

JANUARY 2016

ABRIDGED REPORT

# Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025

## Capabilities, Presence, and Partnerships

An Independent Review of U.S. Defense Strategy in the Asia-Pacific

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Michael Green  
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### TEAM LEADS

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Thomas Karako, Stephanie Sanok Kostro, Gregory Poling, Richard Rossow,  
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## OVERVIEW

**IN NOVEMBER 2011, PRESIDENT OBAMA DECLARED**, “the United States is turning [its] attention to the vast potential of the Asia Pacific region.” The U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific is critical to security and prosperity throughout the region and across the globe. As the United States looks to an ascending Asia, leaders in Washington will have to manage a diverse set of challenges that includes China’s rise, North Korea’s belligerence, Russia’s Pacific and Arctic ambitions, and other historical tensions over territorial claims, as well as risks associated with terrorism and humanitarian disasters. The Obama administration’s rebalance built on policies begun in the George W. Bush and prior administrations and added critical new elements such as participation in the East Asia Summit and enhanced engagement with Southeast Asia. The announcement of a deliberate “rebalance” to Asia and the Pacific reflected the American people’s growing recognition of the importance of the region to U.S. interests and the need to reassert American engagement and leadership after the uncertainty caused by the 2008 financial crisis and a decade of combat operations in Southwest Asia.

As explained by the Obama administration, the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific is a whole of government effort with three primary lines of effort. First (and most visible to date) is the security component. Second is the economic element, represented most notably by the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Third is the pursuit of human dignity. Developing a strategy to protect U.S. interests requires that Washington leverage a number of fundamental strengths. U.S. allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific are strong supporters of the rules-based regional and international order. Moreover, leaders throughout the region remain interested in working with the United States, each other, and regional organizations to sustain Asian security and prosperity. If anything, polling shows that most regional states want more leadership, initiative, and engagement from Washington, not less.

Since its announcement in 2011, administration officials have taken a number of actions to execute the rebalance. Congressional support has been necessary for implementation of many of these actions, but some questions have persisted in Congress about aspects of U.S. strategy. In an effort to address these concerns, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012 required that the Department of Defense (DOD) commission an independent assessment of U.S. strategy and force posture in the Asia-Pacific. The Center for Strategic and International Studies was tasked with that independent assessment and issued its findings in September 2012, which emphasized the need for the rebalance and funding its requirements and identified potential new initiatives. Now, three years after CSIS’s first study, CSIS has again provided an independent assessment of the rebalance at Congress’s direction. This takes into account not only the state of U.S. strategy and force posture, but also that of U.S. allies and partners. This report provides a summary of CSIS’s findings and recommendations for the President and the Congress, setting forth an agenda for the United States in the Asia-Pacific through 2025.



# ASSESSMENT OF THE REBALANCE TO ASIA

**FOUR YEARS INTO THE REBALANCE**, the Department of Defense should receive high marks for sustained attention to the Asia-Pacific. Measured by senior-leader focus on the region, including meeting regularly with senior leaders from the region—both in Asia and in the United States—the United States is maintaining a steady pace of engagement. Further, the Defense Department has increased the proportion of its capabilities dedicated to or deployed in the region. The Pentagon has also deployed new capabilities to the Asia-Pacific. Together with the negotiation of new and updated posture agreements with regional allies and partners, and the increase in exercises with countries from the Indian Ocean region through East Asia, these changes suggest the Defense Department is indeed focused on a long-term rebalance strategy that includes capabilities, posture, and relationships.

Nevertheless, the United States will need to continue and in some cases accelerate investments in regional relationships, posture, operational concepts, and capabilities if it is to achieve the strategic goals of the rebalance. Over the last few years, the Asia-Pacific region has witnessed significant developments that require a reappraisal of U.S. strategy and force posture, as well as an assessment of the strategy and force posture of U.S. allies and partners. Many of these trends have improved prospects for regional security, but some new challenges are emerging, and some existing risks are worsening. These trends span issue areas of geopolitics, diplomacy, economics, domestic politics, and military considerations.

Geopolitically, most states in the Asia-Pacific region are embracing closer security and economic ties with the United States. At the same time, however, states across the region have become more sensitive to China's growing political, economic, and military power, and are potentially vulnerable to Beijing's increasingly coercive behavior. The U.S. relationship with China is complex, mixing elements of cooperation and competition. Although the U.S. rebalance seeks to create space for China to contribute to peace and prosperity throughout the region, it is also important that DOD deter Chinese aggression or coercion and defend U.S. interests.

Polls in Asian countries indicate strong support for the rebalance, with the notable exception of China. The United States is working bilaterally, trilaterally, and multilaterally to reinforce critical rules and norms that underpin a secure and prosperous regional and international order. Yet despite these efforts, there is more acrimony and tension in the U.S.-China relationship, a general deterioration in relations with Russia, and increasing bellicosity from North Korea. In preparing this study, the authors heard a consistent refrain from U.S. allies and partners that, despite their appreciation for the goals of the rebalance, many regional observers worry that U.S. efforts to manage the Iran nuclear negotiations, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant have distracted it from fully implementing the rebalance.

The administration has taken important steps to reinforce the rebalance strategy, beginning with the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance and recently, the 2015 Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy prepared for Congress. The authors also found that the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) is well-aligned with the rest of DOD in its various lines of effort, including theater campaign planning. Much progress has been made since 2012, when CSIS scholars conducted a similar study and found significant disconnects across the U.S. government and with allies and partners. Nevertheless, the implementation of the rebalance may be insufficient to secure U.S. interests. Actions by countries in the region routinely challenge the credibility of U.S. security commitments, and U.S. capability development is not keeping pace with challenges by potential competitors, resulting in the regional balance of military power shifting against the United States. The reasons for these negative changes are four fold.

First, *the Obama administration still has not articulated a clear, coherent, or consistent strategy for the region*, particularly when it comes to managing China's rise. The language used to explain the rebalance in administration speeches and documents has varied substantially over the last four years. The 2012 CSIS independent assessment highlighted this shortcoming, but it remains a problem in terms of reassuring allies and partners and sustaining Congressional support.

Second, *cuts to the defense budget from 2009 to 2015 have limited the Defense Department's ability to pursue the rebalance*. The October 2015 budget agreement notwithstanding, long-term budget uncertainty and the large cuts already implemented represent major changes from the environment that existed when CSIS scholars conducted the 2012 review.

Third, while the U.S. military has instituted major posture changes and is developing new military capabilities to strengthen the rebalance, *the anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) challenge is increasing* and concerns are growing about the ability of potential adversaries to hold at risk forward deployed and forward operating forces throughout the region. Chinese military strategy places a premium on investments in A2/AD capabilities. Its A2/AD umbrella includes long-range cruise and ballistic missiles, advanced integrated air and missile defense systems, and submarines. The goal of these systems is to restrict or outright deny an attacker freedom of entry or maneuver. Chinese investments in cyber; electronic warfare; a blue water navy; missiles; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities serve as powerful reminders of China's plans to push the United States out of the region in a conflict. These capabilities give China the ability to hold at risk U.S. installations and naval assets in the Western Pacific, U.S. allies and partners, and the freedom to use international air and waterways on which the U.S. economy depends. Absent major operational or technology breakthroughs by the United States and its allies and partners, substantial risk remains that China's strategy could undermine the U.S. military's ability to defend U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific.

Fourth, *China's tolerance for risk has exceeded most expectations*—as demonstrated by Beijing's increased operational tempo and construction of military airfields and facilities on seven features in the Spratly Islands. This risk tolerance requires the United States to reassess its China policy, and may lead allies and partners to do the same.

Taken together, these trends suggest that the U.S. rebalance must be enhanced to fulfill defense and deterrence requirements in the PACOM area of responsibility. Executing an effective Asia-Pacific strategy will require a clear and consistent but agile approach; continuous dialogue with regional allies, partners, and competitors; robust economic engagement throughout the region; development of new military concepts and capabilities for deterrence, defense, and crisis management; divestment of lower priority activities if budget constraints continue; and close cooperation between the executive and legislative branches. This report suggests how the United States might adopt just such an approach.

# STUDY BACKGROUND

## IN SEEKING TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH BY THE CONGRESS

(contained in Appendix A), the study authors established a project team consisting of experts on Asia and security from across CSIS. Members of the project team met with senior officials throughout the Asia-Pacific and conducted research in Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Members of the project team also travelled within the United States to Guam and Hawaii and consulted relevant officials in the Washington, D.C. region.

To conduct this study, the CSIS team adopted a strategy-driven, budget-informed approach. This analysis begins with national interests, then identifies potential risks to those interests, and finally determines a strategy and associated policies. The study assesses U.S., ally, and partner capabilities and makes recommendations for closing capability gaps and capacity shortfalls. The study notes that the fiscal environment will drive the viability of many recommendations and therefore includes an assessment of the resource implications of its recommendations.

In an effort to engage noted policy leaders in Washington, the study team enlisted a senior review group to assess the study's preliminary findings. Members of the review group provided valuable insights, but the authors take full responsibility for the content of the study. The senior review group included:

- The Honorable Richard Armitage, former deputy secretary of state;
- Lieutenant General Thomas Conant (USMC, ret.), former deputy commander of PACOM;
- The Honorable Michèle Flournoy, former under secretary of defense for policy;
- Lieutenant General Wallace "Chip" Gregson (USMC, ret.), former assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific security affairs and former commander of Marine Corps Forces Pacific;
- General Gary North (USAF, ret.), former commander of Pacific Air Forces (PACAF);
- Admiral Gary Roughead (USN, ret.), former chief of naval operations and former deputy commander of PACOM;
- General Walter "Skip" Sharp (USA, ret.), former commander of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United Nations Command (UNC); and
- The Honorable James Steinberg, former deputy secretary of state.

The full report is designed to respond to the specific requirements set forth in Section 1059 of the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. Accordingly, the seven sections in the full study address: 1) the overall strategic picture in Asia and the methodology for this study; 2) U.S. interests and risks in the region; 3) the status of U.S. strategy and current and future force posture; 4) the roles and capabilities of regional allies and partners; 5) capability gaps and shortfalls; 6) security issues in the Arctic; and 7) recommendations for U.S. strategy and force posture in the Asia-Pacific region towards 2025. Below is a summary of the report's major findings and recommendations.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINING THE REBALANCE

**THE UNITED STATES HAS DONE MUCH TO STRENGTHEN ITS POSITION** in the Asia-Pacific since President Obama came into office, but more must be done to implement and sustain the rebalance. The CSIS study team categorizes its highest priority recommendations as falling into four broad areas:

- Aligning Asia strategy within the U.S. government and with allies and partners;
- Strengthening ally and partner capability, capacity, resilience, and interoperability;
- Sustaining and expanding U.S. military presence; and
- Accelerating development of innovative capabilities and concepts.

To fully implement the recommendations of this study requires resources at a level above the president's budget. The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific will therefore require the Congress to forge a long-term bipartisan agreement to fund defense at the higher levels for which there is a broad consensus. To give policymakers an approximate sense of the scale of specific initiatives—and to aid in prioritization and synchronization—the initiatives below are categorized as falling into one of three broad cost categories: high (over \$1 billion in additional annual costs above the president's FY 2016 budget during the five-year period); medium (\$10 million to \$1 billion in additional annual costs); and low (under \$10 million in additional annual costs). These categories consider only U.S. fiscal costs, not political costs or expected costs to allies and partners. Accomplishing the initiatives discussed here will require sufficient resources and a continued commitment to the rebalance by senior leaders in the U.S. government over a period of years. Many of these proposals are unlikely to be adopted during the current administration's remaining time in office, given the level of effort and resources needed to make them a reality. Nevertheless, although the political and monetary costs of these initiatives might be substantial, so too would be the benefits.

## 1 | **Align Asia Strategy within the U.S. Government and with Allies and Partners**

Although the Obama administration issued a series of speeches and documents on the rebalance, the authors found that there remains no central U.S. government document that describes the rebalance strategy and its associated elements. In interviews with leaders throughout the Department of Defense, in various U.S. agencies, on Capitol Hill, and across the Asia-Pacific, the study team heard consistent confusion about the rebalance strategy and concern about its implementation. Indeed, a 2014 study by CSIS found that language used to describe the rebalance has changed substantially since its announcement in 2011. Addressing this confusion will require that the executive branch develop and then articulate a clear and coherent strategy and discuss that strategy with Congress as well as with allies and partners across the world. The steps below would increase strategic alignment within the U.S. government and with allies and partners.

## 1.1 | Prepare an Asia-Pacific Strategic Report

In the early 1990s, the George H. W. Bush administration released two East Asia Strategy Initiative reports, which were followed by the Clinton administration's East Asia Strategic Report (often called the Nye Initiative), setting forth U.S. security strategy toward the Asia-Pacific. These reports made clear the importance of U.S. regional presence, and explained Washington's strategy, for both internal and external audiences.

Today, a new strategic report is needed for the Asia-Pacific region. Although the Department of Defense issued an August 2015 Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy, this defense-focused and maritime-specific strategy cannot compensate for the lack of an overall whole-of-government strategy. The 2016 National Defense Authorization Act contains language requiring that the President develop an overall strategy to promote U.S. interests in the region. As part of this report, the National Security Council should develop a principals-level regional strategy to deter coercion and the use of force, to reassure allies and partners, and to engage potential competitors throughout the region. Given the need to develop and execute a whole-of-government approach, this strategy should be among the first documents released by an incoming administration in 2017.

*Estimated cost* low.

## 1.2 | Increase Administration Outreach to Congress

The Obama administration has not quelled congressional concern about the execution of the rebalance, despite making important progress in a number of areas. Congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle remain worried about implementation of the rebalance, particularly efforts to counter Chinese coercion in the South China Sea. Presently, congressional focus is fractured along committee lines and lacks coherence. On the positive side, there is a new group of members in both houses who have demonstrated interest in sustained focus on the region.

The United States has made significant progress on Asia-Pacific initiatives when the administration and Congress have cooperated, as was the case with the creation and announcement of the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative. The administration should reach out to leaders of both parties to ensure support needed for major Asia-Pacific initiatives. Congress, in turn, should establish an "Asia-Pacific Observer Group" in each chamber. These groups could consult and advise U.S. officials on Asia-Pacific issues as well as monitor progress and report to the Congress on relevant matters. An observer group is a well-developed method to generate institutional focus and coherence, most successful when fully bipartisan, and traditionally used to monitor complex arms control negotiations.

Finally, the secretary of defense should establish a mechanism by February 2016 to brief presidential candidates and their senior advisers on critical Asia intelligence developments and policy initiatives to improve the prospects for maintaining the rebalance's momentum during the transition to the next administration.

*Estimated cost* low.

### 1.3 | **Ensure Alignment between Strategy and Resources**

As the United States seeks to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific, the Defense Department must ensure that strategy and resources are aligned. Strategy-resource alignment is necessary due to the gap that has opened between the stated goals of strategy, including new demands in the Middle East and Europe, and the resources available. The 2015 budget deal averted the near-term crisis but not the long-term strategy-resource mismatch.

In preparation for the next strategic review, therefore, the Defense Department should develop a set of classified strategic alternatives that it can provide to the next administration. These strategic alternatives should provide a range of illustrative tradeoffs including various ends, ways, and means combinations and should explicitly consider different resource levels. The alternatives should consider program tradeoffs and efficiencies to make headroom for new initiatives.

In conducting the strategic review, the Defense Department should take advantage of the revised statutory language for the Quadrennial Defense Review, which allows senior leaders to examine resources as part of their review process. Congress, in turn, should begin now to enact defense reforms that can move scarce funding from lower-priority programs to higher priority, especially from overhead to operating forces. These actions would also clearly set a baseline for the next administration to assess how it can implement the rebalance amid other priorities without adopting unrealistic assumptions about future savings. If the gap between strategy and resources is too great, the administration can argue credibly that additional resources are necessary to achieve desired ends.

*Estimated cost* low.

### 1.4 | **Better Coordinate U.S. Strategy with Allies and Partners**

Leaders in Washington frequently discuss the need for combined efforts to meet shared challenges, but leaders in foreign capitals too often feel left out of U.S. decisionmaking. During interviews with officials in foreign capitals, CSIS scholars consistently encountered concerns about long-term U.S. strategic choices, and the conclusions underlying those decisions, particularly with respect to China.

To address these concerns, administration officials should reenergize efforts to engage their counterparts among allies and partners on comprehensive assumptions, assessments, and strategy towards China. As a starting point, U.S. officials should work with allies and partners to examine deterrence and escalation dynamics in “gray zone” conflicts, and jointly develop whole-of-government policies to address coercive behavior. The U.S. PACOM Commander should enhance its efforts to advocate for greater resources for its AOR, prioritizing those military capabilities of allies and partners that best align with U.S. security interests. Additionally, the United States should establish a contact group among key allies and partners to discuss China policy on a more regular basis.

*Estimated cost* low.

## 1.5 | **Expand Confidence Building, and Crisis Management with China**

The CSIS team observed that tensions between Washington and Beijing have been growing, due in large part to China’s increasingly coercive behavior in maritime disputes and disruptive cyber activity. Constructive Sino-American relations are important to regional security and prosperity, but cannot come at the cost of U.S. interests or those of allies or partners. Leaders in Washington and Beijing have taken steps to improve ties, as evidenced by recent agreements on air-to-air safety and crisis communications and cybersecurity. Nevertheless, full implementation of existing agreements and additional efforts to forge new crisis-management mechanisms will be required.

Potential initiatives could include deepening U.S.-China dialogues—such as the Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue—to include more direct discussion of regional strategies and perspectives on difficult issues, such as North Korea, the South China Sea, and space. In addition, the United States could encourage China to adopt bilateral confidence-building measures with U.S. allies and partners, such as Japan and the Philippines. To avoid potential maritime clashes, Washington and Beijing should act on their tentative agreement to pursue adaptation of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea to coast guard vessels. Crisis-management mechanisms are also needed at the political level, to ensure that those crises that occur do not escalate through miscalculation. Confidence-building measures could help to build trust, but, if Chinese coercion continues apace, U.S. leaders may have to condition some military coordination, such as involvement in RIMPAC, on adherence to international rules and norms.

*Estimated cost* low.

## 2 | **Strengthen Ally and Partner Capability, Capacity, Resilience, and Interoperability**

The United States needs robust allies and partners across the Asia-Pacific, but the authors found growing concern that security challenges are outpacing the capabilities of regional states. Many allies and partners are struggling to mitigate security risks, particularly those having to do with maritime disputes in the South China Sea and East China Sea. The United States seeks and benefits from the success of all states throughout the region, so building ally and partner security capability and capacity is in the U.S. interest. Working together more closely, through coordination of strategic approaches and greater interoperability, is an important step in this direction. Strengthening regional security capability, capacity, resilience, and interoperability requires a differentiated strategy that works with highly capable militaries like Japan, Australia, India, South Korea, and Singapore while also assisting states in Southeast Asia struggling to meet basic defense needs.

### 2.1 | **Pursue Federated Approaches with Highly Capable Regional Allies**

For decades, the United States has worked on a largely bilateral basis with its allies, but today new challenges require new approaches. Although the United States has long emphasized the desirability of working with allies to meet pressing security challenges, it has not achieved deep integration of defense industries and capabilities. Meanwhile, with the United States and its allies hitting defense spending limits and the cost of developing and fielding systems increasing rapidly, working together is of paramount importance. A “federated” approach that includes for-

ward-thinking strategies for how to develop and share capabilities and capacity, can knit together the United States and its key allies. By sharing development of federated systems, training, logistical support, concept development, and potentially some operational missions, the United States, Japan, Australia, and South Korea could draw closer to one another.

For example, the allies' strength in undersea warfare is an important edge amidst the maturing anti-access/area denial capacities in the Asia-Pacific region. Leveraging expertise in submarine design and operations could increase each ally's capabilities while also improving interoperability among them. Other areas of cooperation could include missile defense, maritime domain awareness, cybersecurity, and ISR, amphibious operations, and intelligence sharing. The PACOM commander should identify a prioritized list of capabilities in which a federated approach could enhance warfighting capabilities. In pursuing these and other federated defense initiatives, allied officials must work with their respective civilian and military leaders, legislatures, and defense industries. These types of federated approaches to security are necessary if the United States and its allies are to meet shared challenges.

*Estimated cost* low.

## 2.2 | Build Maritime Security Capacity in Southeast Asia

The greatest shortfall among allies and partners in Southeast Asia, both in capability and capacity, is in maritime security. Tensions are growing over disputed claims in the East and South China Seas, but many smaller states lack the sensors or patrol craft required to monitor their maritime approaches. Helping allies and partners develop, deploy, maintain, and operate maritime systems is vital to their ability to provide for their own security. In particular, the United States will need to work with highly advanced militaries, such as those of Japan, South Korea, Australia, and India, to help provide critical platforms, enabling systems, training, and maintenance capabilities.

The Pacific Command should bring these states together on a regular basis to harmonize their respective capacity-building efforts in Southeast Asia. Pacific Command should also work with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Department of State to develop a maritime security joint regional campaign plan that takes these contributions into account and aligns U.S. Foreign Military Sales, training and exercises, and other mechanisms with allies and partners.

Whole-of-government engagement will be necessary to address maritime security needs that fall outside traditional areas of military expertise. For example, financial support might be provided by the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), which can fund development efforts in the security realm. Additional U.S. funding will also be needed, as only \$50 million has been appropriated for the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative (a small sum when compared to spending on European and Middle Eastern reassurance), with future funding yet to be determined.

*Estimated cost* low for coordinating capacity building; medium for additional activities, depending on the scale of U.S. commitment.

### 2.3 | **Form a Standing U.S. Joint Task Force for the Western Pacific**

Maritime security challenges within the Asia-Pacific are more complicated today than ever before, highlighting the need for clear U.S. command and control relationships. If a conflict were to occur today in the First Island Chain, the Pacific Command would likely establish a joint task force to centralize command and control responsibilities. However, experience shows that arrangements of this sort are most effective when established before a conflict and exercised on a regular basis. The risks associated with major combat operations in the Asia-Pacific theater place a premium on pre-existing command relationships. This function was once served by Joint Task Force 519, which was prepared and trained to respond to a crisis in Northeast Asia but has since been dissolved. Interviews with numerous military and civilian leaders suggest that a standing Joint Task Force for Maritime Security is still needed to exercise operational command in future contingencies.

The Pacific Command has made great strides in recent years, but its political-military responsibilities could hamper effective operational command in a high-intensity conflict. The Defense Department should study whether Pacific Fleet, 7th Fleet, III MEF, or U.S. Forces Japan would be best suited to lead a Joint Task Force, balancing the desire for a forward command element, the physical requirements of each location, and the expertise of various commanders and staff. Preliminary analysis suggests that the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet might be well positioned to exercise operational command and control, but that there could also be operational advantages and deterrence and reassurance benefits to deploying the Joint Task Force within the first island chain. Therefore, Pacific Fleet might serve as a Joint Task Force lead with 7th Fleet acting as a potential forward headquarters location during a crisis.

A critical component of such a task force would be frequent training and exercises, and development of strong relationships with allies and partners. Some allies might also contribute officers to serve on the staff of the Joint Task Force, thereby ensuring close coordination with regional partners.

*Estimated cost* low to medium, depending on the degree of “dual hatting” of existing staff.

### 2.4 | **Encourage Japan to Establish a Joint Operations Command**

As the world’s third-largest economy, Japan is a critical U.S. ally from a political, economic, and security standpoint. Prime Minister Abe’s desire to play a more proactive role in international affairs creates the opportunity to further strengthen the alliance, by addressing the need for improved alliance command structures. Although the allies recently agreed to establish an Alliance Coordination Mechanism, it lacks the command and control elements necessary for a rapid combined and joint response to potential crises or conflicts. The authors encountered concern in both Tokyo and Washington that the command and control arrangements are not sufficient for the type of complex, high-intensity warfare that the allies must be prepared to conduct.

To address this requirement, the United States should offer expertise and suggest establishment of a joint operational command, similar to the Australian Joint Operations Command. U.S. personnel could be integrated into this command, if deemed appropriate by the government of Japan. This would improve alliance interoperability, and Japanese officers could serve in similar positions in a U.S. Joint Task Force for the Western Pacific. Such an arrangement would separate the command and control functions from the chief of defense functions, which is critical to effective operational responses.

*Estimated cost* low.

## 2.5 | Deepen Whole-of-Government Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Expertise

Sitting on the ring of fire, the Asia-Pacific region faces the world's highest risk of natural disaster, and the most geographically concentrated population on Earth. In just the last decade, earthquakes, tsunamis, and typhoons have brought serious damage to nearly all states in the region. Too often, regional militaries have struggled to meet this shared challenge. The U.S. Agency for International Development has a strong existing capability for emergency response, as do U.S. and international nongovernmental organizations. The military also has an important role to play in developing regional capability, capacity, and interoperability and establishing regional stockpiles of supplies enables effective humanitarian relief missions.

To expand whole-of-government cooperation on disaster response, the Pacific Command should host a global conference to bring civilian organizations with disaster response expertise together with Asian military representatives. The Pacific Command could also establish an emergency response portal to act as a repository for capabilities and contacts, both for the regional governments and nongovernmental organizations. In addition, training and exercising for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, and practicing interoperability between foreign forces before a crisis occurs, also increases the speed and effectiveness of operations. Exercises should include whole-of-government engagement, creating institutional connections and individual trust before a crisis occurs.

*Estimated cost* low.

## 3 | Sustain and Expand U.S. Military Presence

The authors encountered concern both in Washington and in foreign capitals about the sustainability of U.S. military presence throughout the region. Forward-stationed U.S. forces are one of the most important ways to signal U.S. political commitment to the region. The political and military value of forward presence from both permanently stationed and temporarily deployed forces is enormous. U.S. military presence serves as a stabilizing force in the region, helping to deter conflict on the Korean Peninsula and manage crises from the South China Sea through the Indian Ocean. Forward presence provides opportunities for partnership, interoperating, training, and exercising with allies and partners that U.S.-based forces cannot support.

The goodwill and the capabilities of the United States are on display each time U.S. forces contribute to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions. Operating together on a daily basis helps the United States build partner capacity and prove it is an enduring partner. Over time, these efforts contribute to security throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, for permanently-stationed forces, the financial expense of housing U.S. military personnel and families in Asia can be higher than housing them in the United States, but the costs are often offset by substantial support from host nations. Nevertheless, facing a growing anti-access/area denial threat, U.S. bases and forward-deployed forces are increasingly under risk.

The authors identified initiatives to address capability gaps and capacity shortfalls in ten areas: base realignment, surface fleet presence, undersea warfare, amphibious warfare, air supremacy,

missile defense, ground force mission sets, logistics, munitions, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. Forward presence, including forces deployed, is central to U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific and strengthening U.S. military posture in these areas will require a sustained commitment and additional resources.

### 3.1 | Continue Implementing and Resourcing Key Posture Initiatives

Strengthening U.S. posture in the Asia-Pacific will require continued efforts to minimize the cost of forward presence while maximizing forward-deployed capability and political sustainability. Ongoing initiatives to realign U.S. forces in Japan, South Korea, and Guam are vital to these efforts, as are posture initiatives in Australia, the Philippines, and elsewhere.

- **Japan:** U.S. presence in Okinawa is a strategic necessity given growing regional security challenges. Shifting from the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to the Futenma Replacement Facility in Henoko is critical to this realignment, as is continuing to work closely with Tokyo to address host-nation concerns. Political dynamics in Okinawa have changed substantially in recent years and local government efforts to halt construction could further complicate a realignment 20 years in the making. Nevertheless, the study team reaffirms the conclusion from the 2012 study that moving forward with the Futenma Replacement Facility remains the best option for the United States and Japan. Although U.S. bases on Okinawa impact on the local population, the governments have carefully designed land returns and realignment efforts to minimize this impact while maintaining capabilities required for deterrence and reassurance. As necessary, the allies should consider adjusting operations or accelerating return of facilities under the Special Action Committee on Okinawa.
- **South Korea:** Realignment of army facilities in South Korea will make for a more sustainable and less vulnerable posture on the Korean Peninsula. The shift to rotational deployment of units to South Korea has ensured that elements arrive well trained, but concerns remain about the combat readiness of newly arrived forces in terms of familiarization with terrain, logistics, and South Korean counterparts. The Defense Department should examine lessons from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan that might mitigate these problems; for example, phased initial sub-unit deployments or integration of South Korean elements into U.S.-based training.
- **Australia:** Accelerate implementation of the air element of the U.S. posture initiative in Australia, including aircraft rotations and implementation of necessary infrastructure enhancements together with the government of Australia.
- **Guam:** Bases outside the First Island Chain are also vital, as these facilities are less vulnerable to attack. Guam is sovereign U.S. territory and provides a reliable base that is well located geographically for rapid responses to crises in both Northeast and Southeast Asia. Recent cooperation between the U.S. military and the Guam government has proven highly effective. The United States should continue to fund military construction in Guam to enable force realignment and to increase installation resilience. Efforts in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are also important for effective training and airfield diversification.

Beyond Japan, South Korea, and Guam, initiatives designed to expand access to facilities in Australia and the Philippines will help to diversify U.S. posture and increase combined training and exercise opportunities. U.S. allies already offset some of the costs of forward stationing, with Japan and South Korea providing nearly \$2 billion and \$900 million in yearly funding, respectively. The administration and Congress should work together to ensure that these posture initiatives receive continued political and financial support.

*Estimated cost* high, but most already budgeted.

### 3.2 | Increase Surface Fleet Presence

China's growing assertiveness and its increasingly capable air, naval, and missile forces reinforce the need for additional surface force presence, especially that of carrier strike groups. The United States already has an aircraft carrier permanently stationed in Japan at Yokosuka Naval Base, but potential warfighting scenarios may require rapid deployment of additional surface forces, including carrier strike groups and surface action groups. Many of these assets are often deployed elsewhere, particularly to manage security concerns in the Middle East. Adding more small combatants, such as Littoral Combat Ships, helps to address some presence requirements. Yet, a larger demonstration of U.S. will and capability is necessary for deterrence and reassurance purposes.

In the near term, the United States should continue to develop a network of access agreements and facilities to ensure the ability to maneuver throughout the expanse of the Asia-Pacific region in times of crisis. For the longer term, the navy should examine the steps needed to move a second carrier (to include the associated strike group, air wing, and personnel) west of the international date line. One possible location would be Yokosuka, Japan.

The study team notes such a decision would require analysis of tradeoffs between the advantages of timely response to contingencies and the risks inherent in stationing more U.S. assets inside increasingly contested areas of the Western Pacific. Nevertheless, forward stationing an additional carrier would serve as a clear signal of U.S. commitment to the Asia-Pacific, strengthening deterrence and reassuring regional allies and partners. Forward stationing another West Coast carrier to Asia would also increase the overall carrier presence not only in the Asia-Pacific but in Europe and the Middle East as well. This increased efficiency is vital to maximize the effectiveness of existing platforms. Moreover, there is a unique political opportunity to shift a carrier forward in 2019, because the U.S. fleet is scheduled to add the USS Gerald R. Ford, which will deploy to California and would therefore permit movement of an older carrier forward without decrementing homeported U.S. carriers.

*Estimated cost* high.

### 3.3 | Improve Undersea Capacity

While surface combatants contribute essential capabilities to expected operational requirements and send a strong signal of U.S. commitment, the greatest U.S. combat edge is in the undersea domain. U.S. nuclear attack and guided-missile submarines are the most capable in the world, and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. These assets are in high demand, so increasing their time-on-station is critical if the United States is to make the most use of its undersea advantage.

In the near term, the U.S. Navy could station an additional two Los Angeles-class nuclear attack submarines in Guam, making a total of six. Guam’s location makes it ideal because transit times are relatively short to Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and throughout the western and southern Pacific. In the long term, the U.S. Navy should also consider homeporting several Virginia-class submarines in the Indian Ocean region. Locations to consider should include HMAS Stirling near Perth and Diego Garcia. Stationing submarines in the Indian Ocean would require significant investments in port facilities and host nation agreement. Yet, it would give the United States the ability to quickly pivot forces from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, as well as provide the ability to monitor critical chokepoints such as the Sunda and Lombok Straits. Moreover, U.S. submarines based in the Indian Ocean could improve interoperability with Australia’s Future Submarines and help create a southern maintenance and resupply location for U.S. Navy vessels.

*Estimated cost* medium for shifting two additional submarines to Guam; medium for stationing two submarines in the Indian Ocean, depending on host-nation support and construction requirements.

### 3.4 | Deploy Additional Amphibious and Other Lift

Many likely missions, particularly in Southeast Asia, require a rapidly deployable force capable of conducting operations ranging from humanitarian relief to operating in contested maritime environments. U.S. Marines supply a critical capability in both regards, but they require substantial lift capacity. Particularly with the U.S. Marine Corps deployment to Darwin, inter- and intra-theater lift needs are substantial.

In the near term, the U.S. Navy could shift an amphibious assault ship from the West Coast to Guam to increase lift capacity and homeport an additional High Speed Vessel in Guam. In the medium term, the entire 10th Amphibious Ready Group should be moved from San Diego to Japan—likely Sasebo. Together, these would provide readily available intra-theater lift for U.S. Marines operating in Asian littorals, to include locations within Southeast Asia, and also increase the ease and decrease the cost of regional training and exercises.

In the long term, the navy and marines would ideally add an 11th Amphibious Ready Group to the Pacific, adding capacity to this already-stressed force. Much of the necessary infrastructure already exists at Naval Base Guam for such a force, although additional housing and port facilities would be required. Alternatively, the United States might work with Australia and Japan to share some operational amphibious lift and maneuver capacity, increasing allied interoperability while minimizing costs.

*Estimated cost* medium for shifting an amphibious assault ship to Guam or adding additional high-speed vessels; medium to high for shifting an amphibious ready group to Guam, depending on the amount of additional construction needed; high for adding an additional amphibious ready group to the force; low for sharing amphibious lift with Australia and Japan.

### 3.5 | Continue Diversifying Air Operating Locations

The U.S. Air Force relies on a small number of main operating bases in East Asia, most notably Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Kunsan Air Base and Osan Air Base in South Korea, and Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. These facilities have become increasingly vulnerable to attack, particularly from cruise and ballistic missiles. If these bases were disabled early in a conflict, the U.S. Air Force

would struggle to generate combat power. Further, vulnerability is destabilizing. Pacific Air Forces has been developing alternate basing concepts, including a greater reliance on diversification using ally and partner facilities and more austere bases, potentially including civilian airfields.

The Departments of State and Defense should continue to work with the Philippines, Australia, and others to access, and where appropriate develop, additional facilities that could be used to deepen partnership. Operating from a range of airfields also provides greater strategic depth. Clustering bases could ease the logistical burden of operating multiple facilities while still complicating potential adversaries' targeting choices. If combined with aircraft shelters to defend against submunitions, and with concealment and deception, dispersal would greatly complicate an adversary's targeting challenge. In addition, capabilities for airfield construction and repair, and for exploiting shorter, expeditionary airfields need to be expanded and new technologies pursued.

To respond rapidly to this dynamic environment, the U.S. Air Force should create a more flexible Air Tasking Order process capable of responding rapidly to dynamic and diversified operations. The United States will have to increase its efforts to overcome political and budgetary obstacles, including in U.S. territories like the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), in order to develop a robust and diversified basing posture across the Asia-Pacific.

*Estimated cost* medium for developing CNMI divert airfields; medium to high for developing facilities in the Philippines and Australia, depending on how much new infrastructure is constructed.

### 3.6 | Bolster Regional Missile Defenses

China, North Korea, and Russia all continue to develop their long-range missile capabilities, increasing the missile risk to forward-deployed U.S. forces, as well as to the U.S. homeland. Mitigating these risks requires the ability to intercept cruise and ballistic missiles, likely in large numbers. In the near- and mid-term this requires additional investments in missile inventories. DOD should assess whether any additional firing units are needed beyond those already planned.

Additional posture changes can help as well. In particular, the United States can work to link missile defense systems together, as it has attempted to do with systems operated by Japan and South Korea. Developing integrated air and missile defenses will be vital to defend critical operating locations. In the near term, two posture initiatives are worthy of consideration. First, the United States should work with South Korea to deploy U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense assets to the peninsula, helping to defend against ballistic missiles. Second, the United States should improve cruise missile defenses on Guam, using either PAC-3 or in the future the Indirect Fire Protection Capability integrated air and missile defense systems.

*Estimated cost* low for deploying existing Terminal High Altitude Area Defense assets to South Korea; low for deploying existing PAC-3 systems to Guam; medium for procuring Indirect Fire Protection Capability systems, for additional PATRIOT personnel, or for additional THAAD or PATRIOT missiles and firing units.

### 3.7 | Advance and Adapt the U.S. Army's Regionally Aligned Forces Concept

The U.S. Army conceived of the regionally aligned forces approach to the Pacific at a time when the Department of Defense believed that global demands would abate after Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, worldwide demand for U.S. Army forces, especially headquarters units that provide command and control as well as key enablers, is greater than anticipated and is likely to remain high for the foreseeable future.

The U.S. Army should revise its Regionally Aligned Forces concept and its Pacific Pathways deployments because unit integrity and the availability of forces will make the routine deployment of brigade-level formations difficult to sustain beyond those required to support deterrence and crisis response on the Korean Peninsula. Employing smaller units—at the company, battalion, or brigade headquarters level—could improve the effectiveness of regional deployments, including of missile-defense deployments, while reducing resource requirements.

Such an approach would better leverage National Guard and Army Reserve Forces. In particular, the National Guard's State Partnership Program should be expanded in Asia and viewed as a key component of Regionally Aligned Forces. There are currently 69 State Partnership Programs of which 22 are with EUCOM and 22 with SOUTHCOM; only 8 are with PACOM. While state governments have a central role in determining these partnerships, the Department of Defense should encourage a rebalance to Asia that reflects the growing economic and cultural ties of the United States with the region.

*Estimated cost* low to medium, depending on the cost differential between current large unit deployments in Asia and a greater number of small unit deployments drawing from the total force.

### 3.8 | Address Logistical Challenges

Underlying the U.S. military's ability to project power is its logistics capacity. Logistics in the Pacific Command area of responsibility are particularly challenging because of the long distances involved and the needs of new operating concepts—such as getting fuel to more distributed and austere locations during times of conflict—and the rising A2/AD threat, which means that logistical operations will no longer be conducted in sanctuary.

In a time of declining budgets, logistical needs may not draw much public attention, but they are no less important. Some of these logistics challenges can be met internally. One near-term need is the continued service of a dedicated T-AOE supply ship, which is scheduled to leave active service for cost savings next year. In the mid to long term, acquiring additional combat logistics force assets and deploying them to the Pacific will also be necessary.

Some logistics challenges can leverage civilian and commercial assets. Civilian contractors have become a permanent part of U.S. force structure, especially for logistics, and they need to be rapidly deployable. In addition, the United States should leverage the immense capabilities of the commercial assets available from allies and partners. These capabilities already exist, operate every day, and could reduce the U.S. military's peacetime footprint. Ensuring this is done correctly will require proper oversight and management controls by the operational command, government contracting organizations, and military staffs.

Further, DOD must reexamine its logistics communication system and identify means to better secure unclassified networks, and where necessary make greater use of classified networks for logistics planning and execution. Finally, and importantly, logistics planning—including analyses for strategic mobility and aerial refueling—will need to account for attrition and interdiction inherent to a combat environment.

*Estimated cost* low for leveraging partner and allied commercial assets; medium for maintaining the deployment of a T-AOE ship in the Pacific Command area of responsibility; high for additional combat logistics force assets.

### 3.9 | **Stockpile Critical Precision Munitions**

Demand for munitions in the Asia-Pacific is high, given the potential for large-scale and high-intensity conflicts. The ability to “fight tonight” requires that U.S. forces have munitions in theater to meet this demand. U.S. forces do have access to a large number of munitions-storage facilities, from Okinawa to South Korea to Guam. Yet, most of these facilities are nearing their capacity and stockpiles for many precision munitions are still lacking in forward areas. As a result, munitions would have to be moved forward rapidly during a conflict, increasing the risk that delays could affect current plans. Moreover, acquisition of additional munitions is necessary to meet the large number of potential air and surface targets required by a high-intensity conflict.

DOD should sustain its recently increased investments in this area in order to expand stockpiles of high-demand, low-inventory munitions, for example air-to-air munitions such as the AIM-120D and anti-surface munitions such as the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile-Extended Range. Where necessary, DOD should clear production bottlenecks. Once acquired, the U.S. military should increase the forward stockpiles of needed munitions—on land or at sea through maritime prepositioning—particularly JDAMs in Korea and long-range guided missiles for Guam and Japan.

*Estimated cost* medium for creating additional storage facilities at Guam; medium to high for increasing production of certain precision munitions (though much is already in the budget).

### 3.10 | **Enhance ISR Coverage in PACOM through Partnership with Allies**

All combatant commands increased ISR capabilities. Both operators and planners acknowledge that ISR demand will always outpace available supply. However, ongoing operational requirements in CENTCOM and EUCOM continue to tax an ISR force already in high demand. Increased PRC gray zone challenges, combined with growing ally and partner concern, suggest the need for greater ISR throughout PACOM.

We recommend, consistent with recommendation 2.1, that the United States co-develop ISR platforms and analysis tools with allies. Further, it should develop with allies cooperative and aligned ISR plans to maximize collection effectiveness. Finally, it should conduct combined operations and analysis of ISR missions in the South China Sea and East China Sea with regional treaty allies.

*Estimated cost* low.

## 4 | Accelerate Development of Innovative Capabilities and Concepts

The United States must update existing concepts and capabilities to ensure that the future force is capable of deterring and prevailing in potential conflicts. China's development of anti-access/area-denial capabilities aims to restrict U.S., ally, and partner freedom of maneuver. To overcome this challenge, the United States is developing new concepts of operation and next-generation capabilities. However, the security environment is highly dynamic and will require a culture of adaptability, a willingness to try new approaches and risk failure through experimentation, and the ability to move rapidly from concept to acquisition.

In developing these capabilities, the United States needs to accept some level of uncertainty and hedge by developing capabilities that address a wide range of emerging challenges. Resource constraints will limit the degree to which the Defense Department can plan for all outcomes, so collaboration with international partners and the commercial sector will be vital. In particular, the authors identified capability gaps in two types of areas. First are those capabilities required to offset an emerging risk to U.S. forces, such as the growing ballistic missile risk to U.S. ships and forward bases. Second are those capabilities that the United States could develop to provide an asymmetric counter to potential regional competitors. Both will be needed for the U.S. military to retain a resilient forward presence and the ability to project combat power in the Asia-Pacific, despite competitors' efforts to constrain U.S. leaders by increasing the risk to U.S. forces.

### 4.1 | Institutionalize a Culture of Experimentation

The operational experience of the U.S. armed forces, their leadership skills, and their spirit of innovation are arguably the greatest U.S. advantages over any potential adversary. Where recent experience is lacking, gaming and other analytic tools, professional military education, and experimentation and exercises can assist in testing alternative concepts and new technologies. Recent efforts to revitalize wargaming are an important step. Effective red teaming is critical to success and findings need to be captured and acted upon.

The Defense Department should launch an annual competition of "blue teams" consisting of nominees drawn from professional military education institutions against a "red team" drawn from within and beyond the U.S. intelligence community. The first such annual competition should focus on overcoming challenges imposed by China's military investments and advances, such as operating in information-denied environments. The secretary of defense could provide citations to the members of the most successful blue team.

In-the-field experimentation is even more vital than gaming. The use of interactive equipment and a dedicated opposing force has revolutionized tactical training in all the services, but the same needs to be done at the operational and strategic levels. The Department of Defense should develop an 18-month roadmap for improving the institutional underpinnings of joint concept development and experimentation, including an experiment and concept fund to resource the most innovative service and combatant commander field experiment, concept development, or gaming ideas.

*Estimated cost* medium.

## 4.2 | Encourage Rapid Platform Evolution

Cutting-edge technologies are emerging faster than current military acquisition cycles can incorporate or counter them. Some observers argue that the future will be “small, smart, and many.” If true, then the customary practice of long-lifespan, relatively static platforms with occasional capability upgrades will not provide the United States the capabilities it will need in the future.

Programs with modular or interchangeable sub-systems must be studied and expanded. The insertion of new sensor capabilities on the MQ-9 Reaper, including the GORGON STARE and VADER systems, showcases how relatively basic modular platforms can make possible high-end capabilities. Another example of repurposing existing capabilities is the development of electronic warfare packages that fit within the fuselage of a wing-mounted missile, enabling a local air commander to rapidly reconfigure for electronic warfare capability, even without dedicated electronic warfare airframes. The Defense Department must find ways to incorporate a greater degree of upgradability and even disposability into its operational concepts and acquisition processes. Certain platforms should endure while others should have short experimental lifetimes to best adopt rapidly emerging technology at a lower cost.

*Estimated cost* medium to high, depending on the systems adopted.

## 4.3 | Develop Advanced Long-Range Missiles

The United States retains a substantial advantage in the technological sophistication of its major military platforms, but the missiles they carry often lack the range needed to operate against adversaries with anti-access/area denial capabilities designed to prevent U.S. forces from closing within striking distance. Long range will be important for effective employment of anti-ship, anti-surface, and anti-air missiles, as well as for the survivability of their launch platforms. Such munitions are especially important payloads for new platforms, such as the F-35, the Long Range Strike Bomber, and the Littoral Combat Ship. U.S. missiles need not only have long ranges but also advanced terminal guidance and high-speed maneuverability to defeat potential countermeasures. Although many investments are already underway, the administration and the Congress should provide these advanced long-range missiles with continued budgetary support.

*Estimated cost* high, but some already in budget.

## 4.4 | Fund Innovative Missile Defense Concepts

The United States relies on missile defenses to protect forward bases and forward-deployed forces. With missile ranges increasing and the cost of missile defenses rising more rapidly than the missiles themselves, it is vital that the United States develop cheaper alternatives to offset the growing missile risk.

Three options are particularly promising: railgun, directed-energy, and upgraded conventional powder guns. Railguns have the benefit of high rates of fire and the ability to fire at air, missile, and land targets over great distances. Directed-energy defenses are attractive for their large magazine depth, dependent primarily on energy-storage capacity. Conventional powder guns are already deployed throughout the region in large numbers, so the ability to repurpose them would

likely save money and require less technological risk than using more innovative and untested technologies. Given the importance of missile defenses for forward bases and deployed forces, all three capabilities should be pursued and prioritized.

*Estimated cost* medium for research, development, test, and evaluation; high for procurement and fielding.

#### 4.5 | **Field Additional Air Combat Systems**

The United States has a small number of aging bombers, most of which are unsuited for non-permissive environments. Adversary advances in stealth-detecting radars may also reduce the benefits of current stealth platforms, and increase the cost of future stealth systems. Developing a fleet of next-generation aircraft with the right combination of capabilities—long-range, manned and unmanned operation, and stealthy and non-stealthy characteristics—will be critical to prevailing in a major conflict against a peer competitor.

The Long Range Strike Bomber is one important investment, but there are others. Unmanned systems, both carrier-launched and ground-launched, will be vital for executing distributed operations and reducing vulnerability. Maritime platforms, such as the Unmanned Carrier-Launched Surveillance and Strike system, will require the ability to penetrate through advanced air-defense systems to conduct both surveillance and strike missions at great distances from U.S. carrier strike groups. Many of these technologies will be expensive, but they make use of critical U.S. advantages in stealth technology and integration of unmanned systems into operational units. A more rapid and dynamic ATO process, as recommended in recommendation 3.5, is needed to get maximum effect from these advanced strike and reconnaissance capabilities.

*Estimated cost* high, but much already in the budget.

#### 4.6 | **Exploit the U.S. Undersea Advantage**

Perhaps the foremost U.S. asymmetric advantage is in the undersea domain, where the United States retains a substantial technological lead over potential competitors. Nevertheless, continued investment in undersea capabilities is necessary to prevent competitors from catching up. The United States will also need to rely more on its undersea edge as its dominance erodes in other domains. Developing new undersea platforms, especially unmanned underwater vehicles, will help extend the U.S. advantage.

Increasing the number of U.S. nuclear attack and guided-missile submarines in the Asia-Pacific would also be helpful, but increasing their payload is particularly important. The Virginia Payload Module will replace a badly needed capability to approach covertly and strike large numbers of targets from underwater when the Ohio-class guided-missile submarines retire. The U.S. Navy's current plan is to include Virginia Payload Modules in every other submarine starting in 2019. If this plan holds, the large majority of those boats should be sent to the Pacific, where the demand is highest for undersea payload.

*Estimated cost* high.

#### 4.7 | Augment Space, Cyber, and Electronic Warfare Capabilities

The U.S. military remains highly dependent on capabilities in space, cyberspace, and across the electronic spectrum, for command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. Potential adversaries are aware that weakness in these areas could severely limit the operational effectiveness of U.S. conventional forces in a conflict and will contest these domains in the future.

As a result, the United States should ensure it has robust defenses in these domains, the ability to respond to aggression by an adversary, and alternative mechanisms for providing the needed capability. For space, at a minimum this means hardening terrestrial and satellite-based communication systems against jamming, hosting payloads on foreign satellites, and developing non-space back-up mechanisms for capabilities that are currently space-based. For electronic warfare, this means enhancing EW capabilities to ensure U.S. forces can operate in a battlespace saturated with adversary jamming devices and advanced radars. For cyberspace, this means continuing to invest in both offensive and defensive cyber capabilities, particularly combat mission teams, is important.

*Estimated cost* high for hardening communication systems; medium to high for increasing electronic warfare investments; medium for shifting toward hosted payloads; medium for bolstering cyber mission forces.

The initiatives outlined above would help to ensure that the United States maintains the ability to protect its interests in the Asia-Pacific while offsetting growing security risks. Safeguarding regional security and prosperity will require that the United States engage states throughout the Asia-Pacific, deter potential adversaries, and reassure allies and partners. As the U.S. Pacific Command looks ahead to 2025, the number and severity of the region's security risks are likely to expand, but the United States has the tools and, with bipartisan cooperation, can have the resources to meet these challenges.

**For the full CSIS report, “Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025: Capabilities, Presence, and Partnerships” please visit [asiarebalance.csis.org](https://asiarebalance.csis.org).**

# APPENDIX A:

## NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015—SECTION 1059

Review Of United States Military Strategy And The Force Posture Of Allies And Partners In The United States Pacific Command Area Of Responsibility

### (a) INDEPENDENT REVIEW

**(1) IN GENERAL**—The Secretary of Defense shall commission an independent review of the United States Asia-Pacific rebalance, with a focus on issues expected to be critical during the ten-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, including the national security interests and military strategy of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region.

**(2) CONDUCT OF REVIEW**—The review conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be conducted by an independent organization that has—

- (A) recognized credentials and expertise in national security and military affairs; and
- (B) access to policy experts throughout the United States and from the Asia-Pacific region.

**(3) ELEMENTS**—The review conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include the following elements:

- (A) An assessment of the risks to United States national security interests in the United States Pacific Command area of responsibility during the ten-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act as a result of changes in the security environment.
- (B) An assessment of the current and planned United States force posture adjustments and the impact of such adjustments on the strategy to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region.
- (C) An assessment of the current and planned force posture and adjustments of United States allies and partners in the region and the impact of such adjustments on the strategy to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region.
- (D) An evaluation of the key capability gaps and shortfalls of the United States and its allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific region, including undersea warfare (including submarines), naval and maritime, ballistic missile defense, cyber, munitions, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.
- (E) An analysis of the willingness and capacity of allies, partners, and regional organizations to contribute to the security and stability of the Asia-Pacific region, including potential required adjustments to United States military strategy based on that analysis.
- (F) An appraisal of the Arctic ambitions of actors in the Asia-Pacific region in the context of current and projected capabilities, including an analysis of the adequacy and relevance of the Arctic Roadmap prepared by the Navy.

(G) An evaluation of theater security cooperation efforts of the United States Pacific Command in the context of current and projected threats, and desired capabilities and priorities of the United States and its allies and partners.

(H) The views of noted policy leaders and regional experts, including military commanders, in the Asia-Pacific region.

## **(b) REPORT**

**(1) SUBMISSION TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the independent organization that conducted the review pursuant to subsection (a)(1) shall submit to the Secretary of Defense a report containing the findings of the review. The report shall be submitted in classified form, but may contain an unclassified annex.

**(2) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS**—Not later than 90 days after the date of receipt of the report required by paragraph (1), the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees the report, together with any comments on the report that the Secretary considers appropriate.



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**Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025: Capabilities, Presence, and Partnerships**

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