

## Strategic Landpower in the Indo-Asia-Pacific

---

John R. Deni

**ABSTRACT:** The US Army has a major, strategic role to play in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater. That role can be broken down into three broad areas—bolstering defense of allies and deterring aggression, promoting regional security and stability through security cooperation, and ameliorating the growing US-China security dilemma. Employing strategic landpower in each of these areas is not without challenges—especially in the face of sequestration—yet not making use of the Army will result in fewer policy options.

In the rush to the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater prompted by the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, it has become conventional wisdom to say the US Army has only a minimal role in the rebalancing effort underway. Advocates of this perspective assume that the Pacific theater—with its massive distances—is far more suitable to the platform-intensive Air Force and Navy, than the soldier-centric Army.<sup>1</sup> They then argue that, since the Army's primary mission is fighting and winning the nation's wars, the Army's role in the Pacific is largely limited to the Korean Peninsula.

The Army is not blameless in this respect. According to one prominent analyst, the Army's, "organizational culture continues to focus nearly exclusively on state-on-state war."<sup>2</sup> Organizational bias has also adversely affected how the institutional Army embraced the importance of promoting interoperability, developing coalition capability, and building partner capacity.<sup>3</sup> And this bias persists despite efforts by General Ray Odierno, the Army's Chief of Staff, to change that culture by emphasizing the importance of shaping the international environment and preventing conflict in the first place, including through the development of the Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) initiative.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, the US Army has significant strategic roles to play in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region that cannot be adequately performed by naval or air forces. They fall into three broad categories: bolstering defense of allies and deterring aggression; promoting regional security and stability through security cooperation; and ameliorating the growing United States–China security dilemma. As discussed below, the United States

---

1 Jan van Tol, Mark Gunzinger, Andrew Krepinevich, and Jim Thomas, "AirSea Battle: A Point of Departure Operational Concept, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments," *Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA)*, May 18, 2010, [www.csbaonline.org/publications/2010/05/airsea-battle-concept/](http://www.csbaonline.org/publications/2010/05/airsea-battle-concept/); T. X. Hammes, "Offshore Control: A Proposed Strategy for an Unlikely Conflict," *National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS)*, June 2012, [www.ndu.edu/inss/docuploaded/SF%20278%20Hammes.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/docuploaded/SF%20278%20Hammes.pdf); Jonathan G. Odom, "What Does a 'Pivot' or 'Rebalance' Look Like? Elements of the U.S. Strategic Turn Towards Security in the Asia-Pacific Region and Its Waters," *Asian Pacific Law & Policy Journal* 14, no. 1 (December 31, 2012).

2 John Nagl, quoted in Julian E. Barnes, "Shrinking Budget Forces Army Into New Battlefield," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 10, 2013, p. 1.

3 Jack Midgley, "Building Partner Capability: Defining an Army Role in Future Small Wars," *Small Wars Journal*, February 20, 2012, at [smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/building-partner-capability](http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/building-partner-capability).

4 Ray Odierno, "The Force of Tomorrow," *Foreign Policy*, February 4, 2013, [www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/02/04/the\\_force\\_of\\_tomorrow](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/02/04/the_force_of_tomorrow).

Dr. John R. Deni is a Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational Security Studies at the US Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute. He worked for eight years as a political and legislative advisor for senior US commanders and consulted on national security issues for the Departments of Defense, Energy, and State.

| Report Documentation Page                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | Form Approved<br>OMB No. 0704-0188                  |                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. |                                    |                                     |                                                                  |                                                     |                                    |
| 1. REPORT DATE<br><b>2013</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                    | 2. REPORT TYPE                      |                                                                  | 3. DATES COVERED<br><b>00-00-2013 to 00-00-2013</b> |                                    |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE<br><b>Strategic Landpower in the Indo-Asia-Pacific</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER                                 |                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 5b. GRANT NUMBER                                    |                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER                          |                                    |
| 6. AUTHOR(S)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER                                  |                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 5e. TASK NUMBER                                     |                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER                                |                                    |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)<br><b>U.S. Army War College,ATTN: Parameters,47 Ashburn Drive,Carlisle,PA,17013-5010</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION<br>REPORT NUMBER         |                                    |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)                    |                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                    |                                     |                                                                  | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT<br>NUMBER(S)           |                                    |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT<br><b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |                                     |                                                                  |                                                     |                                    |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                    |                                     |                                                                  |                                                     |                                    |
| 14. ABSTRACT<br><b>The US Army has a major, strategic role to play in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater. That role can be broken down into three broad areas?bolstering defense of allies and deterring aggression promoting regional security and stability through security coopertion and ameliorating the growing US-China security dilemma. Employing strategic landpower in each of these areas is not without challenges?especially in the face of sequestration?yet not making use of the Army will result in fewer policy options.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                    |                                     |                                                                  |                                                     |                                    |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                    |                                     |                                                                  |                                                     |                                    |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                    |                                     | 17. LIMITATION OF<br>ABSTRACT<br><b>Same as<br/>Report (SAR)</b> | 18. NUMBER<br>OF PAGES<br><b>10</b>                 | 19a. NAME OF<br>RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| a. REPORT<br><b>unclassified</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | b. ABSTRACT<br><b>unclassified</b> | c. THIS PAGE<br><b>unclassified</b> |                                                                  |                                                     |                                    |

faces some hurdles in wielding strategic landpower in each of these areas, yet *not* employing the Army will make matters worse.

### Defense and Deterrence

This role is the most obvious one for the United States Army in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, resting as it does on military commitments since the 1950s. Most are familiar with the Army's presence on the Korean peninsula, fielding a force of several thousand to deter large-scale North Korean aggression. The Army has deterred aggression in two ways: deterrence by punishment and deterrence by denial. The first entails the promise of punishment so severe as to outweigh any potential gains from aggression. American soldiers in South Korea accomplish this by playing the role of a "tripwire" that would trigger a larger response. Deterrence by denial—that is, preventing gains from occurring—was more credible when American forces on the peninsula were more numerous and deployed near the demilitarized zone. Today, the Army is relocating farther south and handing over wartime operational control to the South Koreans starting in 2015. While the South Korean military may continue to deter through denial, the US Army is gradually becoming less critical to that mission.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, several years ago, US officials in South Korea stated that the future American role in the defense of South Korea would be mainly an air force and naval role.<sup>6</sup>

Although not as obvious as the case of South Korea, the US Army is also important to the defense of Japan, another critical treaty-based American ally. Roughly 2,000 American soldiers based in Japan perform vital theater enabling functions such as helping other US services fulfill their missions in support of Japanese Self-Defense Forces.

Likewise, the Army provides critical support to the other services if the United States were to become involved in responding to any Chinese aggression toward Taiwan. The Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of China was terminated in 1980, and Washington maintains a policy of strategic ambiguity regarding whether the United States would intervene in the event of a mainland Chinese attack on Taiwan. Nonetheless, if mainland China were to attack Taiwan and threaten vital American interests—including the security of current US treaty allies in the region—the Department of Defense would have to provide a range of options including military intervention. At a minimum, the US Army would bring to bear its considerable combat support and sustainment capabilities in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater.

Aside from conventional scenarios involving the large-scale use of landpower assets, other situations would entail the commitment of sizeable US Army forces. For instance, in the aftermath of a limited nuclear exchange between Pakistan and India, the United States may be called on to lead or conduct consequence management operations in one or

---

<sup>5</sup> As evidence of this, the South Korea-based 8th US Army is transforming to becoming a warfighting headquarters that could deploy to any area of the world to command and control subordinate units.

<sup>6</sup> Mark E. Manyin et al., "U.S.-South Korea Relations," *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*, April 26, 2013, [www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41481.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41481.pdf).

both countries.<sup>7</sup> The Army's expertise in this area, and its ability to command and control large-scale multiservice and multinational missions, make it indispensable for such a scenario. In another example, if seismic activity in the South China Sea—for instance, along the Manila trench, which scientists estimate is the locus of two or three earthquakes of a magnitude 7.0 or greater every decade—caused a tsunami to inundate parts of the Philippines, the US Army would likely assist in disaster relief operations.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, the US Army also provides niche capabilities to strengthen regional defense and deterrence. The Army's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities are of particular value in enabling the United States and its allies to achieve situational understanding and develop a common operating picture.

Along these lines, the Army also provides essential command, control, and communications capabilities. Indeed, when it comes to commanding and controlling large military operations with and among Indo-Asia-Pacific countries, which may not be comfortable working with each other, the US Army's capabilities are unmatched. The Army's communications network supports *all* US military services in the theater and enables operations within a noncontiguous battlefield framework, spanning time and distance; thus, it enhances the lethality, survivability, agility, and sustainability of US and allied forces.

Perhaps the most important capability the Army provides is ballistic missile defense. Some have argued the Army ought to assume *offensive* missile-related missions, such as coastal artillery, in the Pacific theater.<sup>9</sup> According to this reasoning, the United States would seek to turn the Anti-Access / Area Denial (A2AD) challenge posed by China on its head, with US shore-to-ship coastal artillery batteries holding at risk the growing Chinese navy and frustrating its ability to project power.

Although this makes great sense strategically, and would certainly be seen as an Army mission, there are major drawbacks to pursuing this course of action in the short run. It would require the development of some capabilities the Army does not yet possess, such as the appropriate missiles, as well as the necessary doctrine, training, and manpower. In the sequestration era, the Army may be hard-pressed to find the resources necessary to take this on.

Nonetheless, other potential missions *are* possible today with little in the way of materiel or doctrinal development. Ballistic missile defense (BMD) of allied and partner countries is currently (and appears likely to remain) a growth industry for the Army, especially in light of perceived Iranian and North Korean missile threats.<sup>10</sup> The Army already has the lead role in operating the road-mobile Patriot air defense missile

---

7 Michael O'Hanlon comments, "The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges," *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

8 Chiu Hon Chim, "Identifying Tsunami Risk in South China Sea," lecture, University of Hong Kong, April 23, 2007, [www.slideshare.net/chiu/identifying-tsunami-risk-in-south-china-sea](http://www.slideshare.net/chiu/identifying-tsunami-risk-in-south-china-sea). For other scenarios like this that could entail the commitment of significant US Army forces, see Nathan Freier et al., "Beyond the Last War: Balancing Ground Forces and Future Challenges Risk in USCENCOM and USPACOM," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, April 2013.

9 Jim Thomas, "Why the U.S. Army Needs Missiles," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2013.

10 The US Army currently operates the only system for strategic missile defense of the US homeland—the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system—which protects against the threat of limited intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) attack.

system, which is designed to detect, intercept, and neutralize short-range inbound ballistic missiles. The Army is also key to the Phased Adaptive Approach to ballistic missile defense currently being developed for use in Europe, the Persian Gulf, and the East Asia.<sup>11</sup> For years, the Army has operated an advanced X-band radar site in northern Japan near the town of Shiriki; it may soon operate a similar radar site in southern Japan. If the Aegis Ashore System planned for the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) is replicated in other theaters, it is likely the Army and Navy will revisit the issue of which service operates those facilities. Currently, the Navy is slated to do so, but it seems likely the Army will, and should, claim that mission at some point given that defense from the land is inherently a landpower function.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, the Army is the lead service for the Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system, which is completing its test phase and entering operational service. The first operational THAAD battery deployment occurred earlier this year to Guam in response to heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula. It remains unclear to some whether or how, politically speaking, the system could ever be removed from Guam now that it has been deployed, even though the Department of Defense is only planning for a 6-month extension of the initial 90-day deployment.<sup>13</sup>

The Army's embrace of the ballistic missile defense mission is not without potential complications. The Defense Department faces a demand for THAAD systems far outpacing supply, with virtually every combatant commander requesting at least one and sometimes two, and the Army continues to face BMD-related manpower challenges likely to grow more difficult in an era of declining end strength.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, America's allies and partners in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region are eager to host Army-operated ballistic missile defense systems and US soldiers on their territory for two critical reasons.<sup>15</sup> First, these systems, when proven effective through rigorous, realistic testing, help deter aggressors. Second, Army BMD systems assure US allies of the American commitment, reduce the potential for political or other intimidation, and underwrite the promise of greater American involvement should hostilities occur. Although not always viewed by the traditional "maneuver tribes" within the Army—that is, infantry, armor, and artillery—as combat arms, and perhaps not always perceived as completely

---

11 In the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) for instance, the Army is responsible for overseeing operation of AN/TPY-2 radar system in Turkey.

12 Steven J. Whitmore and John R. Deni, "NATO Missile Defense, EPAA, and the Army," *Strategic Studies Institute* monograph, forthcoming in fall 2013 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2013).

13 "First THAAD Deployment Is to Guam," *Mostly Missile Defense* blog, April 3, 2013, <http://mostlymissiledefense.com>; current plans call for acquiring six THAAD systems, but the validated requirement is actually nine systems; Ken Quintanilla, "Argun Introduces Resolution 186," KUAM News, July 8, 2013, [www.kuam.com/story/22778740/2013/07/08/argun-introduces-resolution-186](http://www.kuam.com/story/22778740/2013/07/08/argun-introduces-resolution-186).

14 Steven J. Whitmore and John R. Deni, "NATO Missile Defense, EPAA, and the Army," *Strategic Studies Institute* monograph, forthcoming in summer 2013 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2013); current plans call for acquiring six THAAD systems, but the validated requirement is actually nine systems.

15 Although it addresses threat evolution and future trends, the latest draft of the Army's Field Manual 3-27 on "Army Global Ballistic Missile Defense Operations," somewhat ironically avoids any mention of the growing interest among US allies and partners in hosting Army-operated ballistic missile defense systems.

equal, air and missile defense represents a vitally important mission set for the Army in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region today, one that is very likely to grow, if not because of Washington's intent, then because US allies and partners demand it.

### Regional Security and Stability

When the US Army is not engaged directly in defense or deterrence, its most important mission in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region is engaging in security cooperation activities. Previously termed "mil-to-mil" activities, security cooperation includes training events and exercises, senior leader visits, educational programs, cooperative research and development, and multilateral acquisition.

One example of these activities is the biennial Talisman Saber exercise with Australia. Conducted over the course of three weeks every odd-numbered year since 2005, Talisman Saber involves tens of thousands of American and Australian troops taking part in combat training, readiness, and interoperability exercises across a wide spectrum of military activities. Events include amphibious assaults, parachute drops, urban operations, and live-fire training. Another example is the "Yudh Abhyas" exercise series between the Indian and US armies. Restarted in 2004 following a 42-year lull, "Yudh Abhyas" has grown from relatively small annual exchanges focused on command post activities to a much larger series of exercises involving hundreds of soldiers from each country engaged in a peacekeeping exercise scenario. The annual event rotates between India and the United States; in May 2013, roughly 400 Indian soldiers traveled to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, to participate in Yudh Abhyas 2013. The two-week exercise also included expert academic exchanges on logistics, engineering, information operations, and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE). Across the region, and especially in Southeast Asia, there is a growing interest among US partners and allies to engage in these activities with American counterparts, and especially with the Army.<sup>16</sup>

Many security cooperation activities are conducted under the auspices of the US State Department and its broad responsibility for American foreign policy. In this context, Army security cooperation activities truly are *strategic* in impact, directly advancing US foreign policy. A military exercise with Australia, for example, benefits the institutional Army insofar as interoperability is maintained with a critical ally through the development of common tactics, techniques, and procedures. However, the benefits of such an event to the United States and its allies and partners extend beyond the tactical. Security cooperation activities strengthen the capability of allies and partners to maintain stability and security domestically as well as regionally. At the higher end of the capability spectrum, the United States promotes the ability of allies, such as Australia and India, to take increased roles in safeguarding regional security and stability.<sup>17</sup> Even among America's closest, most capable allies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater, plenty of room exists for interoperability improvement, especially in terms of command and

---

16 Ernest Z. Bower and Duane Thiessen comments, "The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges," *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

17 Derek S. Reveron, *Exporting Security: International Engagement, Security Cooperation, and the Changing Face of the U.S. Military* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press: 2010), 31-33, 46-48.

control interoperability, developing a common operating picture, and avoiding blue-on-blue casualties.

For other partners, the United States helps establish capabilities that support the rule of law, promotes security and stability domestically, and ameliorates transnational security challenges such as international criminals, smugglers, or terrorists.<sup>18</sup> In the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, which is vital to the US economy today, stability and security are essential to the flow of capital and goods and to continued economic growth.

Most of these missions could not be fulfilled by naval or air forces. Certainly, air and naval exercises can build allied interoperability, or foster the ability of less-capable partner militaries to interdict smugglers. But air and naval forces cannot speak “army” to Indo-Asia-Pacific land forces, which is critical given the dominance of land components across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.<sup>19</sup> Seven of the 10 largest armies in the world are in the Pacific theater, and 22 of the 27 countries in the region have an army officer as chief of defense. Moreover, the Army has an unmatched source of regional expertise—in the form of Foreign Area Officers (FAOs)—that the other US military services have yet to replicate and which forms a critical enabler in Army security cooperation. In sum, although it is not impossible to engage such counterpart institutions and officers without wearing Army green, such engagements are undoubtedly easier and arguably more fruitful when it is Army to Army.

Despite the importance of security cooperation activities in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, several challenges threaten to undercut the effectiveness of the Army’s efforts. First among these is the impact of sequestration on operations and maintenance (O&M) accounts—which fund exercises—and on the State Department’s foreign assistance budget, which funds many of the train-and-equip programs implemented by the Army.<sup>20</sup> Already in 2013, the US Defense Department has scaled down training and exercise events for all military units except those preparing for imminent deployment to Afghanistan. The Army’s plans to send a battalion to Europe for six months in 2013 to participate in NATO Response Force (NRF) training was downsized to a small headquarters cell. The Pentagon is doing what it can to protect training and engagement funds pegged for Southeast Asia, but it may only be a matter of time before sequestration causes the United States to scale down or eliminate Army participation in exercises and training events across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, the Army continues to grapple with how it will shrink from roughly 570,000 active-duty soldiers to 490,000, and possibly lower if the path of sequestration remains unchanged. As Army end strength declines, it will become increasingly difficult to generate the forces necessary for a rigorous security cooperation program in the

---

18 For a discussion on how military forces contribute to addressing transnational security threats, see Paul J. Smith, “Transnational Security Threats and State Survival: A Role for the Military?” *Parameters* 30, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 77-91.

19 Robert B. Brown and John E. Sterling comments, “The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges,” *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

20 On the State Department’s FY 2014 budget submission, see [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2014/assets/sta.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2014/assets/sta.pdf).

21 Ernest Z. Bower comments, “The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges,” *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

Indo-Asia-Pacific theater and elsewhere in a cost-effective way. The Army appears to be focusing more of its existing manpower on security cooperation in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region by having, for instance, both I Corps in Washington state and the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii focus solely on the Pacific region instead of engaging in other worldwide missions such as Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup>

### Dealing with the Security Dilemma

The greatest challenge facing the United States today with regard to rebalancing in the Pacific is to avoid provoking an escalation. The act of rebalancing may so aggravate China as to spur it to behave more aggressively, undermining the very security and stability the rebalance effort was designed to bolster in the first place. This is the classic security dilemma—a situation in which one country's efforts to strengthen its security engenders a sense of insecurity among other countries. Some of those other countries may subsequently take steps to bolster their security, furthering the first country's sense that it must do still more, and an escalation, especially in the form of an arms race, ensues.

Among many observers, particularly those in China, the rebalance appears to be a one-way ticket to great power rivalry with China.<sup>23</sup> To officials in Beijing, the Pacific pivot looks and sounds like the centerpiece of an American strategy to contain Chinese growth. Clearly, China fears encirclement, and as a country with three contiguous neighbors with which it has fought wars—India, Russia, and Vietnam—over the last half century or so, those fears are not without some historical justification. Today, Beijing's sense of being surrounded by hostile powers becomes particularly acute when regional cooperation among even *potential* enemies, such as India and Japan, appears to be on the upswing.<sup>24</sup> In response, China's leaders argue that, in fact, the Chinese benefit from the existing order, and that China is actually a status quo power, not one determined to upset the American-built order.

Of course, China's neighbors do not necessarily share these perceptions. Beijing's submission of its "nine-dash line" map to the United Nations in 2009—designed to depict and hence justify the extent of Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea—caused dramatic, negative reactions among other countries of the region. This development, as well as evidence of China wielding its economic power as a political weapon, has spurred other countries to engage with the United States, especially militarily.<sup>25</sup> However, none wants to feel forced to choose between one or the other, and many are now faced with questions

---

22 William Cole, "As Afghan Duty Winds Down, Army Adjusts Its Focus," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, May 14, 2013.

23 He Yafei, "The Trust Deficit: How the U.S. 'pivot' to Asia looks from Beijing," *Foreign Policy*, May 13, 2013, [www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/13/how\\_china\\_sees\\_the\\_us\\_pivot\\_to\\_asia](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/13/how_china_sees_the_us_pivot_to_asia).

24 For example, see "Manmohan Singh to visit Japan to discuss security cooperation," *Hindustan Times*, November 2, 2012.

25 Keith Bradsher, "Amid Tension, China Blocks Vital Exports to Japan," *The New York Times*, September 22, 2010, [www.nytimes.com/2010/09/23/business/global/23rare.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/23/business/global/23rare.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0). Later, China reportedly ended the *de facto* ban on exports of rare earth metals to Japan.

over how to navigate between the rising economic giant and the one country capable of acting as a security guarantor.<sup>26</sup>

The challenge facing senior American leaders is how to ensure vital US interests, such as freedom of the seas, are maintained while also avoiding negative security dilemma outcomes. Such a task is difficult given the degree to which Beijing views *every* American action in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region as part of a broad anti-Chinese conspiracy. At a recent conference on American policy toward Asia, former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy relayed one anecdote that illustrates the challenge of changing Chinese perceptions.<sup>27</sup> During a meeting with her senior Chinese military counterparts, she presented an historical analysis showing the distribution of US military forces and the security agreements the United States had arrayed against the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War. She then showed the same types of information vis-à-vis China, all dramatically less than the United States used to contain the Soviet Union. In reaction, “their jaws hit the floor in a moment of profound cognitive dissonance.” The Chinese officials said they did not believe the data: it clashed heavily with what has become conventional wisdom in China, even within elite circles.

If the United States is to have any chance of reshaping those closely held Chinese perceptions, confidence- and security-building measures will be critical. They permit two or more countries to exchange information regarding the size, composition, disposition, movement, or use of their respective military forces and armaments, and to conduct bi- or multilateral activities to verify that information. If constructed and wielded successfully, they can help ensure normal military activities are not mistakenly perceived as threatening, thereby ameliorating the security dilemma.

The US Army has a strong record of success with such measures. Beginning with the intrusive on-site verification regime of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty approximately 25 years ago, and continuing with inspection and verification measures under the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, the Vienna Documents, and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Army has decades of experience in building confidence through transparency and hence furthering strategic American interests.<sup>28</sup> Examples might include notifications of troop movements and exercises; exchanges of information on doctrine, strategy, unit locations, and defense budgets; inviting observers to exercises and training events; facilitating independent technical verification means; exchanges of personnel at military schoolhouses; establishment of “hotlines”; and multinational military training such as for disaster relief or other humanitarian missions.

---

26 David J. Greene, “U.S. Strategy In Southeast Asia: Power Broker, Not Hegemon,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 64, 1st Quarter 2012: 131-133; Kenneth Lieberthal, “The American Pivot to Asia: Why President Obama’s turn to the East is easier said than done,” *Foreign Policy*, December 21, 2011, [www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/21/the\\_american\\_pivot\\_to\\_asia?page=0,5](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/21/the_american_pivot_to_asia?page=0,5); and Christian Jack, “Australia’s strategic and economic position between Washington and Beijing,” *East Asia Forum* blog, April 8, 2011, [www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/04/08/18430/](http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/04/08/18430/).

27 Michèle Flournoy comments, “The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges,” *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

28 The Army FAO program played an important role once again, this time in facilitating the development of confidence and trust.

In limited cases, the Army and the other services are pursuing some of the examples noted above. Since 2002, China has observed the annual Cobra Gold exercise between the armies of the United States, Thailand, and several Southeast Asian countries. For 2014, China has accepted an offer by the US Navy to participate for the first time in RIMPAC, the world's largest maritime exercise event. China has also joined the US Navy in counter-piracy training events. American critics argue that Beijing's participation in such activities only provides more opportunities for Chinese military intelligence officers to collect information regarding American military techniques and procedures. In all likelihood, this was also true in the Col War, with both Americans and Soviets/Russians collecting intelligence on each other whenever and wherever possible. However, at least in part, that is the point: to increase transparency for all involved, and in so doing, to build confidence and bolster security.

Aside from managing security risks in conducting such activities, another challenge may be the lack of formal mechanisms for such measures. Those mentioned above were implemented under the terms of binding treaties or other agreements, resulting in a formalized approach with less reliance on *ad hoc* tools and mechanisms. Although formal treaties may be a bridge too far in the short run, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Regional Forum—which already has as one of its objectives the development of “confidence-building and preventive diplomacy”—and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Plus meetings may provide the ideal venues for developing such measures between the US Army, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and the armies of ASEAN member states.

## Conclusion

Conventional wisdom holds that the US Army's primary role in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater is guarding against a North Korean invasion. Arguably, the Army itself has promoted this over the last several years, placing great emphasis on campaign planning on the Korean peninsula. But such a conceptualization of how landpower is or could be utilized in the pursuit of American vital interests is unnecessarily limited. The strategic use of landpower in what is typically seen as a Naval or Air Force theater offers more benefits to the national security of the United States and its allies than is commonly acknowledged.

Defense and deterrence are critical roles the US Army plays on the Korean peninsula, but the aperture needs to widen beyond discussing potential responses to Pyongyang's aggression. It is logical to expect the Army to play a key role in any number of defense and deterrence related scenarios—assuming sequestration does not force a precipitous drop in Army end strength. This is especially true regarding ballistic missile defense throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific region and well beyond Korea.

At the same time, the Army will continue shaping the international environment and preventing conflict, even though much of this mission is fundamentally diplomatic in nature. The other US military services cannot replicate Army-led security cooperation, especially in terms of engaging with the armies of critical allies and partners like India, Australia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The US Army must overcome

institutional as well as budgetary challenges to fulfill its missions completely.

Finally, the Army can help the United States resolve the security dilemma with China. It may take a generation or more to convince the Chinese that the United States does not seek containment, and that US mil-to-mil engagement throughout the region actually benefits China. It is, however, an effort worth making.