indonesia's navy to 274 ships by 2024 and

²⁴⁵ Sullivan, *Strengthening U.S.-Indonesia Defense Ties*, 5–6.

²⁴⁶ Siow, "South China Sea."

²⁴⁷ "Indonesia Reinforces Its Command over Natuna Waters through Military Bases," *The Jakarta Post*, 2016, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2016/09/27/indonesia-reinforces-its-command-over-natuna-waters-through-military-bases.html>.

²⁴⁸ Evan Laksmana, "Why Indonesia's New Natuna Base Is Not about Deterring China," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, last modified 2019, <https://amti.csis.org/indonesias-natuna-base-not-about-deterring-china/>.

improve Indonesia’s defense industry.²⁴⁹ However, defense spending has remained under 1 percent of GDP in the past decade, despite President Widodo’s campaign pledge to increase defense spending to 1.5 percent of GDP.²⁵⁰ As such, the MEF modernization plan is behind schedule. Figure 12 depicts Indonesia’s military expenditure as a percentage of GDP between 2010 and 2020.

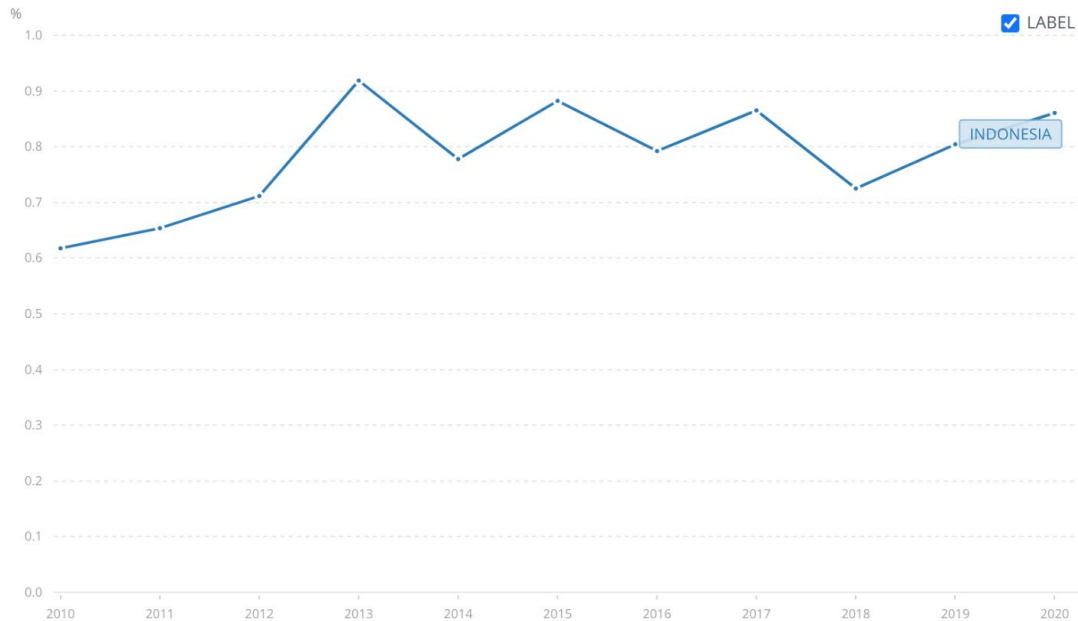


Figure 12. Indonesia’s Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP between 2010–2020²⁵¹

Furthermore, Indonesia has averaged just \$7.5 billion annually in total defense spending between 2011 and 2020.²⁵² Indonesia’s Minister of Defense, Prabowo Subianto,

²⁴⁹ Felix K. Chang, “At a Crossroads: Indonesia’s Navy Modernization,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, last modified 2021, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/09/at-a-crossroads-indonesias-navy-modernization/>.

²⁵⁰ Sullivan, *Strengthening U.S.-Indonesia Defense Ties*, 6.

²⁵¹ Source: “Military Expenditure (% of GDP) - Indonesia,” The World Bank, accessed February 15, 2022, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2020&locations=ID&start=2010&view=chart>.

²⁵² “Indonesia: Military Spending,” Statista, accessed April 1, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1038365/indonesia-military-spending/>.

highlighted that Indonesia’s defense spending “is the lowest compared to our neighbors in Southeast Asia.”²⁵³ Consequently, Indonesia budgeted \$9.26 billion in 2021 for defense spending to keep up with its neighboring countries, an approximate 20 percent increase from prior years.²⁵⁴ Finally, Indonesia has sought up to \$125 billion in foreign loans to assist its MEF modernization plan.²⁵⁵ Figure 13 depicts Indonesia’s yearly defense spending between 2011 and 2020.

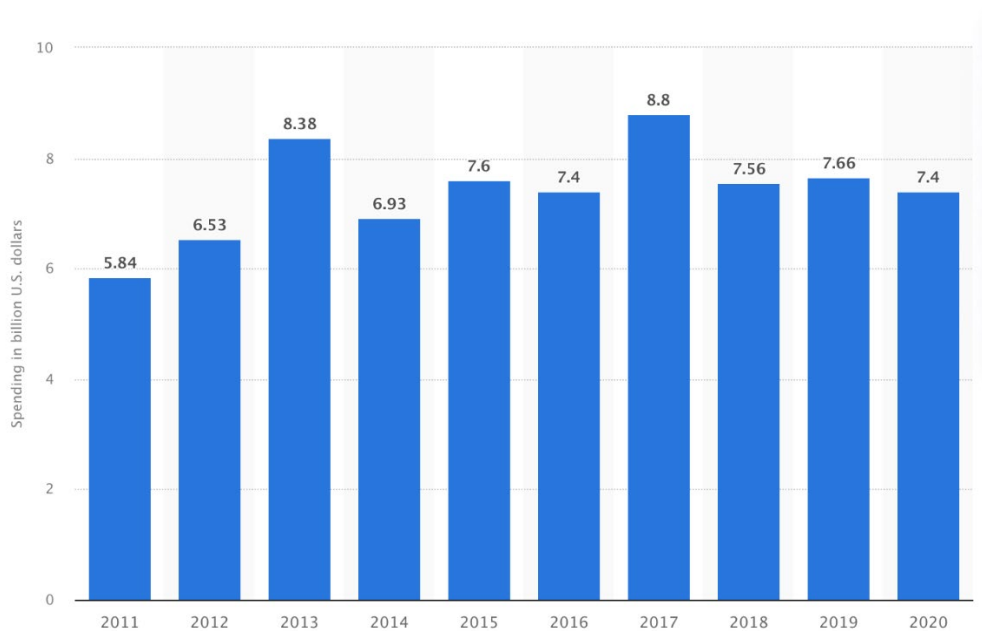


Figure 13. Indonesia’s Annual Defense Spending between 2011 and 2020²⁵⁶

The variety of internal issues, nontraditional external concerns, and traditional external threats pose significant challenges for Indonesia and its defense industry. One scholar asserts “that this ‘spectrum of conflict’ may force tradeoffs, as Indonesia is unlikely

²⁵³ Tom Abke, “Indonesia’s Modernization Efforts Spur Big Increase in Defense Spending,” Indo-Pacific Defense Forum, last modified 2020, <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2020/01/indonesias-modernization-efforts-spur-big-increase-in-defense-spending/>.

²⁵⁴ Abke.

²⁵⁵ Tangguh Chairil, “What Is Indonesia’s US\$125 Billion Arms Procurement Budget Plan about and What Does It Need to Do?,” The Conversation, last modified 2021, <http://theconversation.com/what-is-indonesias-us-125-billion-arms-procurement-budget-plan-about-and-what-does-it-need-to-do-163080>.

²⁵⁶ Source: Statista, “Indonesia.”

to be able to field a force that can effectively deal with both near-term, low-level threats and longer-term, high-end threats.”²⁵⁷ As such, U.S. efforts in building an enduring security relationship with Indonesia may result in Indonesia seeing merit in U.S. concepts like EABO as part of a greater deterrence strategy that complements Indonesia’s national security needs. Adopting such concepts for the TNI would be valuable for the U.S. as it builds relevant partner capacity and facilitates bilateral cooperative deployments to the extent the political situation allows.

2. U.S. Efforts to Build Partner Capacity with Indonesia

Indonesia’s perceived security environment and challenges have led to it having similar security objectives to the U.S., providing opportunities for the U.S. to demonstrate its support for Indonesia’s sovereignty and promote Indonesian stability.

To address Indonesia’s internal concerns, the U.S. implemented various programs to enhance Indonesia’s counterterrorism capabilities and strengthen Indonesia’s democratic governance. For example, in 2003, the U.S. began to fund Indonesia’s counterterrorism unit, Densus 88, through the Diplomatic Security Service’s Antiterrorism Assistance Program, which had great success in destabilizing terrorist networks in Indonesia.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, the U.S. provided training to the TNI on effective counterterrorism measures and agreed to provide maritime security assistance, limiting infiltration by terrorists.²⁵⁹ To strengthen Indonesia’s democratic governance, the U.S. Agency for International Development, under the authority of the U.S.-Indonesia Strategic Partnership, engaged with Indonesian government officials, civil society, educational institutions, and media to promote pluralism and tolerance, decreasing the restriction on individual and group freedoms in Indonesia.²⁶⁰ Such efforts assisted in curbing the threat

²⁵⁷ Sullivan, *Strengthening U.S.-Indonesia Defense Ties*, 5.

²⁵⁸ “Radical Islam, Islamism & Terrorism in Indonesia - Terrorist Cells,” Indonesia Investments, accessed April 2, 2022, <https://www.indonesia-investments.com/business/risks/radical-islam/item245>.

²⁵⁹ Scott Mastic, “The United States Must Help Indonesia in Fight against ISIS,” The Hill, last modified 2018, <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/372791-the-united-states-must-help-indonesia-fight-against-isis/>.

²⁶⁰ “Democratic Resilience and Governance: Indonesia,” U.S. Agency for International Development, 2022, <https://www.usaid.gov/indonesia/democracy-human-rights-and-governance>.

from Islamist militants and highlighted how U.S. foreign assistance could bolster Indonesian stability and improve the U.S.-Indonesia security relationship.

The U.S. has a similar interest in Indonesia's nontraditional maritime security issues, as they threaten its interests as well.²⁶¹ Therefore, the U.S. signed the "Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Maritime Cooperation" with Indonesia in 2015, concurrent with the Strategic Partnership, focusing on maritime security, marine conservation, maritime economy, maritime safety and navigation, and marine technology and science.²⁶² Under this MOU, both countries began conducting dozens of annual engagements aimed at maritime security, border security, and counter-proliferation.²⁶³ These engagements consisted primarily of security dialogues, exercises (e.g., CARAT, GARUDA SHIELD, RIMPAC), maritime education and training, and cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts.²⁶⁴ In addition, in 2020, the Department of Defense (DOD) provided Indonesia's navy with 14 ScanEagle unmanned aerial vehicles and upgrades for three of its Bell 412 helicopters through the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative, totaling \$22.6 million.²⁶⁵ These provisions not only assisted in modernizing Indonesia's navy but strengthened its naval and coast guard maritime security efforts and maritime domain awareness capacity.²⁶⁶ The MOU, and its accompanying engagements and provisions, further highlight the importance the U.S. and Indonesia put on building their security relationship. As such, they may prove valuable foundations for future cooperation, although they fall far short of the demands for EABO.

²⁶¹ Kurlantzick, *Keeping the U.S.-Indonesia Relationship Moving Forward*, 13.

²⁶² "Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Republic of Indonesia," White House, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/26/joint-statement-united-states-america-and-republic-indonesia>.

²⁶³ Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation With Indonesia."

²⁶⁴ Adrian Jansen, "USINDO Jakarta Open Forum: 'Expanding and Strengthening the United States - Indonesia Security Partnership: The Maritime Cooperation,'" The United States-Indonesia Society, last modified 2013, <https://usindo.org/events/usindo-jakarta-open-forum-expanding-and-strengthening-the-united-states-indonesia-security-partnership-the-maritime-cooperation/>.

²⁶⁵ Prashanth Parameswaran, "US-Indonesia Defense Relations in the Spotlight With Legislative Approval," *The Diplomat*, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/us-indonesia-defense-relations-in-the-spotlight-with-legislative-approval/>.

²⁶⁶ Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation With Indonesia."

In support of Indonesia's efforts to thwart China's aggressive actions in the SCS, the U.S. invested \$3.5 million in Indonesian projects to develop infrastructure in the Natuna Islands.²⁶⁷ Furthermore, the U.S. offered Indonesia increased maritime security cooperation and freedom of navigation operations around the Natuna Islands, further demonstrating U.S. support for Indonesia's sovereignty.²⁶⁸ While such support builds a more robust security relationship between the U.S. and Indonesia, U.S. investment in infrastructure projects such as the Natuna Integrated TNI Unit provides potential basing locations for EABO at the southern boundary of the SCS without directly subjecting Indonesia's populated islands to China's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities. Further, in the interim, this sort of engagement facilitates U.S. security cooperation officials' engagement with the TNI's approach towards deploying missile systems and C5ISR-T (Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting) capabilities in support of traditional high-end conventional forces.

The U.S. has also served as one source of foreign investment in Indonesia's defense efforts, investing over \$5 million from 2016 through 2020 to support Indonesia's defense industry improvements, specifically targeting strategic planning, budgeting, and sustainment of Indonesia's defense forces.²⁶⁹

Overall, the U.S. has provided over \$30 million in foreign assistance specifically aimed at building the U.S.-Indonesia security relationship. These provisions do not include the millions of dollars the U.S. offers in military financing for equipment, maintenance support, or service contracts, which I will discuss below. Though such foreign assistance supports Indonesia's military modernization, Indonesia still lacks adequate funding to achieve its MEF plan and play a more significant role in regional security. Therefore, increased U.S. investment in Indonesia's economy may be necessary. While it is outside

²⁶⁷ "US, Indonesia Building Maritime Training Base on Batan," Radio Free Asia, 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/base-06282021182525.html>.

²⁶⁸ Lenny Tristia Tambun and Heru Andriyanto, "US Offers Maritime Security Cooperation in Natuna amid China's 'Unlawful Claims,'" *Jakarta Globe*, 2020, sec. News, <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/us-offers-maritime-security-cooperation-in-natuna-amid-chinas-unlawful-claims>.

²⁶⁹ Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation With Indonesia."

the scope of this thesis to examine the specifics behind U.S.-Indonesia economic relations, more favorable trade agreements between the two countries may grow Indonesia's economy and lead to an increase in defense spending. Increased defense spending will undoubtedly aid Indonesia in recognizing its modernization efforts more quickly and position Indonesia as a leading non-alliance partner at the southern boundary of the SCS.

Militarily, the U.S. and Indonesia conduct over 220 security cooperation activities annually, mainly focused on counterterrorism, maritime security and awareness, and HA/DR.²⁷⁰ Most significant are CARAT, GARUDA SHIELD, COPE WEST, and RIMPAC.

CARAT Indonesia is a bilateral exercise with the U.S. but part of a nine-nation multilateral series of CARAT exercises throughout the Indo-Pacific. CARAT Indonesia demonstrates the two countries' ability to cooperate on bilateral security efforts and fosters interoperability between the U.S. and Indonesian navies. Routine activities in the exercise include bilateral naval maneuvers, target identification and pursuit, search and seizure drills, gunnery exercises, maritime patrol operations, and logistical sustainment, among others.²⁷¹ In 2021, U.S. assets taking part in CARAT appeared specifically related to EABO. In particular, naval and air assets included the variant littoral combat ship, the USS Jackson, the expeditionary fast transport ship, the USNS Millinocket, a P-8 Poseidon aircraft, and a squadron of MH-60S Seahawk helicopters.²⁷² Therefore, CARAT not only improves the interoperability between the U.S. and Indonesian navy and sharing of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) but also serves as a perfect venue for the U.S. to practice its EABO operating concept and demonstrate its effectiveness to a potential supporting country.

²⁷⁰ Brady Crosier, *Country Security Cooperation Plan Overview for Indonesia* (U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Indonesia: United States Marine Corps, 2020), 1.

²⁷¹ Lauren Chatmas, "U.S., Indonesia Commence Bilateral Exercise CARAT Indonesia," United States Navy, last modified 2021, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2828209/us-indonesia-commence-bilateral-exercise-carat-indonesia/>.

²⁷² "US and Indonesian Forces Begin CARAT 2021 Exercise," Naval Technology, 2021, <https://www.naval-technology.com/news/us-indonesian-forces-begin-carat-2021/>.

GARUDA SHIELD is a U.S. Army and TNI exercise that focuses on training for combat, overcoming nontraditional threats, and providing HA/DR.²⁷³ COPE WEST is a U.S. Air Force and Indonesian Air Force exercise that permits the exchange of TTPs related to air-to-air training.²⁷⁴ Finally, RIMPAC is a more extensive multilateral exercise in the region, focused on maritime security to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific.²⁷⁵ Participating in these exercises is essential for the U.S. because it affords them some short-term access to Indonesian territory. Such access presents opportunities to set conditions, build institutional relationships, and build local awareness for future operations like EABO.

IMET is another crucial security cooperation activity that lends to increased access for the U.S. in Indonesia. In *The Military and Democracy in Indonesia*, published by RAND, authors Rabasa and Haseman highlight the importance of IMET on TNI decision-making regarding important issues (e.g., increased access):

The enhanced person-to-person relationships between American officers and their foreign classmates have repeatedly been cited as being of great value in future years when those young officers have risen to the highest levels of their respective armed forces and national government establishments. In Indonesia, the capability to gain the ear of senior TNI officers as the result of shared experiences and friendship provides a more meaningful opportunity to discuss—and perhaps influence—issues of importance to both countries.²⁷⁶

Recognizing the importance of IMET, the U.S. has progressively increased its IMET to Indonesia over the past decade. Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, when foreign travel was mainly halted, Indonesia received more than \$2.3 million in IMET.²⁷⁷ Figure 14 depicts the progressive increase in U.S. IMET to Indonesia from 2008 to 2017.

²⁷³ “U.S. and Indonesia Strengthen Partnership with Garuda Shield 2021 Military Exercise,” U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Indonesia, 2021, <https://id.usembassy.gov/u-s-and-indonesia-strengthen-partnership-with-garuda-shield-2021-military-exercise/>.

²⁷⁴ Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation With Indonesia.”

²⁷⁵ Department of State.

²⁷⁶ Angel Rabasa and John Haseman, “The Rocky Course of U.S.-Indonesian Military Relations,” in *The Military and Democracy in Indonesia: Challenges, Politics, and Power*, 1st ed. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 120, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mr1599srf.20>.

²⁷⁷ Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation With Indonesia.”



Figure 14. U.S. IMET to Indonesia from 2008 to 2017²⁷⁸

In like manner, U.S. FMS, Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) to Indonesia serve as enablers for increased U.S. access. Specifically, as Indonesia purchases more military equipment and assets from the U.S., Indonesia will require U.S. training, upgrades, and maintenance on the equipment and assets to ensure operational effectiveness.

To enumerate, through FMS, Indonesia has active contracts for the purchase and acquisition of a variety of aircraft and missiles, including the F-16C/D Block 25 fighter aircraft, the AH-64D Apache Block III Longbow helicopters, the MV-22 Block C Osprey aircraft, the Javelin, the AIM-120C-7 AMRAAM, the AIM-9X-2 Sidewinder, and AGM-65K2 Maverick, totaling \$1.88 billion.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Source: Andreyka Natalegawa, “Enhancing the U.S.-Indonesia Strategic Partnership,” Center for Strategic & International Studies, last modified 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/enhancing-us-indonesia-strategic-partnership>.

²⁷⁹ Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation With Indonesia.”

From 2015 through 2019, the U.S. authorized the permanent export of over \$546 million worth of aircraft, firearms, and electronics to Indonesia through the DCS process.²⁸⁰

Additionally, in 2020, via FMF, Indonesia received \$14 million from the U.S. to be spent on U.S. military equipment, maintenance support, or services.²⁸¹ Accordingly, many of these systems require specific maintenance and parts outside the capabilities of Indonesia's defense industry, promoting opportunities for the U.S. to establish supporting infrastructure within Indonesian territory.

Lastly, HA/DR is a primary mission for the Indonesian government and provides the U.S. opportunity to further build partner capacity with the TNI and create pro-U.S. sentiment with the Indonesian population, improving access potential. Recognizing itself as a country frequently impacted by natural disasters, Indonesia holds an annual military exercise, KOMODO, open to all countries wanting to focus on HA/DR.²⁸² KOMODO features a variety of activities, including civil action projects, medical civilian action projects, maritime exhibitions, and field training exercises, among others.²⁸³ The maritime exhibitions incorporate replenishment at sea operations and the rapid deployment of navy vessels for maritime interception.²⁸⁴ U.S. assets that take part in KOMODO include the expeditionary fast transport ship, the USNS Millinocket, a P-8A Poseidon aircraft, a detachment of U.S. Marines and Navy Seabees, and command staff.²⁸⁵ Therefore, U.S. forces are not only operating in Indonesian waters, gaining maritime domain awareness, but are also gaining temporary access to Indonesia's territory and familiarizing themselves with the terrain, ports, and command and control interoperability with TNI staff. Therefore,

²⁸⁰ Department of State.

²⁸¹ Department of State.

²⁸² Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, 48–49.

²⁸³ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Exercise Komodo 2018 Puts Indonesia Navy in the Spotlight," *The Diplomat*, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/exercise-komodo-2018-puts-indonesia-navy-in-the-spotlight/>.

²⁸⁴ Parameswaran.

²⁸⁵ "U.S. Navy Joins 30-plus Nations for Multinational Exercise Komodo," Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, 2018, <http://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/1512047/us-navy-joins-30-plus-nations-for-multinational-exercise-komodo>.

though primarily engineered to support HA/DR, participation in KOMODO also provides valuable rehearsals for the execution of EABO.

Furthermore, as a regular participant in KOMODO, the U.S. improves its interoperability with the TNI, does not challenge Indonesia's nonalignment policy, and promotes multilateral cooperation for larger Indo-Pacific strategies.²⁸⁶ Most significantly, the U.S. military may gain increased access in the event of a natural disaster in Indonesia because of the assistance it could provide, such as runway repair, coastline remapping, and aid delivery via air assets.²⁸⁷ Therefore, HA/DR operations are a high-yielding mission set for increased engagement and access at a relatively low cost.

3. Gaining/Maintaining Access

Despite both countries' enduring security relationship and extensive investment in building partner capacity, increased access for U.S. forces has not manifested itself and seems unlikely to do so in the near term. Indonesia does not authorize the basing, staging, or overflight access required for EABO.²⁸⁸ Currently, no Status of Forces Agreement, Visiting Forces Agreement, or Mutual Defense Treaty exists between the U.S. and Indonesia. Moreover, any limited access for the U.S. in Indonesia for routine security cooperation, training, or transit is pre-planned, captured through MOUs (e.g., the Maritime Cooperation MOU), and limited in scope.²⁸⁹ However, the U.S. does have informational access with Indonesia through their General Security of Military Information Agreement and Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement, establishing a framework for increased intelligence sharing.²⁹⁰ These agreements may serve as a foundation for access later on; however, Indonesia's firm stance on its nonalignment policy currently prevents any semi-permanent or temporary stationing of

²⁸⁶ Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, ix.

²⁸⁷ Blank, 49–50.

²⁸⁸ Blank, 50.

²⁸⁹ White House, "Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Republic of Indonesia."

²⁹⁰ Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation With Indonesia."

U.S. forces and equipment. Thus, Indonesia does not authorize the requisite access for EABO.

C. FEASIBILITY OF EABO IN INDONESIA

1. Findings

The extent to which Indonesia participates in bilateral and multilateral security efforts with the U.S., finances U.S.-led training, and purchases U.S. military equipment does not indicate it is willing to forego its nonalignment policy in today's era of great power competition. As one U.S. military official pointed out, "We tend to equate exercises with access...If we train together, then we'll fight together...But Indonesia won't give us basing or overflight rights in any conflict unless China attacks Indonesian territory. Even *then*, they wouldn't be thrilled about it."²⁹¹ In fact, in 2020, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi asserted that, "in accordance with the lines and principles of Indonesian foreign policy, Indonesian territory cannot and will not be used as a military facility base for any country."²⁹² Thus, currently, Indonesia is not a viable country option for the execution of EABO.

2. Limitations

Anti-U.S. sentiments stemming from the two countries' history and Indonesia's unwavering nonalignment policy pose the most significant limitations for U.S. security cooperation activities aimed at gaining increased access for EABO in Indonesia. In particular, the TNI, which plays a considerable part in domestic policy decision-making, is highly distrustful of any foreign influence due to its experience during the colonial era.²⁹³ Specifically, colonization by the Dutch generated an anti-Western national narrative that has survived to complicate current U.S. engagement efforts.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, the

²⁹¹ Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, 45.

²⁹² Budi Sutrisno, "'Indonesia Won't Be Military Base for Any Country', Retno Says, Dismissing Pentagon Report," *The Jakarta Post*, 2020, 1, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/09/04/indonesia-wont-be-military-base-for-any-country-retno-says-dismissing-pentagon-report.html>.

²⁹³ Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, 42.

²⁹⁴ Blank, 42–43.

suspension of U.S. security cooperation with Kopassus (Indonesia's special forces) in the late 20th century and, more recently, the U.S.'s unwillingness to provide crew lists for all U.S. Navy vessels making port in Indonesia has added to anti-U.S. sentiments and generated domestic support for the TNI's cautious approach towards cooperating solely with the U.S.²⁹⁵

Indonesia's nonalignment policy is what restricts U.S. cooperation the most in Indonesia and is, therefore, a significant prohibitor to increased access—an effective block to the execution of EABO. Indonesia's nonalignment policy has been the foundation of its foreign policy since its independence in 1945 and has permitted Indonesia to remain neutral in international affairs. The policy itself “is one which does not make [Indonesia] the object of an international conflict...[but] the subject who reserves the right to decide [its] own destiny.”²⁹⁶ Consequently, Indonesia favors multilateral cooperation with all major powers. As one U.S. military official pointed out, “Indonesia doesn't do ‘mini-lats’—multilateral is *everything*...they won't sign up for anything long term...that would feel too much like an alliance.”²⁹⁷

Given such limitations, it is expected that Indonesia will remain a neutral country in the current U.S.-China competition. Therefore, U.S. security cooperation planners must evaluate current security cooperation activities aimed at U.S.-Indonesia relationship-building to ensure limited resources are being utilized responsibly and facilitate U.S. security objectives in the region.

Unsurprisingly, this assertion has severe implications for U.S. planners responsible for planning security cooperation and EABO. For U.S. planners, Indonesia remains an important country in the geostrategic sense, necessitating continuous fiscal and human capital investment to ensure the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Indonesia continues to endure. However, planning within a limited budget requires U.S. planners to prioritize security cooperation resources in countries that are truly capable and willing to

²⁹⁵ Blank, 44.

²⁹⁶ Blank, 16.

²⁹⁷ Blank, 17.

support DOD strategic objectives and warrant enhanced U.S. engagement. As such, since Indonesia's policy of nonalignment limits the U.S., specifically regarding access, U.S. security cooperation activities with Indonesia should be appropriately scoped to recognize their current commitments and promote practical cooperation while vectoring more resources to countries that have the inclination to support DOD defense concepts like EABO as part of larger U.S. strategy. Similarly, for military planners responsible for planning EABO, Indonesia does not support the concept's deterrence requirements. Therefore, increased assumptions on suitable locations for EABO, supported by intelligence capabilities, exercise after-action reports, and site surveys, are necessary for pre-planning EABO from Indonesia's territory during a conflict with China.

3. Recommendations

The DOD should consider the following recommendations for enhancing security cooperation activities with Indonesia and increasing the potential for EABO:

- *Increase IMET.* The interaction and interoperability gained between the TNI and U.S. military because of IMET has led to the increased willingness of Indonesia to reconsider its nonalignment policy and be more assertive in maritime security.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, increasing IMET would improve U.S. sentiment amongst the TNI and enhance their professionalism in the international community.²⁹⁹
- *Prioritize Key Leader Engagements with the TNI.* TNI officers value respect and courtesy, carrying their experienced treatment with them as they enter politics—where they impact policy the greatest.³⁰⁰ As such, respect and courtesy demonstrated through Key Leader Engagements or similar high-level events enforce a solid interpersonal relationship that may lead to increased access for EABO.

²⁹⁸ Kurlantzick, *Keeping the U.S.-Indonesia Relationship Moving Forward*, 17.

²⁹⁹ Kurlantzick, 17.

³⁰⁰ Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, 58.

- *Conduct regular bilateral maritime exercises with Indonesia in the vicinity of the Natuna Islands.* Conducting a regular U.S.-Indonesia exercise in the vicinity of the Natuna Islands strengthens the two countries' security relationship and partner capacity and signals to China that Indonesia will not take a passive approach to the growing intensity in the SCS, thus bolstering deterrence.³⁰¹
- *Prioritize EABO training for the Indonesian Marine Corps (KORMAR).* The KORMAR models itself on the EABO concept.³⁰² In discussion with the USMC Attaché to Jakarta, he opined, "when you consider a ground-based naval infantry supporting a domestic-defense oriented (mostly) brown-water naval force in an archipelagic nation...[EABO] is kind of a natural fit."³⁰³ Additionally, improved interoperability in EABO lends itself to the purchasing, staging, and maintenance of EABO assets across the competition continuum.
- *Increase FMS and FMF to Indonesia in EABO-related assets.* Increasing the sales of EABO-related assets like littoral combat ships, missile and anti-missile systems, fighter aircraft, and radar to Indonesia assists in Indonesia's force modernization, making it more capable of protecting its territory and being a key player in the SCS.³⁰⁴ Furthermore, contracts on these sales would require U.S. training, resulting in increased access and TNI capacity to support EABO.
- *Emphasize HA/DR and maritime domain awareness operations.* HA/DR operations improve multi-service, multi-domain interoperability, do not challenge Indonesia's nonalignment policy, and improve the capabilities

³⁰¹ Kurlantzick, *Keeping the U.S.-Indonesia Relationship Moving Forward*, 17.

³⁰² Cedric N. Lee, EABO Discussion with USMC Attaché to Jakarta, 2022.

³⁰³ Lee.

³⁰⁴ Kurlantzick, *Keeping the U.S.-Indonesia Relationship Moving Forward*, 17–18.

of both the U.S. and Indonesian military.³⁰⁵ Furthermore, the frequent occurrence of natural disasters in the region promotes the opportunity for a continuous U.S. presence and the need for logistics and staging access. Additionally, maritime domain awareness operations, which include the sale of equipment, information sharing, and exercises, assist Indonesia in combating its maritime security issues and enhance the concept of EABO. Specifically, three key tenants of maritime domain awareness: (1) the early identification of threats, (2) interoperability with allies and partners, and (3) integrated information sharing aligns with the Commandant's vision for "smaller units on smaller ships, distributed over vast distances but linked by command-and-control systems and doctrines that allow...relevant, lethal effects in deterrence and in war."³⁰⁶

- *Modify future CARAT exercises to support EABO.* The framework of CARAT permits the application of EABO TTPs, which the U.S. should leverage in future iterations. For example, the increasing participation of U.S. littoral combat ships and expeditionary transport ships in CARAT could facilitate the practice of staging, receiving, and transporting U.S. forces throughout Indonesia's archipelago. Practicing such evolutions with Indonesia can continue to build the TNI's capacity to support EABO while simultaneously building U.S. awareness of what it needs to conduct EABO in Indonesian territory.

³⁰⁵ Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, 58.

³⁰⁶ Jonathan Haynes, "Maritime Domain Awareness: An Entry Point for Force Design 2030 Implementation," Marine Corps Association, last modified 2020, <https://mca-marines.org/blog/2020/06/08/maritime-domain-awareness-an-entry-point-for-force-design-2030-implementation/>.

V. CONCLUSION

Over the course of the 21st Century, China has emerged as a peer competitor to the United States and intends to displace the U.S. as the leading power in the Indo-Pacific. Its anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy and modernized capabilities, combined with its increased diplomacy and economic statecraft, pose numerous threats to U.S. influence in the region. Specifically, China's advanced missiles, sensor systems, and modernized People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy threaten U.S. conventional military platforms' survivability and freedom of maneuver, thus reducing U.S. credibility and power projection capabilities throughout the Indo-Pacific. Additionally, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) strengthens its diplomatic and economic relationships with other regional countries, thus threatening the U.S.-established regional order and current balance of power.

Disinclined to yield influence to China, the U.S. has applied whole-of-government efforts to preserve its established regional order and maintain stability. The United States Marine Corps (USMC) introduction of Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) is one such effort to combat China's A2/AD strategy and preserve regional stability, but its success is dependent upon the U.S. obtaining basing, staging, overflight, and freedom of maneuver access to key terrain belonging to sovereign nations, many of whom rely on China for their economic prosperity. Therefore, increased security cooperation activities are required to persuade Indo-Pacific countries to authorize U.S. access to their territory. Moreover, increased security cooperation activities will showcase the U.S.'s commitment to the region, further bolstering its efforts to preserve its established regional order.

This thesis focused on Japan and Indonesia as viable and exemplary countries to support EABO because of their location, varying degrees of security cooperation activities with the U.S., and the impact those activities may have on the respective bilateral relationships and local political dynamics that would define the feasibility of conducting EABO from their territory. Moreover, from a military perspective, both countries' dispersed geography and proximity to strategic locations along the First Island Chain present a perfect fit for EABO and illustrate the range of possibilities. The remainder of this chapter will summarize my findings, provide U.S. policy recommendations, and suggest opportunities for future research.

A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the case of Japan, my analysis found that it is feasible for the U.S. to conduct EABO from Japanese territory. This viability has manifested itself through a robust and decades-long security relationship built around shared security concerns and objectives, resulting in over 60 years of security cooperation. Security cooperation with Japan, which occurs primarily through Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Direct Commercial Sales (DCS), exercises, and hosting U.S. military units, has enhanced Japan's capacity to better defend its island territories and increased its interoperability with U.S. forces, permitting the conduct of joint operations aimed at ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific. Consequently, despite some anti-base protests, there is an overall high level of host nation support (70 percent of the Japanese public hold positive views about U.S. presence) for U.S. access to Japanese territory.³⁰⁷ Moreover, U.S.-Japan security cooperation has increased the amount of EABO-related assets in Japan, which both countries' military forces are increasingly relying on to accomplish their defense strategies, further indicating the feasibility of EABO from Japanese territory. Therefore, increasing security cooperation activities around these areas (i.e., interoperability and arms sales) will further enable the conduct of EABO as both a deterrent and, if necessary, a form of combat power during contingency operations. Lastly, the strength of U.S.-Japan institutions (e.g., the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security and the current Status of Forces Agreement) provide the U.S. with more access and freedom of maneuver than it has in any other country in the region. This is evidenced by the U.S.'s numerous bases, rotational deployments, and high force presence throughout Japan. Thus, the U.S. has the requisite access to conduct EABO from Japanese territory, especially in the direct defense of Japan; however, some legal and societal limitations may reduce the feasibility of conducting EABO from Japanese territory in defense of other countries.

In contrast to Japan, my analysis found that it is not feasible for the U.S. to conduct EABO from Indonesia. Despite a growing alignment on similar security-related issues, the young security relationship between the U.S. and Indonesia is untested and narrow in scope, focusing primarily on maritime security and counterterrorism. Similarly, U.S. security

³⁰⁷ Alisa Gaunder, *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Politics* (London: Routledge, 2011), 337, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203829875>.

cooperation activities with Indonesia have only recently become consistent. Normalized in 2010, U.S. security cooperation activities (e.g., FMS, Foreign Military Financing, DCS, and bilateral training) have aimed to build Indonesia's capacity to maintain its internal stability and combat the increasing presence of external security threats, which were largely absent in Indonesia until the 21st century. However, such activities have not increased access for U.S. basing or operations beyond the temporary use of Indonesian facilities for exercises. This is primarily because of Indonesia's nonalignment policy and lingering anti-U.S. sentiment stemming from the two countries' history. Therefore, increasing security cooperation activities around areas that influence the decisions of Indonesian policymakers (e.g., International Military Education and Training, Key Leader Engagements, and regularly scheduled exercises) may lead to them authorizing U.S. access in the future. However, such activities are a long-term strategy, and results may take years to come to fruition, if at all. Thus, Indonesia does not currently provide the requisite access to conduct EABO and may only do so temporarily when in crisis or should its sovereignty come under direct threat by China.

Overall, when comparing Japan and Indonesia, I find that security cooperation does build stronger security relationships, enhance partner capacity, and maintain current U.S. access levels. However, I opine that it is a combination of shared security objectives, host nation support for U.S. force presence, and the existence of institutions or formal agreements that lead to the U.S. initially gaining or enhancing access. Anyone with general knowledge of U.S. relations with countries in the Indo-Pacific knows that the combination of these elements exists definitively in only two countries (i.e., Japan and South Korea) and arguably a third (i.e., the Philippines). As such, the absence of these elements in other countries throughout the region raises concerns about the efficacy of EABO as a deterrent because it limits the operational concept to a select few countries.³⁰⁸

These findings place increased importance on the diplomatic component of U.S. national power and underscore the assertion that the Department of State (DOS) plays a vital

³⁰⁸ Jim Webb, "Momentous Changes in the U.S. Marine Corps' Force Organization Deserve Debate," *Wall Street Journal*, 2022, sec. Opinion, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/momentous-changes-in-the-marine-corps-deserve-debate-reduction-david-berges-general-11648217667>.

role in coordinating with allies and partners to gain access, formalize agreements, and reduce the militarization of foreign policy.³⁰⁹ The Department of Defense (DOD) does not have the diplomatic influence to effectively gain access on its own and is better suited for strengthening security relationships and building partner capacity. Therefore, persuading countries to authorize access for EABO requires even more emphasis on diplomatic and military coordination that functions “by, with, and through” the DOS.³¹⁰

B. U.S. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing the importance of U.S. diplomacy in supporting U.S. strategic objectives and in achieving current geopolitical challenges, such as securing access for U.S. forces through formal agreements, necessitates changes to how the U.S. oversees security sector assistance. The Biden administration should shift resources and responsibilities for security cooperation and security sector assistance at large back to the DOS, as initially designed under U.S. law. The DOD has produced quality results in its implementation of security sector assistance programs, especially since 9/11. However, the current security sector assistance framework has become lopsided and fails to exert profound diplomatic leverage in pursuing U.S. strategic objectives because it is not designed to prioritize diplomacy but rather the military element of U.S. national power.³¹¹ Many DOD officials responsible for overseeing the military’s security cooperation efforts acknowledge that the current framework is not working and argue that it is “not fit for purpose” and is “out of sync with U.S. priorities when it comes to where resources are needed most.”³¹² Therefore, by centralizing and coordinating security sector assistance through the DOS, U.S. diplomats would have greater authority and influence in negotiating U.S. foreign policy goals, such as gaining access, which the DOD could then strengthen when executing its train-and-equip programs. Moreover, it would create

³⁰⁹ Dan Lamothe, “Retired Generals Cite Past Comments from Mattis While Opposing Trump’s Proposed Foreign Aid Cuts,” *The Washington Post*, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2017/02/27/retired-generals-cite-past-comments-from-mattis-while-opposing-trumps-proposed-foreign-aid-cuts/>.

³¹⁰ David, “Making It Work,” 48.

³¹¹ Bergmann and Schmitt, *A Plan To Reform U.S. Security Assistance*.

³¹² Bergmann and Schmitt, sec. Introduction and Summary.

a more integrated, whole-of-government approach to security sector assistance, furthering the U.S.'s ability to strengthen alliances, build partnerships, and increase cooperation.

This shift would pay dividends in the Indo-Pacific, where countries are currently caught in a precarious act of balancing their security needs and opportunities for economic development between two competing great powers. By elevating U.S. diplomacy, the U.S. would facilitate an enhanced role for commercially minded portions of the bureaucracy (such as DOS's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, which has no analog inside the DOD) to create more favorable foreign assistance provisions for recipient countries. This would further establish trust between the U.S. and Indo-Pacific countries and prove to them that the U.S. is committed to not only the security of the region but each country's overall prosperity as well. Consequently, more formal agreements and host nation support for U.S. presence may materialize.

Specific to EABO, the U.S. should also prepare for the possibility that countries will not accept the risk of becoming targets to China's A2/AD capabilities due to authorizing U.S. access and freedom of maneuver for U.S. forces throughout their territory. Mathew Burrows and Robert Manning rightfully highlighted that "any effective U.S. strategy needs to discard the mindset that assumes U.S. interests subsume those of allies and partners [and] understand the limits of U.S. agency."³¹³ Therefore, just because the U.S. desires increased access for EABO does not mean it will happen. In this case, the U.S. should focus its security cooperation activities on building the capacity of its allies and partners to defend themselves. Such security cooperation activities might include selling Indo-Pacific countries EABO-related assets and equipment that they may rather not have on their territory under U.S. control or conducting regularly scheduled EABO-oriented exercises to develop host nation support for the concept, enhance interoperability, and facilitate contingency access. As defense analyst Graham Jenkins pointed out, "Such a restrained posture is one of neither abandonment nor

³¹³ Mathew Burrows and Robert Manning, "Humility in American Grand Strategy," War on the Rocks, last modified 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/03/humility-in-american-grand-strategy/>.

appeasement—it is recognizing the limits of the possible and tailoring a strategy to support and defend the U.S. partners.”³¹⁴

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

On numerous occasions, this thesis highlighted that the efficacy of EABO as both a deterrent and warfighting concept is dependent upon the U.S. obtaining basing, staging, overflight, and freedom of maneuver access to sovereign territory, which only the host nation can authorize. While this thesis only examined Japan and Indonesia as potential countries to support EABO, they are not the only viable country options for EABO. The USMC, DOD, and U.S. government at large would benefit from future research that similarly examines the varying degrees of security cooperation activities the U.S. engages in with other Indo-Pacific allies and partners, namely the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and South Korea, and the subsequent impact those activities may have on the feasibility of conducting EABO from their territory.

The Philippines, for one, is a country that offers tremendous opportunities for the U.S. to conduct EABO. Its archipelago lies along all the eastern avenues of approach into the South China Sea, making its geography strategically valuable. Moreover, the U.S.-Philippines security relationship has become more aligned around similar security concerns, has elements of host nation support for U.S. force presence, and has existing institutions and formal agreements that facilitate U.S. access. To enumerate, geopolitical influences and Philippine necessity for heightened security in the 21st century have necessitated increased U.S. security cooperation. Specifically, the threat of al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf terrorists has resulted in an indefinitely stationed detachment of 600 U.S. special forces personnel who conduct joint military operations with the Philippines’ military forces against the terrorist organization.³¹⁵ Additionally, Chinese assertiveness in the vicinity of the Spratly Islands led to the Philippines

³¹⁴ Graham Jenkins, “Sailors, Sailors Everywhere and Not a Berth to Sleep: The Illusion of Forward Posture in the Western Pacific,” War on the Rocks, last modified 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/07/sailors-sailors-everywhere-and-not-a-berth-to-sleep-the-illusion-of-forward-posture-in-the-western-pacific/>.

³¹⁵ Linda Robinson, Patrick B. Johnston, and Gillian S. Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines, 2001–2014*, RR1236 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2016), 112, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1200/RR1236/RAND_RR1236.pdf.

seeking support from the U.S. to bolster its maritime policing capabilities.³¹⁶ This support is also reflected in the two countries' annual BALIKATAN exercise, where more EABO-related operations have begun to unfold. For example, in BALIKATAN 22, U.S. and Philippine forces employed over 50 aircraft, ten amphibious vessels, four naval ships, four High Mobility Artillery Rocket System launchers, and four PATRIOT missile systems to enhance maritime and air superiority.³¹⁷

Elements of host nation support for U.S. force presence were evident even during the recent, contentious Duterte administration. Specifically, disputes in the South China Sea challenged public perception and support for President Duterte's foreign policy with China. President Duterte made five visits to China from 2016 to 2019 to strengthen economic ties with China and participate in its Belt and Road Initiative.³¹⁸ However, the rest of the Philippine government and the public did not share his friendly approach.³¹⁹ In fact, President Duterte's attitude towards China contrasted with the domestic support for the U.S.'s pivot to Asia and strengthening of defense ties, including security cooperation.³²⁰

Finally, the continuing existence of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, ratification of the 1998 Visiting Forces Agreement, and the recent adoption of the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement have helped restore some U.S. military access and rotational deployments in the Philippines, which the U.S. lost with the expiring of the U.S.-Philippine

³¹⁶ Richard Javad Heydarian, "Tragedy of Small Power Politics: Duterte and the Shifting Sands of Philippine Foreign Policy," *Asian Security* 13, no. 3 (2017): 220–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2017.1354569>.

³¹⁷ "U.S. and Philippines Successfully Conclude 37th Balikatan," United States Navy, 2022, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2993877/us-and-philippines-successfully-conclude-37th-balikatan/>.

³¹⁸ Lye Liang Fook, "China-Philippine Relations: Duterte's China Visit and Prospects for Oil and Gas Exploration," *ISEAS Perspective* 80 (2019): 2, https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2019_80.pdf.

³¹⁹ Jay L. Batongbacal, "The Philippines and the South China Sea Arbitration Award: External Appeasement and Internal Dissension," *ISEAS Perspective* 126 (2021): 7, <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/2021-126-the-philippines-and-the-south-china-sea-arbitration-award-external-appeasement-and-internal-dissension-by-jay-l-batongbacal/>.

³²⁰ Ralf Emmers, "ASEAN's Search for Neutrality in the South China Sea," *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 2, no. 1 (2014): 70, <https://doi.org/10.18588/201405.000019>.

Military Base Agreement in 1992.³²¹ Despite the removal of U.S. forces from the Philippines in 1992, the Mutual Defense Treaty has continued to serve as the basis for U.S.-Philippine security cooperation in the post-bases era.³²²

Security cooperation with the Philippines, which occurs primarily through FMS, Foreign Military Financing, exercises, and hosting U.S. military units on a rotational basis, has enhanced the Philippines' capacity to defend its island territories better and increased its interoperability with U.S. forces.³²³ If BALIKATAN 22 indicates the direction the Philippines' armed forces are headed to protect its country's national security needs, increasing security cooperation activities around EABO-related arms sales and EABO-oriented exercises will further enhance the feasibility of conducting EABO from the Philippines. However, given the distinct political and diplomatic dynamics in the Philippines, combined with a brand-new administration, increasing security cooperation activities around areas that influence the decisions of Filipino policymakers (e.g., International Military Education and Training, Key Leader Engagements, and regularly scheduled exercises) may lead to them authorizing enhanced U.S. access. Overall, the feasibility of the U.S. conducting EABO from the Philippines likely falls somewhere in the middle compared to Indonesia and Japan. Therefore, expanded research on the Philippines would be beneficial, especially to the USMC.

Lastly, in the event in-depth country analyses are conducted for all Indo-Pacific allies and partners, compiling these findings into a single report will assist military planners with their assumptions on where U.S. forces can and cannot conduct EABO and also assist U.S. security cooperation planners in allocating limited resources to countries that best support DOD defense concepts and U.S. strategic objectives.

³²¹ Mark F. Cancian, *U.S. Military Forces in FY 2019: The Buildup and Its Limits* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018), 61, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-military-forces-fy-2019-buildup-and-its-limits>.

³²² Victor Felix, *Philippine-US Security Relations: Challenges and Opportunities After 9/11* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2005), 5, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA431897.pdf>.

³²³ "Philippines," Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2022, <https://www.dsca.mil/tags/philippines>; Department of State, "U.S. Relations With the Philippines," 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-the-philippines/>.

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