

APRIL 2016



Australia-Japan-U.S. Maritime Cooperation

Creating Federated Capabilities for the Asia Pacific

AUTHOR

Andrew Shearer

A Report of the
CSIS ASIA PROGRAM

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INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Notwithstanding the U.S. rebalance to Asia, a combination of new military threats is altering the balance of power in the Asia Pacific and creating critical capability and capacity gaps—particularly in the maritime domain. U.S. capability development is not keeping pace, largely as a result of reductions in defense funding. The traditional U.S.-led “hub and spokes” alliance system needs to adapt to a different and more contested region. A new approach is needed to deter potential aggression and reassure regional allies and partners.

Significantly deepening maritime cooperation with the United States’ most capable allies and partners should lie at the heart of this new approach. Australia and Japan are two of the most capable maritime powers in the Asia Pacific and serve as the longstanding southern and northern anchors of regional stability. They share an increasingly close defense and security relationship and their strategic importance is growing. Closer trilateral maritime cooperation serves the interest of all three countries and of maintaining maritime security and stability in the Asia Pacific. Each brings unique and complementary assets to the table, whether in the form of capability, technology, or strategic geography.

Building networked maritime capabilities should build on existing interoperability between Australia, Japan, and the United States in areas such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; undersea warfare; amphibious operations; logistics; and capability development. This includes more trilateral exercises and training, and operations where possible, as well as working together to develop new operating concepts, tactics, and weapons systems. Given that the Asia Pacific undersea realm is becoming more important and increasingly contested, stronger trilateral submarine and antisubmarine cooperation is particularly vital—for example, to develop Australia’s next generation of conventional submarines. The existing institutional arrangements for trilateral strategic cooperation need to be upgraded. Finally, where possible India should be brought into trilateral activities over time.

Bolstering regional deterrence and warfighting capabilities is important, but stronger trilateral maritime cooperation is not an end in itself. Rather, it can play a vital role in shaping a more benign regional strategic environment and thereby supporting the long-term grand strategic goal of maintaining a peaceful and prosperous Asia Pacific underpinned by inclusive regional institutions, open economies, and adherence to longstanding rules and norms such as freedom of navigation.

Expanding trilateral maritime cooperation will require policy decisions in the three capitals that at times will take each partner out of its comfort zone. It will require political courage, cultural change in the respective defense forces and bureaucracies, and sustained high-level engagement over decades. But the stakes are high and the need for action is increasingly urgent.

Introduction

Since 2013 CSIS has developed an extensive body of research and policy discussion on the concept of federated defense. The Federated Defense Project aims to assess and recommend concrete ways for the United States and its partners to integrate their defense capabilities in support of shared interests.¹ Within this framework, this paper seeks to make the case for significantly deeper trilateral maritime cooperation between Australia, Japan, and the United States and proposes a series of initiatives to achieve this objective.

The first section of the paper examines the conceptual framework of federated defense, how it applies in the Asia Pacific, why it is particularly important in the maritime domain, and why a focus on Australia, Japan, and the United States makes sense.

The paper goes on to assess the strategic logic for deeper Australia-Japan-U.S. maritime security cooperation. It outlines the evolving threat environment in Asia and the Pacific, including increasing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, regional military modernization, and nonstate threats and challenges. It discusses the U.S. “rebalance” to Asia and identifies maritime capability and capacity gaps across a broad spectrum, from low-intensity missions such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) up to high-intensity warfighting, with an emphasis on bolstering conventional deterrence. It considers the importance of strategic geography, shared interests and common values, and strategic perceptions and outlines the evolving geostrategic roles of Japan and Australia, and their deepening defense and security relationship.

The third section of the paper briefly surveys existing trilateral strategic cooperation between Australia, Japan, and the United States following the establishment of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD—then known as the Trilateral Security Dialogue) in 2002.

In the fourth section the paper identifies opportunities for deeper Australia-Japan-U.S. trilateral maritime cooperation to fill the key capability and capacity gaps identified earlier in the paper, and potential constraints to closer cooperation—including limited resources, impediments to information sharing, barriers to technology transfer, cultural and operational differences, implementing mechanisms, and regional presentational issues. It lays out an action plan of concrete initiatives to deepen practical trilateral maritime cooperation.

Some of these proposals relate to improving coordination in the maritime domain at the policy, strategic, and operational levels. Others are more operational, including measures to develop more ambitious exercises, interoperability, and closer integration in key capability

¹ See, in particular, *Federated Defense Project: Overview* (Washington, DC: CSIS, December 16, 2013), <http://csis.org/program/federated-defense-project>; Michael J. Green, Kathleen Hicks, and Zack Cooper, *Federated Defense in Asia* (Washington, DC: CSIS, December 2014); Stephanie Sanok Kostro and Rhys McCormick, *Institutional Foundations of Federated Defense* (Washington, DC: CSIS, January 2015); and Mark W. Lawrence, *Tailoring the Global Network for Real Burden Sharing at Sea* (Washington, DC: CSIS, August 2015).

areas such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), amphibious operations, antisubmarine warfare (ASW), missile defense, logistics, and sustainment. More ambitiously, the paper also recommends areas for potential joint development of maritime platforms and systems, including submarine cooperation, maritime surveillance, and unmanned aerial and undersea vehicles (UAVs and UUVs). Common platforms that all three countries operate or will operate, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, offer significant opportunities to develop federated operating concepts, training, tactics, and support systems.

01

Why Federated Maritime Defense Cooperation Makes Sense in the Asia Pacific

Federated defense seeks to square the circle—to provide workable answers to an increasingly pressing strategic dilemma: how the United States, with its allies, can respond effectively to a deteriorating international security environment in an era of constrained defense budgets.

The concept takes as a given that increased multilateral cooperation is necessary to respond to a range of nonstate, transnational security threats and challenges—everything from natural disasters, people smuggling, and piracy through to terrorism. But while efforts to build partner capacity across these low-intensity missions are necessary, they are no longer sufficient. Federated defense is more ambitious, recognizing that a new approach is also needed to the more traditional and fundamental “hard security” objectives of deterring potential aggression and reassuring regional allies and partners. The ultimate goal is “to knit together a geopolitically significant defense capability that is demonstrably greater than the United States or its allies and partners can manage individually.”²

To achieve these high-level strategic effects, federated defense necessarily extends beyond existing, and often piecemeal efforts, such as training, foreign military sales, provision of surplus equipment, and coordination in multilateral security institutions. It is a multifaceted, forward-leaning strategy that “involves integrating U.S., ally, and partner capabilities into regional security architectures that advance common interests”³—predicated on aligned strategies, force postures, operating concepts, training, and logistics, and delivered through shared defense capabilities, facilities and other infrastructure, and jointly developed and acquired systems. Federated defense seeks to build on existing alliances but deliberately goes beyond them to link U.S. allies with nonallied security partners.⁴ It does not impair participants’ sovereign ability to take autonomous action.⁵ Nor does it constitute a formal collective security arrangement.

² See *Federated Defense Project: Overview*.

³ Green, Hicks, and Cooper, *Federated Defense in Asia*, 1.

⁴ See *Federated Defense Project: Overview*.

⁵ Green, Hicks, and Cooper, *Federated Defense in Asia*, 1.

The Asia Pacific is particularly ripe for federated defense approaches. It features the full gamut of nonstate threats and challenges with an increasing overlay of traditional strategic competition, rapid military modernization, and the proliferation of new space and cyber capabilities. At the same time, regional multilateral institutions and confidence-building measures are underdeveloped—palpably unable to uphold regional order. Meanwhile, the United States’ longstanding alliance system in Asia—designed on a “hub and spokes” basis not only to contain the Soviet threat but to allow Washington to navigate tensions between its allies and to avoid “entrapment”—continues to play an important part in underpinning deterrence and reassurance but needs to adapt to a very different region.⁶

Despite these challenges, there is a significant overlap of strategic interests and shared security objectives in Asia—one of the preconditions for federated defense to be viable. The shared drivers of regional militaries’ missions and requirements include protecting territorial integrity; avoiding the emergence of a hostile regionally dominant state; ensuring the free flow of commerce; preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and supporting the rule of law, both domestically and internationally.⁷ Some missions, such as HADR, information and intelligence sharing, and cyber security are shared priorities across the region, with Southeast Asian countries particularly focused on nonstate threats. But a few countries are also increasingly focusing on higher-end missions such as missile and air defense, undersea warfare, and countering anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) tactics.⁸

The United States and other regional nations are taking steps to respond to the more challenging strategic environment in the Asia Pacific. Yet these are inadequate. Together new military threats—led by but not confined to China’s rapid military modernization—and shrinking resources⁹ are altering the balance of power in Asia and the Western Pacific and creating critical capability and capacity deficits. Sub-surface threats are increasing, with Asian navies expanding their undersea capabilities “at a remarkable rate.”¹⁰ A recent review of the U.S. military rebalance concluded that U.S. capability development is not keeping pace with

⁶ On the origins of the U.S. alliance system in Asia, see Victor D. Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia,” *International Security* (Winter 2010, Vol. 34, No. 3), 158–96. For good treatments of the challenges facing the U.S. alliance system in Asia, see Victor D. Cha, “American Alliances and Asia’s Regional Architecture,” in Saadia M. Pekkanen, John Ravenhill, and Rosemary Foot (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 744–5; and Victor D. Cha, “Complex Patchworks: US Alliances as Part of Asia’s Regional Security Architecture,” *Asia Policy*, 11 (January 2011), 27–50.

⁷ Green, Hicks, and Cooper, *Federated Defense in Asia*, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹ The negative impact of the sequester on U.S. defense capabilities is well documented. A number of Asia-Pacific governments are increasing defense spending, but most remain significantly underinvested. For example, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) 2015 Military Balance Report, Australia spent only 1.5 percent of GDP on defense in 2014; Japan, 1 percent; the Philippines, 0.7 percent; and Vietnam, 2.2 percent; by contrast, the United States spent 3.3 percent of GDP on defense.

¹⁰ Abraham M. Denmark, “Declining Capabilities and Rising Subsurface Threat,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (October 2011, Vol. 137/10/1,304).

challenges in the Asia Pacific, “resulting in the regional balance of military power shifting against the United States.”¹¹

Substantial gaps exist in the following key capability areas: HADR; information and intelligence sharing; maritime security; undersea warfare; missile defense; and cyber security. In particular, “As maritime trade continues to grow, regional fishing fleets expand and compete over dwindling fish stocks, and both nonstate threats and state-based disputes over sovereignty rise, many gaps and seams are opening in the maritime domain.” As a result, “there exists a dangerous and growing capability gap in maritime security.”¹² This includes a shortfall of maritime ISR capacity and of coast guard and naval assets in Southeast Asia in particular. Federated approaches to maritime security make sense because many maritime threats are shared and many of the required capabilities are similar.¹³ A number of the other regional capability gaps—for example, HADR, ISR, undersea warfare, and missile defense—also have a strong maritime dimension. Hence this paper focuses particularly on deepening Asia Pacific *maritime* cooperation.

Efforts are under way to build maritime capabilities and capacity in Asia. The U.S. Navy casts its regional engagement net wide. Its goal of building a “global network” of navies emphasizes broader participation over enhancing warfighting capability.¹⁴ By taking an inclusive approach it seeks to contribute to transparency, avoid causing offense, and help build a stronger sense of security community. Other U.S. efforts such as the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative and provision of two surplus U.S. Coast Guard patrol vessels to the Philippines government seek to boost the low-end maritime capabilities of a more select group of regional partners. Japan has similarly provided patrol vessels to the Philippines and Vietnam, and Australia has donated two surplus patrol boats to Malaysia. As noted above, these efforts are welcome and necessary to address a range of lower-intensity maritime challenges in Asia and should continue to receive concerted support from the United States, Japan, and Australia. But they are not sufficient to begin filling the high-end capability deficits and contributing to conventional deterrence and the maintenance of a favorable balance of power in the region.

To achieve this will require a deliberate and sustained emphasis on deepening maritime cooperation with the most capable U.S. allies and partners and “a shift from broad statements of principle to a series of focused, targeted, and explicitly linked efforts with tangible promise.”¹⁵ In this endeavor, “The Navy’s most valuable partners within the global network . . . will be those navies with which the United States works most often, and specifically those

¹¹ Michael Green, Kathleen Hicks, Mark Cancian et al., *Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025: Capabilities, Presence and Partnerships* (Washington, DC: CSIS, January 2016), 4.

¹² Green, Hicks, and Cooper, *Federated Defense in Asia*, 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴ Mark W. Lawrence, *Tailoring the Global Network for Real Burden Sharing at Sea* (Washington, DC: CSIS, August 2015), 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

who benefit from operationally driven command and control integration (both technical and procedural) developed with the U.S. Navy over time.”¹⁶ The Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force is both highly capable and highly interoperable with the U.S. Navy, particularly in ASW and missile defense, and is expanding and upgrading its maritime capabilities.¹⁷ The Royal Australian Navy, while smaller, is also modernizing and expanding, and has operated closely with the U.S. Navy for decades, particularly in out-of-area coalition operations; the two navies enjoy high levels of functional interoperability.¹⁸ Therefore this paper focuses on Australia and Japan as the most prospective partners for the United States to start seriously deepening maritime cooperation and interoperability in Asia.

¹⁶ Ibid., 14.

¹⁷ Ibid., 19–20.

¹⁸ Ibid., 21.

The Strategic Logic of Deeper Australia-Japan-U.S. Maritime Cooperation

There is little doubt that the United States and its allies around the world face growing instability and intensifying security challenges. U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work points to one of the most volatile security environments the West has faced since the end of the Second World War.¹⁹ Conflict in the Middle East, the growing assertiveness around the world of authoritarian powers China, Russia, and Iran, and the continuing threat of Islamist terrorism—most recently in the form of ISIL—are straining the defense, intelligence, and domestic security resources of the United States and its allies and partners. Other nontraditional threats are also proliferating. At the same time, the United States and most other Western nations have been reducing or capping post-Cold War defense budgets that were already barely adequate if that. The U.S. military is steadily losing the technological edge it has enjoyed for more than half a century.²⁰ And war-weary publics are anxious but reluctant to respond to growing threats by increasing military investment and commitments abroad.

In the Asia Pacific, the maritime domain is becoming increasingly contested and is central to these concerning trends. The United States' *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy* recognizes that free and open maritime access has been critical to protecting the stable economic order that has underpinned regional growth for decades and to America's ability to respond effectively to contingencies.²¹ The ability to project dominant military power across transoceanic distances also underwrites U.S. conventional deterrence and its capacity to reassure allies and partners.²² Yet this vital element of American strategy in Asia and

¹⁹ Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work, "The Third U.S. Offset Strategy and Its Implications for Partners and Allies," speech to the Center for a New American Security, Washington, DC, January 28, 2015, 1, www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speed-View/Article/606641.

²⁰ Secretary Work acknowledged this frankly in his CNAS speech, cited above; see p. 3. See also Thomas G. Mahnken, with Dan Blumenthal, Thomas Donnelly, Michael Mazza, Gary J. Schmitt, and Andrew Shearer, *Asia In The Balance: Transforming US Military Strategy in Asia* (Washington, DC: The American Enterprise Institute, June 2012).

²¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy: Achieving U.S. National Security Objectives in a Changing Environment*, 2015, 2.

²² Work, "The Third U.S. Offset Strategy and Its Implications for Partners and Allies," 5.

contributor to regional stability is in jeopardy for the first time in more than 70 years. The main drivers are rapid economic and military modernization—in particular, China’s acquisition of a broad suite of A2/AD capabilities—combined with growing resource demands, longstanding territorial disputes, and a mélange of nontraditional maritime challenges that further stretch the capacity of the United States and its regional allies and partners.²³

Numbers tell part of the story. As U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus has said, when it comes to maintaining naval presence, “Quantity has a quality all its own . . . you’ve got to have those big, gray hulls on the horizon.”²⁴ Increasingly, however, the big gray hulls are Chinese. China has by far the largest force of major combatants, submarines, and amphibious warfare ships in Asia (over 300) and by far the largest civil maritime enforcement fleet (over 200).²⁵ It also has 600 modern combat aircraft.²⁶ By contrast Japan, Asia’s next-largest maritime power, has fewer than 70 naval combatant vessels, fewer than 80 maritime law enforcement vessels, and approximately 350 combat aircraft.²⁷ The leading maritime Southeast Asian nations—including claimants to disputed South China Sea territory—have smaller navies and civil maritime enforcement fleets. The U.S. 7th Fleet has 50 to 70 vessels (including 1 aircraft carrier, 8–12 submarines, and 10–14 destroyers and cruisers) and 140 combat aircraft deployed forward in the region, while the 3rd Fleet includes 5 carrier strike groups, more than 30 submarines, and more than 400 aircraft stationed in California and Hawaii.²⁸ But keeping tabs on this significantly enhanced Chinese maritime presence is stretching the U.S. Navy and its allied counterparts.

²³ U.S. Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, 5.

²⁴ U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, “Lasers, Railguns, and Drones: Navy Secretary Ray Mabus on the Future of the Navy and Marine Corps,” speech to the American Enterprise Institute, June 2, 2015.

²⁵ In 2015, the PLA Navy (PLAN) had a total of 303 naval combatant vessels, comprising 79 large combatants, 107 small combatants, 53 amphibious vessels, and 64 submarines, as well as 95 large and 110 small maritime law enforcement vessels, according to the U.S. *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, 12–13.

²⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2014* (Washington, DC, 2014), 9.

²⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2015* (London: IISS, 2015), 115:1, 207–302.

²⁸ See U.S. Third Fleet, <http://www.c3f.navy.mil/>; and U.S. Seventh Fleet, <http://www.c7f.navy.mil/Portals/8/documents/7thFleetTwoPagerFactsheet.pdf?ver=2016-01-27-061248-087>.

2015 Regional Naval Combatants Comparison

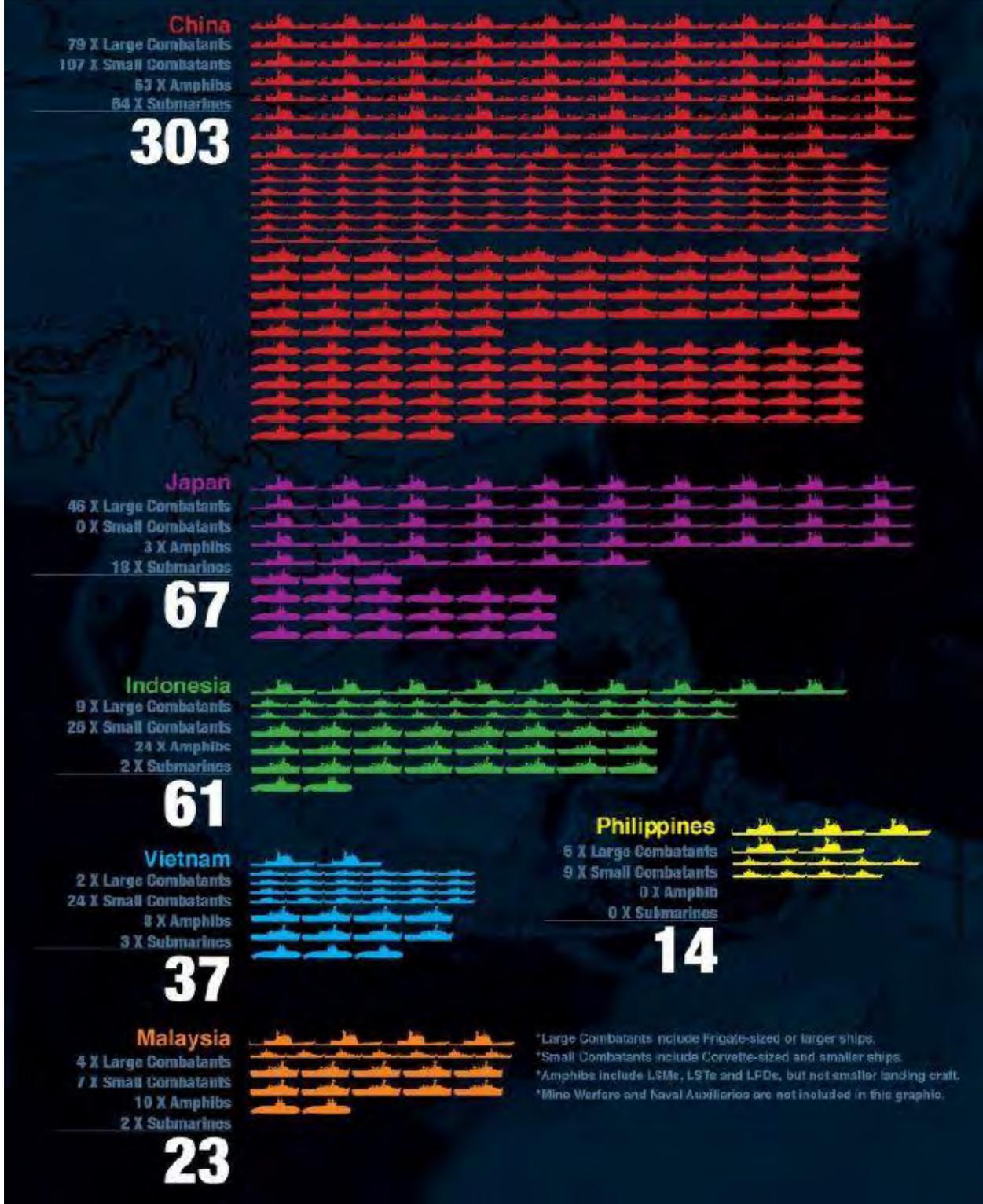
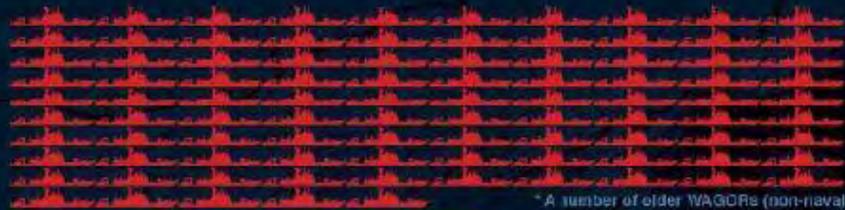


Image Credit: U.S. Department of Defense.

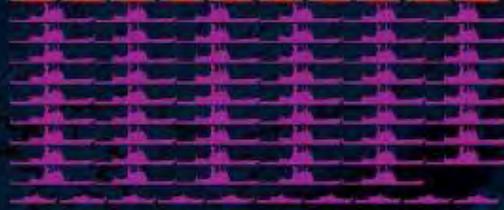
2015 Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Comparison

China
95 X Large
110 X Small
205



* A number of older WAGORs (non-naval oceanographic research ships) used as patrol ships were included

Japan
53 X Large
25 X Small
78



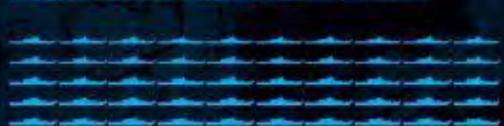
Indonesia
3 X Large
5 X Small
8



Malaysia
2 X Large
0 X Small
2



Vietnam
5 X Large
50 X Small
55



Philippines
0 X Large
4 X Small
4



* Navy AFT (stores ship) and AF (combat stores ship) vessels are not included

* This includes WPCs (non-naval patrol craft) and WAIIs (non-naval intelligence trawler)

* For the purposes of this graphic, Large vessels are greater than 1,000 tons; Small vessels are between 500–1,000 tons.

Image Credit: U.S. Department of Defense.

Even more important than this burgeoning of Chinese maritime *capacity* is the rapid gains Beijing continues to make in *capability*. Of most immediate concern to U.S. defense planners—and to regional allies and partners worried about the durability of the American military position in the Western Pacific—is the suite of A2/AD systems²⁹ China is developing to reduce the flexibility U.S. forces have long enjoyed to maneuver in Asian waters, including within the so-called first island chain that runs from Japan through the Philippines, northern Indonesia and Borneo to the Asian landmass, girding Taiwan and the South China Sea. These include cruise and ballistic missiles designed to strike warships and bases; larger and more sophisticated surface warships; modern submarines; advanced aircraft and air defenses; advanced electronic warfare (EW) systems; offensive systems to counter U.S. advantages in space and cyber space; and, increasingly, the ISR, command and control, and training needed to knit these into an integrated, effective whole.

This paper does not deal at length with China's maritime strategy or the evolution of operating concepts designed to negate its A2/AD efforts, such as Air Sea Battle and its successors, which have been addressed extensively elsewhere.³⁰ It is clear, however, that China's A2/AD strategy has moved well beyond the notional and is now a major challenge for U.S. military planners. The U.S. Department of Defense considers that the PLA Navy (PLAN) has developed "an ability to counter an adversary fleet's intervention with multi-axis, high-intensity attacks that increase in lethality as adversary naval combatants approach the Chinese coast" and has fielded ballistic missiles designed to target U.S. aircraft carriers out to 900 nautical miles.³¹

International relations scholar Aaron Friedberg assesses that

China's ongoing military build-up, and especially the expansion of its long-range nuclear forces and its development of so-called "anti-access/area denial (A2/AD)" capabilities, poses a serious and growing threat to the American position in East Asia, and to the security of other regional powers. Because they challenge Washington's ability and perhaps its willingness, to project power in the region, the continuing growth of these forces could call American security guarantees into question,

²⁹ Capabilities to "dissuade, deter, or if ordered, defeat possible third-party intervention during a large-scale, theater campaign." This paper adopts the U.S. term although Chinese strategists do not use it; see Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 33.

³⁰ See, for example, Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, *Red Star Over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2013); Aaron L. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate over US Military Strategy in Asia* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2014); Peter A. Dutton and Ryan D. Martinson, *Beyond the Wall: Chinese Far Seas Operations* (Newport, RI: China Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, 2015); and Ronald O'Rourke, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 21, 2015).

³¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 34–35.

weakening the alliances on which they rest and eventually undermining the United States' place as the preponderant Asia-Pacific power.³²

The U.S. Department of Defense acknowledges that the PLA is "increasingly able to project power to assert regional dominance during peacetime and contest U.S. military superiority during a regional conflict"³³ and that China has credible air and missile defenses out to 300 nautical miles.³⁴ The *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* noted that China (along with other states) is developing A2/AD approaches, air defenses, and missiles that can restrict U.S. forces' access and freedom of maneuver in waters and airspace beyond territorial limits.³⁵

As well as this formidable set of capabilities designed to deny access to and ultimately exercise control over its "near seas," China is also developing aircraft carriers and other attention-grabbing capabilities to support missions well beyond its coastal waters, such as antipiracy, HADR, amphibious operations, and sea lane security. PLAN surface task groups and submarines are turning up farther afield, roaming into the Indian Ocean and waters as far south as Australia. Going beyond fielding platforms to developing genuine power-projection capability will take time. However, the Department of Defense assesses that when these are combined with a more extensive and sophisticated exercise program, moves toward more joint command and control structures, and an expanding logistics footprint in the Indian Ocean, the PLA will be able to conduct "a range of military operations in Asia far from China's traditional territorial claims."³⁶ Again, the increasing scope of China's maritime reach will stretch U.S. and allied naval resources.

These trends pose both quantitative and qualitative challenges to the United States and its Asia-Pacific allies and partners. The United States is responding to this challenge, including through investing in new technologies under the "third offset" strategy,³⁷ adapting U.S. force posture in Asia, and boosting engagement with allies and partners.

Under the broad rubric of the rebalance to Asia, 60 percent of U.S. naval and overseas air assets will be located in the Pacific region by 2020 and the U.S. Navy will increase the number of vessels assigned to Pacific Fleet outside U.S. territory by approximately 30 percent.³⁸ Forces are also being reapportioned within the region, with an increasing presence in Southeast Asia and Oceania, to make the U.S. presence "more distributed, resilient and sustainable" and less vulnerable to China's growing A2/AD and longer-range strike

³² Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*, 12–13.

³³ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 43.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 35–36.

³⁵ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (Washington, DC: 2014), 6–7. See also Eric Heginbotham, *The U.S.-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography and the Evolving Balance of Power 1996–2017* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015), Report R-392.

³⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 31.

³⁷ Work, "The Third U.S. Offset Strategy and Its Implications for Partners and Allies."

³⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, 22.

capabilities.³⁹ Many of the United States' most advanced weapons systems are being deployed to the Asia Pacific.⁴⁰

Significant U.S. Military Elements in the PACOM AOR

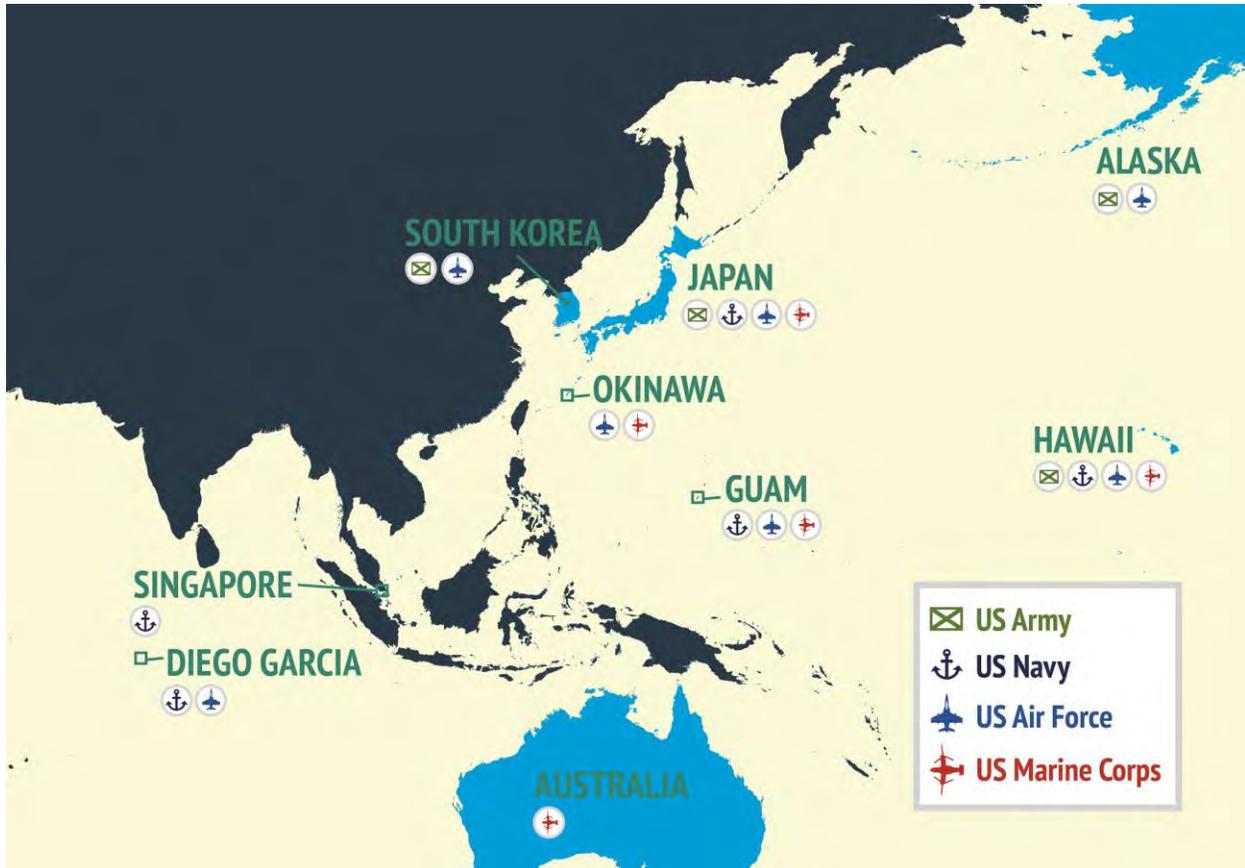


Image Credit: CSIS.

Against the backdrop of a more challenging maritime security environment and in a climate of continuing fiscal austerity, strengthening regional alliances and partnerships is another key element of the rebalance and the United States' Asia-Pacific maritime security strategy. The *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, for example, states that "Regional and global trends in the security environment, coupled with increasing fiscal austerity, will make it imperative that the United States adapt more quickly than it has in the past and pursue more innovative approaches and partnerships in order to sustain its global leadership role."⁴¹ Put simply, the

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ These include replacement of the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* with the newer *USS Ronald Reagan*; the new amphibious assault ship *USS America* (by 2020); two additional Aegis destroyers in Japan; all three of the new DDG-1000 stealth destroyers; an additional attack submarine in Guam and funding for two additional *Virginia*-class submarines; Littoral Combat Ships in Singapore; the Mobile Landing Platform; F-22 stealth fighters; B-2 and B-52 bombers; F-35 fighters; E-2D carrier-based airborne early warning and control aircraft; P-8A maritime surveillance aircraft; and MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial vehicles.

⁴¹ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, 3.

United States cannot meet the growing qualitative and quantitative challenges in the Asia-Pacific maritime domain—from responding to natural disasters up the spectrum to deterrence and high-end warfighting—on its own.

JAPAN, THE NORTHERN ANCHOR: UNDER STRAIN

As a result of China's growing capabilities and purposeful efforts to develop the ability to deny its near seas to U.S. and allied forces; because of their dispute over the territorial status of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea; and owing to the bases and forward-deployed U.S. forces Japan hosts, Japan finds itself in the front line of Asia's emerging maritime competition. Over several years, Japanese and Chinese civil enforcement and naval vessels and aircraft have been involved with increasing frequency and risk in a series of incidents and confrontations.⁴² Located at the northern end of the first island chain, Japan is an indispensable linchpin in any strategy to respond to China's A2/AD capabilities and in a range of regional contingencies—including the defense of South Korea or Taiwan.

The vulnerability of U.S. bases and forces in Japan to attack by China's burgeoning missile arsenal and the increasing strategic importance of its southern islands are new elements in Japanese and American calculations and are preoccupying defense planners in both countries. Ten years ago only Taiwan was seriously vulnerable to PLA missiles, and then only a few hundred; today, by contrast, China fields at least 1,200 conventional ballistic missiles, as well as air and ground-launched cruise missiles, able to strike targets within the first island chain. The U.S. Department of Defense assesses that American bases in Japan are within range of a growing number of increasingly accurate Chinese medium-range ballistic missiles as well as a variety of cruise missiles⁴³—one driver of moves to a more distributed U.S. force posture in Asia.

Official statements and significant shifts in policy show that these challenges are recognized not just in Washington but in Tokyo, and that Japan is responding. The Japanese government's current National Defense Program Guidelines, for example, stipulate that "Japan is a maritime state" and that peace and prosperity rest on freedom of air and maritime navigation and "an 'Open and Stable Seas' order." Yet "the security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe," including an increase in "so-called 'gray-zone' situations"—that is, conditions falling between genuine peace and actual military conflict.⁴⁴

⁴² For a comprehensive timeline of these interactions, see the website for CSIS's Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative: <http://amti.csis.org/timeline/>.

⁴³ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 33–34.

⁴⁴ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and Beyond* (Tokyo: December 17, 2013; provisional translation), 1, 4.

Chinese Headquarters (HQ) Locations and Missile Ranges



Image Credit: CSIS.

Accordingly, the guidelines commit Japan to building a “dynamic joint defense force” (as well as strengthening its alliance with the United States and expanding and deepening cooperation with other countries). After a long period of steady or declining defense expenditure from the mid-1990s to 2012, the Abe administration is increasing investment in defense.⁴⁵ In particular, Tokyo is boosting ISR and deterrent capabilities, with priority given to ensuring maritime and air supremacy, particularly in Japan’s southern approaches.⁴⁶ Japan’s Five-Year Defense Program, endorsed by the government in December 2012, notes that “maritime supremacy and air superiority . . . [are] the prerequisite for effective deterrence and [the] response to various situations, including [the] defense posture buildup in Japan’s

⁴⁵ By 0.8 percent in FY 2013, 2.2 percent in FY 2014, 0.8 percent in FY 2015, and a projected 2.2 percent in FY 2016. See Japanese Ministry of Defense, *Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: Overview of FY2016 Budget Request*, see “Changes in defense-related expenditures,” 46.

⁴⁶ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and Beyond*, 17–21.

southwestern region.”⁴⁷ Tokyo is reportedly planning to deploy antiship and anti-aircraft missile batteries throughout the southwestern island chain.⁴⁸

Tokyo’s FY 2016 defense budget request continues a focus on building up Japan’s defense capabilities, particularly to ensure effective deterrence and support Asia-Pacific stability.⁴⁹ It highlights ISR, lift, command and control, capabilities to respond to attacks on its remote islands, and missile defense, along with space and cyber. The budget request includes funding for capability improvements to Japan’s fleet of P-3C maritime surveillance aircraft, new SH-60K maritime patrol helicopters, new E-2D airborne early-warning aircraft, Global Hawk UAVs for persistent wide-area ISR, a new Aegis-equipped destroyer, and a 12th *Soryu*-class submarine, all of which will bolster Japan’s maritime capabilities. It also includes funding for F-35A fighter aircraft, new air defense radars, and further cooperative development of the SM-3 advanced ballistic missile interceptor, as well as V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft and amphibious vehicles. Japan has highly capable ASW forces and is expanding its submarine fleet to a force of 22 capable boats, including *Oyashi*-class and *Soryu*-class vessels and the successor class to the *Soryu*. It is also developing an amphibious assault capability based around a specialized rapid deployment brigade.⁵⁰ The 2016 defense budget will also provide for additional ISR, space and cyber capabilities, and participation in multilateral exercises.⁵¹

It is noteworthy how many of the abovementioned capabilities are interoperable with U.S.—and potentially allied—systems. This is consistent with the commitment of both governments to strengthen and update their alliance. The revised *Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation* issued in April 2015 expand the ambit of bilateral defense and security cooperation, including to cover ISR, air and missile defense, maritime security, space, and cyber.⁵² They also commit Tokyo and Washington to deepen operational coordination across the full spectrum of activities and contingencies and to coordinate with third countries.⁵³ They include a specific commitment to cooperate closely “to maintain maritime order based upon international law, including freedom of navigation,” including through minesweeping, escort operations, and interdiction of enemy shipping in a conflict.⁵⁴

In the event of a conflict with China, the United States and its allies could adopt a range of strategies to counter its A2/AD capabilities. These include direct approaches to defeat and

⁴⁷ Government of Japan, *Medium Term Defense Program (FY2014–FY2015)*, 2.

⁴⁸ Tim Kelly and Nobuhiro Kubo, “Japan’s far-flung island defense plan seeks to turn tables on China,” *Japan Today*, December 20, 2015, <http://japantoday.com/category/national/view/japans-far-flung-island-defense-plan-seeks-to-turn-tables-on-china>.

⁴⁹ Japanese Ministry of Defense, *Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: Overview of FY2016 Budget Request*, 2015.

⁵⁰ Government of Japan, *Medium Term Defense Program*, 4.

⁵¹ Japanese Ministry of Defense, *Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: Overview of FY2016 Budget Request*, 2–19.

⁵² Government of Japan and U.S. Government, *The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation*, April 27, 2015.

⁵³ Michael J. Green, Matthew P. Goodman, and Nicholas Szechenyi, *The Abe-Obama Summit* (Washington, DC: CSIS, April 28, 2015).

⁵⁴ Government of Japan and U.S. Government, *The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation*, Sections IV A 3 and IV D 3.

dismantle those capabilities, generally based on the Air Sea Battle (ASB) operating concept or derivatives such as the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons (JAM-GC), and indirect alternatives such as maritime denial (within the first island chain) or distant blockade (disrupting China's sea lines of communication beyond it).⁵⁵

ASB relies on networked, integrated forces to take the offensive across the air, maritime, land, space and cyber domains to disrupt, destroy and defeat an adversary's A2/AD capabilities, allowing friendly forces maximum flexibility to defeat opposing forces.⁵⁶ This includes a focus on disrupting the adversary's ISR and command and control, destroying his A2/AD platforms and systems, and defeating launched weapons. This involves withstanding an adversary's initial attack, conducting prompt strikes against C4ISR targets (such as communications networks and radars), degrading air defense systems and then targeting land-based missile systems.⁵⁷ Friedberg assesses that "Because of its location and capabilities, Japan is the most important potential contributor to ASB."⁵⁸

Japan would also play an important role in executing less direct (and therefore less potentially escalatory) strategies based on maritime denial. These approaches would avoid the strikes on the Chinese mainland that are inherent to ASB, focusing instead on destroying Chinese naval and commercial shipping within the first island chain to cripple China's economy and hem its military forces into the near sea, restricting them from projecting power.⁵⁹ In addition to its role hosting U.S. maritime forces, Japan's fleet of capable submarines and antiship cruise missiles deployed from its southern islands could play important roles in such a strategy, again underlining the importance of its strategic geography.

AUSTRALIA: SOUTHERN SANCTUARY AND REGIONAL SPRINGBOARD?

Despite occasional academic debate, the Australia-U.S. alliance enjoys broad public and bipartisan political support. Australia's *2016 Defence White Paper* confirms that "A strong and deep alliance is at the core of Australia's security and defence planning."⁶⁰ By contrast with Japan, Australia enjoys substantially more strategic depth, located as it is at the southern end of the first island chain, between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Australia's strategic role in any major regional conflict is likely to resemble that which it played in the Pacific War—as a

⁵⁵ Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*.

⁵⁶ Air Sea Battle Office, *Air-Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access & Area Denial Challenges*, May 2013.

⁵⁷ Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*, 78–79. This could involve new weapons systems still under development as part of the U.S. "third offset" strategy, such as directed-energy weapons to counter missiles; unmanned carrier-launched strike aircraft; conventional ballistic missiles; new manned long-range bombers; and hypersonic "global strike" weapons.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 116–28.

⁶⁰ Australian Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper* (Canberra: Australian Government, 2016), paragraph 5.18.

vital logistics base and stronghold athwart key lines of communication between the Pacific and Indian Oceans.⁶¹ Rotations of a U.S. Marine Air-Ground Task Force and of U.S. aircraft (including heavy bombers) under the Australia-U.S. Force Posture Initiatives announced in 2011 point to Australia playing an increasingly important role in facilitating a more distributed U.S. military posture in the region, with a greater presence in Southeast Asia, and in the dispersal of American military assets in the event of potential conflict to facilities outside the range of much of China's missile arsenal. Australia is upgrading its own military capabilities and increasing defense spending.⁶²

As a reliable ally with capable air and maritime forces, Australia has been engaged in discussions about ASB and its derivative concepts with U.S. defense officials and could be expected to contribute a range of niche contributions in support of any such effort. Australia is building a highly capable air force comprising almost entirely U.S. platforms, including F/A-18F Super Hornets, F-35A Strike Fighters, EA-18G Growler electronic warfare aircraft, E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning aircraft, P-8A Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft, and MQ-4C Triton unmanned surveillance aircraft, placing a deliberate premium on high levels of interoperability with Australia's main ally. Australia's *2016 Defence White Paper* features a force structure that gives increased priority to maritime capabilities, including a larger fleet of frigates optimized for ASW, a fleet of 12 conventional submarines to replace the current 6 *Collins*-class boats, and larger offshore patrol vessels.⁶³ These will complement two large amphibious assault vessels coming into service and three Aegis-equipped air warfare destroyers yet to enter service.

Australia's submarines, in particular, could also be called upon to operate around the archipelagic chokepoints between Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean in any maritime denial scenario. Australian and potentially U.S. submarines and surface vessels operating from the major Australian fleet base on the west coast, HMAS Stirling south of Perth, could contribute to any "distant blockade" operation against sea lines of communication through the Indian Ocean. UAVs or other ISR aircraft operating from Cocos Island, an Australian territory 1,500 nautical miles northwest of Perth, could surveil deep into the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean approaches to the vital Strait of Malacca.⁶⁴ These operations would be even more effective if they were conducted in close cooperation with Indian forces.

⁶¹ U.S. grand strategy in the Pacific War rested on Australia (along with Hawaii) not falling to the Japanese, and keeping open the sea lanes between North America and Australia was one of the U.S. Navy's highest wartime priorities. See Ian W. Toll, *Pacific Crucible: War at Sea in the Pacific, 1941–1942* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 182.

⁶² Australia's annual defense budget (excluding the cost of operations) will nearly double from AUD31.5 billion in 2016–2017 to AUD51.5 billion in 2025–2026: *2016 Defence White Paper*, Table 1, 180.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, paragraphs 4.22–4.39.

⁶⁴ The Australian government has committed to upgrade the existing airfield to accommodate P-8A maritime surveillance aircraft: Australian Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper*, paragraph 4.66.

Australian Air and Naval Bases and Operating Locations

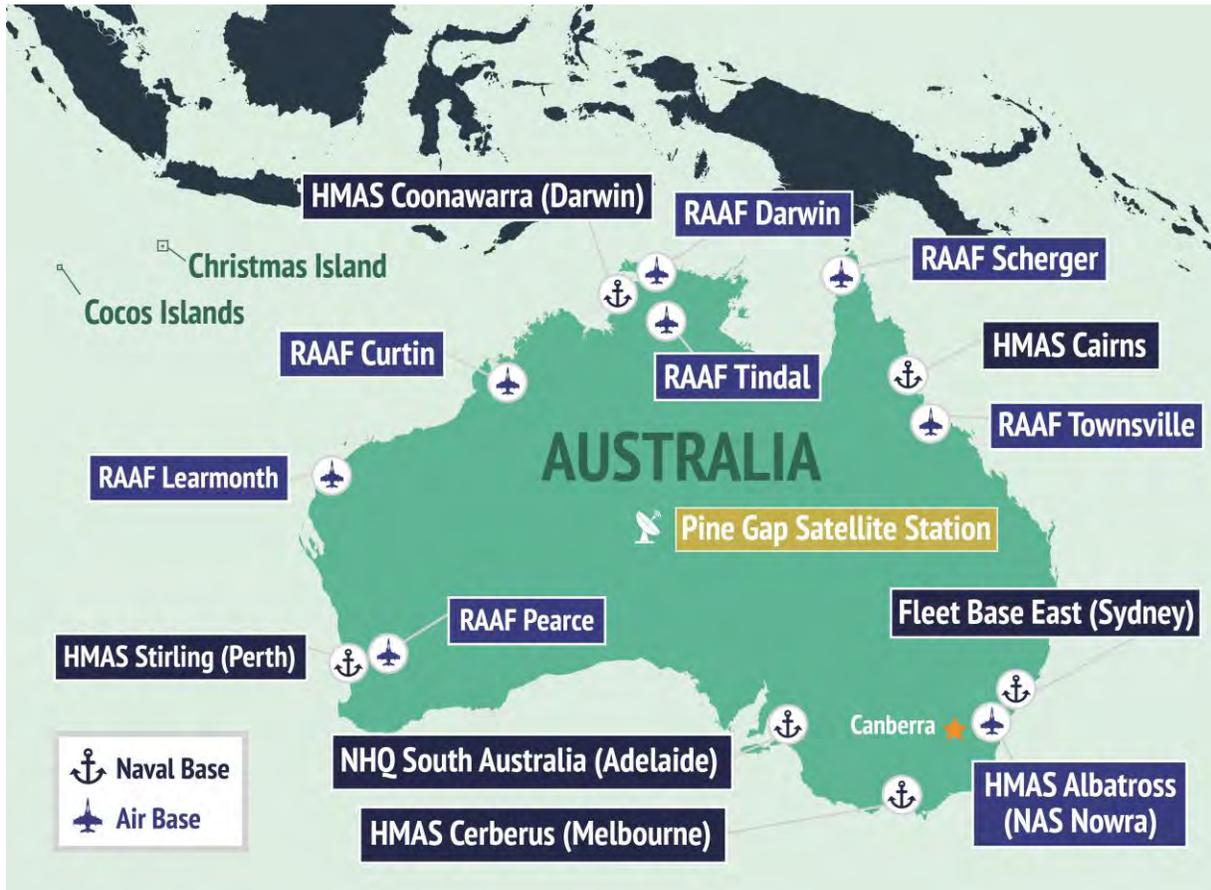


Image Credit: CSIS.

AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN: A DEEPENING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Along with South Korea, the U.S. *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy* singles out Japan and Australia as key partners and notes leader-level agreement to expand maritime cooperation, trilateral exercises, and defense development.⁶⁵ There are four key drivers of this increasing three-way alignment: shared (strategic) outlooks as Asia-Pacific maritime democracies; complementary strategic geography; capable maritime forces; and increasing levels of interoperability.

Japan and Australia have been respectively the northern and southern “anchors” of the U.S. alliance system in the Pacific for more than six decades with a strong stake in the rules-based international order. Australia and Japan have an equally longstanding economic and

⁶⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, 28.

diplomatic partnership that has made a vital contribution to the region's prosperity and stability. Previously Japan tended to look exclusively to the United States as a security partner. Over the last decade, however, Australia and Japan have been building an increasingly close strategic partnership.⁶⁶ It lacks the mutual security obligations of a formal alliance but includes a joint declaration on security cooperation signed in 2007 by the Howard government with the first Abe administration, a logistics agreement signed in 2010, and an information security agreement concluded in 2012.⁶⁷ Negotiations are under way to finalize a reciprocal access agreement that will provide the legal framework for expanded combined exercises and operations, filling the last major institutional gap in the bilateral strategic relationship.

Commitment to deepening the Australia-Japan strategic relationship has become well embedded on both sides. Prime Minister Abe, in an influential 2012 article, laid out his vision of a strategy whereby Australia and Japan, along with India and Hawaii, "form a diamond to safeguard the maritime commons stretching from the Indian Ocean region to the western Pacific."⁶⁸ The *National Defense Program Guidelines* commit Japan to further deepen its relationship with Australia, including through joint training and other activities to boost interoperability, and trilateral cooperation with the United States.⁶⁹ At their most recent 2+2 foreign and defense ministerial meeting, Australia and Japan referred to their "special strategic partnership" and declared that enhanced bilateral defense cooperation was a priority for both countries.⁷⁰ They highlighted maritime security and a range of other areas where the relationship was making progress, including trilateral defense cooperation with the United States. The *2016 Defence White Paper* commits Australia to exploring opportunities for expanding cooperation with Japan in areas such as intelligence and developing common capabilities such as the F-35, air and missile defense, and maritime warfare technologies—as well as expanding trilateral defense cooperation.⁷¹

⁶⁶ N. Bisley, "Enhancing America's alliances in a changing Asia-Pacific: the case of Japan and Australia," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 20, 2006, 47–73; Malcolm Cook and Thomas Wilkins, *The Quiet Achiever: Australia-Japan security relations* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, January 2011); Daikuke Akimoto, "The Japan-Australia Security Alignment: Its Development and the Implications for Regional Integration of the Asia-Pacific," *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, vol. 13, issue 4, December 15, 2013; and Group Captain Lindley (Jim) Ghee, OAM, *The Australia-Japan Security Relationship: valuable partnership or much ado about nothing much?* (Canberra: Australian Defence College/Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Indo-Pacific Strategic Papers, November 2015).

⁶⁷ For useful overviews, see Yusuke Ishihara, *Japan-Australia "New Special Relationship."* NIDS Commentary, No. 44, April 4, 2015 (Tokyo: The National Institute for Defense Studies, 2015); and James L. Schoff, "The Evolution of US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation," in Yuki Tatsumi (ed.), *US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges* (Washington DC: The Stimson Center, 2015).

⁶⁸ Shinzo Abe, "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond," in *Project Syndicate*, December 27, 2012.

⁶⁹ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and Beyond*, 10–11.

⁷⁰ Media release by the Hon. Julie Bishop, M.P. and Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, *Joint Communique—Sixth Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations* (Sydney: November 22, 2015).

⁷¹ Australian Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper*, paragraphs 5.61–5.63.

Trilateral Strategic Cooperation: Building Interoperability and Capability

Trilateral cooperation with the United States has played an important part in reinforcing the momentum of Australia-Japan strategic relations. As Michael Green has observed, trilateralism can coexist with—and compensate for deficiencies in—the existing regional architecture of bilateral treaties and multilateral organizations. This is particularly the case where the participants share a commitment to democratic norms, a favorable balance of power, and an open and inclusive architecture.⁷² In the case of Australia, Japan, and the United States, this fundamental alignment is reinforced by a strong maritime orientation, as well as the operational and technological imperatives discussed in this paper.

The decision to hold the first Australia-Japan-U.S. TSD in 2002—at senior officials’ level—was not without controversy. Even though the United States and its allies were preoccupied with the war on terror that followed the 9/11 attacks, senior officials in Canberra, Washington, and Tokyo were already turning their minds to the rise of China and its implications for security in the Asia Pacific.⁷³ The Howard government proposed the initiative to the incoming Bush administration because it was interested in working with Japan to reinvigorate the U.S. alliance system in Asia, as well as coordinating their support for the global war on terror.⁷⁴ There was conjecture at the time about China’s reaction and whether the TSD would be construed as part of a U.S.-led “containment” strategy.⁷⁵ The forum proceeded, however, and

⁷² Michael J. Green, “Strategic Asian Triangles,” in Saadia M. Pekkanen, John Ravenhill, and Rosemary Foot, *Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, July 25, 2014), 758–74.

⁷³ John Howard, *Lazarus Rising: A Personal and Political Autobiography* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 458. Howard wanted to add a strategic dimension to Australia’s longstanding economic partnership with Japan and saw both the TSD and the deployment of Australian troops to provide force protection for Japanese engineers in Iraq in this light. See also Schoff, “The Evolution of US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation,” and Tomohiko Stake, “The origin of trilateralism? The US-Japan-Australia security relations in the 1990s,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 11 (2011), 87–114.

⁷⁴ Green, “Strategic Asian Triangles,” 705–6.

⁷⁵ Then-U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage dismissed this, responding that it was perfectly responsible for three democratic countries concerned about the fate of Asia to get together and talk: see “U.S.-Australia-Japan security talks backed,” *The Japan Times*, August 18, 2001.

was elevated to ministerial level in 2006 under the leadership of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, and Foreign Minister Tarō Aso.

The TSD convened informally at leaders' level over a breakfast meeting hosted by Prime Minister John Howard with President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the margins of the Sydney Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders' meeting in 2007. Prime Minister Tony Abbott hosted an official trilateral leaders' summit in the margins of the Brisbane G20 meeting in November 2014. For the first time, the meeting produced a joint trilateral leaders' statement, committing the three countries to deepening their security and defense cooperation in a series of areas including maritime security and defense equipment and technology.⁷⁶

The TSD was also augmented in 2007 with the establishment of the Security and Defense Cooperation Forum (SDCF)—a meeting of mid-level defense and foreign ministry officials formally separate from the TSD but intended to coordinate with and support it. The SDCF's mission is to advance trilateral security and defense cooperation by providing visibility of ongoing initiatives and a venue for endorsing and launching new initiatives, reviewing new opportunities, and resolving policy obstacles.⁷⁷ A separate annual trilateral missile defense forum was also established in 2007.⁷⁸

Practical Australia-Japan-U.S. defense cooperation was given impetus by the key role the three countries' naval forces played (along with India and others) in the international "Core Group" that responded promptly and effectively to the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster on Boxing Day in 2004. In 2005, the Australian Defence Force provided force protection for JSDF engineers operating in southern Iraq as part of the U.S.-led military coalition. This experience—where Australia demonstrated to Japan that it was a reliable partner with capable forces that were highly interoperable with the U.S. military—transformed Tokyo's thinking about Australia's potential as a strategic partner (and paved the way for the 2007 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation mentioned above). In March 2011, Australia and the United States were the only two countries to provide airlift support within Japan following the earthquake and subsequent tsunami disaster. Again, this demonstration of effective Australia-Japan-U.S. military interoperability consolidated bureaucratic and public support in Japan for further trilateral cooperation. In 2014, the three countries worked closely together as part of a broader international effort in the Indian Ocean to locate the missing Malaysian airliner MH370.

⁷⁶ Joint Media Release, *Australia-Japan-United States Trilateral Leaders Meeting Joint Media Release* (Brisbane: November 15, 2014).

⁷⁷ Schoff, "The Evolution of US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation," 43.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Royal Australian Air Force C-17 helping to ferry personnel and supplies to the Japanese disaster zone after the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami



Image Credit: Australian Department of Defence.

Current trilateral defense cooperation focuses heavily on combined exercises. In 2012, forces from the three countries conducted exercise Operation Pacific Bond off Japan, with a focus on maritime operations, including ASW and maritime interdiction.⁷⁹ Australia joined the Japan-U.S. air force exercise series Cope North for the first time in 2012,⁸⁰ and trilateral air force exercises were also held in 2013 and 2014. In 2013, Australian, Japanese, and U.S. forces conducted their first trilateral live-fire ground exercise, Southern Jackaroo, in Australia.⁸¹ Also for the first time, in 2015 a contingent of approximately 30 JSDF personnel participated in exercise Talisman Sabre, the biennial Australia-U.S. high-end warfighting

⁷⁹ Ibid., 46.

⁸⁰ "RAAF Participates in Exercise Cope North 2012," [airforce-technology.com](http://www.airforce-technology.com/news/newsraaf-participates-in-exercise-cope-north-2012), February 13, 2012, <http://www.airforce-technology.com/news/newsraaf-participates-in-exercise-cope-north-2012>.

⁸¹ Australian Department of Defence, "Australia, Japan and US participate in inaugural Exercise Southern Jackaroo," media release, May 29, 2013, <http://news.defence.gov.au/2013/05/29/australia-japan-and-us-participate-in-inaugural-exercise-southern-jackaroo/>.

exercise.⁸² In the last few years, trilateral exercises have moved up the spectrum from HADR-based scenarios to developing interoperability in high-intensity operations.

U.S. Marines and Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers riding combat rubber raiding crafts during Talisman Sabre 2015 joint exercises



Image Credit: U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Today the Australia-Japan-U.S. TSD is the most developed and substantial of the various trilateral groupings involving the United States.⁸³ Prime Minister Abe's security reforms are likely to accelerate the shift in focus to building integrated trilateral operational capabilities. The new security legislation passed in September 2015 makes it legal not only for Japanese forces to participate in collective self-defense of U.S. forces but specifically also the forces of another country with which Japan has a close relationship, such as Australia.⁸⁴ This removes the most significant potential constraint on closer defense cooperation between Australia and Japan, and trilaterally with the United States.

⁸² Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy Norris, "I Corps join combined forces at Exercise Talisman Sabre," [www.army.mil, http://www.army.mil/article/151490/I_Corps_join_combined_forces_at_Exercise_Talisman_Sabre/](http://www.army.mil/article/151490/I_Corps_join_combined_forces_at_Exercise_Talisman_Sabre/).

⁸³ Tatsumi, *US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges*, 16.

⁸⁴ Marta McLellan Ross, *The Abe Restoration: Pushing Past Japan's Wartime Legacy and Restoring a Responsible Use of Force* (Honolulu: Pacific Forum CSIS, Issues and Insights, Vol. 15, No. 14, December 2014, 3-4).

An Action Plan

In October 2015, U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and Australian Defence Minister Marise Payne released a statement on Defense Cooperation in the 21st Century. Along with pledges to further deepen the Australia-U.S. defense relationship, including through combined exercises and practical cooperative activities in the region, the statement included a commitment “to expanded trilateral defense cooperation with key partners, particularly with Japan, where our cooperation enhances practical interoperability across our militaries and continued collaboration in regional capacity building efforts.”⁸⁵ The pressing challenge now is to translate this commitment into action.

If U.S. allies and partners are to step up and play a role in upholding conventional deterrence—as the evolving regional security environment increasingly demands—Australia, Japan, and the United States need to give particular attention to their trilateral maritime warfighting capabilities, technical interoperability, common operational experiences, and mutual security priorities.⁸⁶ This means continuing to deepen engagement through intensified trilateral exercises, personnel exchanges, cooperative deployments, and—where opportunity presents—combined operations. It also requires a shared focus on enhancing data and communications networking, particularly tactical data sharing.⁸⁷ Over time, as Japan develops familiarity and confidence as a defense exporter, combined capability development would further reinforce trilateral maritime cooperation.

The recommendations below set out an ambitious but achievable action plan for developing integrated Australian-Japanese-U.S. maritime capabilities that would contribute significantly to conventional deterrence and address other capability shortfalls in the Asia Pacific while delivering greater value from stretched defense budgets.

⁸⁵ Australian Department of Defence and U.S. Department of Defense, “Statement on Defense Cooperation in the 21st Century,” January 13, 2016, http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2015_AUSMIN_Joint_Defense_Statement.pdf.

⁸⁶ Lawrence, *Tailoring the Global Network for Real Burden Sharing at Sea*, 4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

AN INTEGRATED ASIA PACIFIC INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE NETWORK

The United States and Australia are members of the “Five Eyes” intelligence partnership dating back to the Second World War. Their bilateral intelligence relationship is deep and broad and embraces almost all aspects of intelligence cooperation, including the Joint Facilities in Australia. Japan and the United States also have close intelligence ties developed during the Cold War and subsequently. Intelligence ties between Australia and Japan are less mature but expanding, as noted above. Full Japanese membership of the Five Eyes arrangements would be premature, at least while Tokyo beds down its new national security architecture and strengthens protections for sensitive information. But trilateral intelligence sharing and capability development should be expanded, and there are likely to be opportunities for deeper Japanese engagement with the Five Eyes partners in specific areas.

Highly capable intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems are fundamental to any effective military strategy for the Asia Pacific. Situational awareness—particularly in the maritime domain—is indispensable to achieving virtually any U.S. or allied mission in the Asia Pacific, whether low or high intensity (but particularly high-end tasks such as missile defense and ASW). Networking Australia-Japan-U.S. ISR assets would provide a common information picture about the Asia Pacific maritime domain and forge a stronger basis for collective responses to threats.⁸⁸ Other allies and partners could be incorporated over time, depending on their capabilities.

As discussed above, ISR platforms operating from Japanese, American, and Australian facilities located in territories stretching from Hokkaido through the Ryukyus, Guam, northern Australia, and Cocos Island are ideally placed to monitor Russian, North Korean, and Chinese maritime forces, the busy maritime chokepoints of North and Southeast Asia, and their Indian Ocean approaches.

Broader operational ISR networking could initially focus on common platforms the three countries already operate or plan to acquire. Initial trilateral efforts could focus on F-35A fighters and Global Hawk/Triton high-altitude UAVs. Where the platforms are different—for example, Australia and the United States operate P-8 Poseidon maritime aircraft whereas Japan has developed its own, the P-1—the three countries should focus on ensuring that the highest possible level of interoperability is attained.

Other ISR and related capabilities that could potentially be networked and/or developed collaboratively in future include:

- Japan and the United States are upgrading their radar capabilities in the region. Australia operates a sophisticated operational radar network (*Jindalee*) and is a world

⁸⁸ Mahnken, *Asia in the Balance*, 19–20.

leader in phased array radar technology; significant scope exists for three-way sharing of data, operating techniques and technology, and potentially for trilateral capability development.

- Aegis ship-borne combat systems, installed in U.S. and Japanese cruisers and destroyers and the three Australian Air Warfare Destroyers currently under construction.
- Sonar and other underwater sensing systems. For example, Japan is developing a variable-depth sonar system allowing surface vessels to conduct coordinated searches⁸⁹; there may be scope for this system or a variant to be installed on Australia's Future Frigates (which will be optimized for ASW). In the medium to longer term, seabed sensor arrays and next-generation technologies such as low-frequency sonar could be developed and deployed trilaterally.
- Airborne early warning and control.
- Submarines and submarine-related technologies (see below).

UNDERSEA WARFARE

For the reasons set out above, undersea warfare will be crucial to the balance of military power in the Asia Pacific and to U.S. maritime strategy: "the undersea realm will be a key area of competition and (potentially) conflict in the coming years, and a fundamental means for U.S. power-projection in the Asia-Pacific region."⁹⁰ It is an area where the United States and its allies and partners, in particular Japan and potentially Australia, enjoy a significant regional edge, but maintaining this advantage will take continuing investment of resources and effort. Abraham Denmark, now a senior U.S. Department of Defense official, has warned that despite the importance of undersea capabilities to American interests "budgetary pressures will limit the Pentagon's ability to sustain American subsurface dominance," which risks leaving the existing U.S. approach to undersea warfare "fiscally and strategically unsustainable."⁹¹

The solution lies in a combination of new technologies and deeper subsurface warfare partnerships among countries with shared threat perceptions and substantial capabilities—as Denmark puts it, building "a network of SSW [subsurface warfare] partners to complement, and eventually supplement, American subsurface power in the region."⁹² To this end the United States, Japan, and Australia should pursue, as a priority, federated submarine and ASW capabilities. This cooperation should span the gamut from design and development of

⁸⁹ Japanese Ministry of Defense, *Defense Programs and Budget of Japan*, 7.

⁹⁰ Denmark, "Declining Capabilities and a Rising Subsurface Threat."

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

conventional submarines and systems, through training and exercises to submarine rescue and full trilateral undersea warfare operations.

Australia and Japan each have longstanding submarine cooperation relationships with the United States, with American combat systems and weapons installed in their *Collins*- and *Soryu*-class vessels and extensive training and operational relationships. It is important to further deepen these existing bilateral relationships. Submarines are a strategic capability; their operations will always be sensitive and aspects will remain sovereign. Moreover, the technical difficulties inherent in communicating underwater and remaining undetected inhibit the scope for integrated submarine operations as such. Within these operational constraints, however, genuine trilateral submarine cooperation is possible and would be a strategic game-changer in the Asia Pacific.

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force *Soryu*-class submarine *JS Hakuryu* arrives at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in February 2013



Image Credit: U.S. Navy.

At the operational level, augmenting the U.S. nuclear-powered submarine force in the Pacific with a fleet of more than 30 fully interoperable and highly capable conventional boats would be profoundly significant, increasing flexibility, giving American, Japanese, and Australian military planners more options and complicating the calculations of potential adversaries.

Moreover, federated submarine capabilities in the Pacific would bring qualitative advantages beyond increased U.S. and allied capacity to respond to growing regional submarine numbers. Conventional submarines are better suited to littoral operations than larger U.S. nuclear submarines and can exploit their quietness and agility in and around critical maritime choke points. For example, Australian boats could play this role in potential “distant blockade” operations with respect to Southeast Asian chokepoints and their Indian Ocean approaches; Japanese vessels could play a similar role at the northern end of the island chain, freeing U.S. nuclear attack boats to exploit their superior range, endurance, and speed on other missions. Serious trilateral submarine cooperation would facilitate monitoring of increasing Russian and Chinese naval activity in the Pacific and seriously complicate the calculations of any potential adversary.

Unlike submarine operations, which are often autonomous even from their own navy’s surface forces, ASW capabilities could be extensively integrated, with Australia, Japan, and the United States each exploiting their capability and geographic strengths to create a highly effective ASW network stretching in an arc from Japan to the Bay of Bengal (where it could potentially link up with Indian P-8A maritime surveillance aircraft and other ASW assets). UUVs and seabed sensors will play an increasingly important part in these networks.

At the strategic level, trilateral undersea cooperation would have a significant positive effect on the balance of maritime power in the region, sending a potent deterrent signal to potential adversaries and reassuring allies. Undersea warfare is a form of maritime power that is less visible and therefore potentially less escalatory, giving planners additional options in scenarios short of actual conflict. Trilateral submarine cooperation would reinforce the momentum of closer U.S.-Japan alliance ties and also deeper Australia-Japan strategic cooperation, overall strengthening the process of addressing Japan’s strategic anxiety and binding it into a robust twenty-first-century security architecture in the Asia Pacific.

Chinese submarines must pass through narrow straits or 'chokepoints' to reach the Indian Ocean or Pacific Ocean

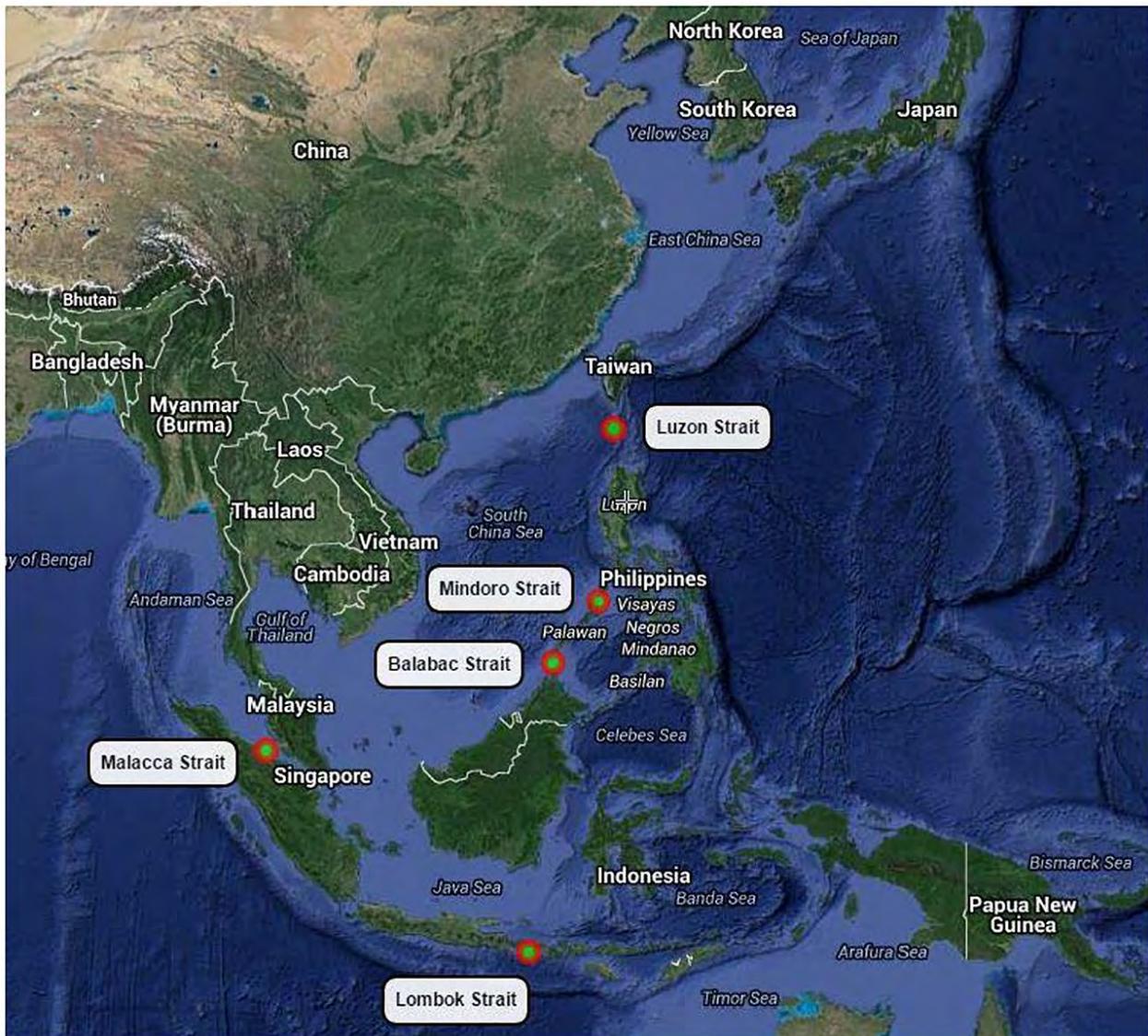


Image Credit: © 2016 Google, SK Planet Imagery ©2016 TerraMetrics, © Scribble Maps. See Jeremy Page, "China's Submarines Add Nuclear-Strike Capability, Altering Strategic Balance," *Wall Street Journal*, October 24, 2014.

It would also serve as a powerful encouragement to the development of a successful Japanese defense export industry, which is in the interests of all three countries. Australian and Japanese industry have formed highly successful and durable partnerships over more than half a century in the automotive, resources, and other sectors; joint development of submarines would be building on a strong foundation of industrial collaboration and mutual trust. Japan is a leading developer of new technologies and partnering on submarines and

undersea systems could make an important contribution to the Australian government's innovation agenda.

To harness these opportunities:

- Australia, Japan, and the United States should commit to deepening bilateral and trilateral undersea warfare cooperation.
- Subject to being satisfied that the Japanese submarine proposal will meet capability requirements, minimize risks, and provide value for money, Australia's final decision on its replacement submarine capability should reflect the substantial strategic and operational benefits of partnering with Japan (which do not exist in the case of France or Germany).
- The United States should encourage Australia to take full account of the operational, strategic, and defense industrial advantages of partnering with Japan in weighing up its decision.
- Australia, Japan, and the United States should conduct frequent trilateral submarine exercises, with a focus on maximizing flexibility and developing shared operational concepts along the lines outlined above.
- They should develop a networked submarine rescue capability with reach across the Asia Pacific.
- They should also conduct frequent trilateral ASW exercises; Japan could play a particularly important role in helping to build stronger Australian ASW capabilities, including through training and exercises, personnel exchanges, and potentially through involvement in maximizing the ASW capability of the Australian Navy's future frigates.⁹³
- The three countries operate a shared ASW helicopter platform (the MH-60/SH-60), offering potential for combined training and exercises, developing shared operating concepts and tactics, and future trilateral capability development.
- Force posture opportunities should be considered, including U.S. submarine operations in the Indian Ocean from Australia's Fleet Base West at HMAS Stirling in West Australia and trilateral submarine exercises and operations from Guam.
- The United States, Japan, and Australia should work together to develop next-generation undersea warfare capabilities, including UUVs; sensors; combat systems;

⁹³ Abraham Denmark calls for the establishment of an undersea warfare training center, potentially based in Australia, where the United States and its allies and partners would discuss, train, and exercise in SSW operations.

propulsion and stealth technologies; and submarine payloads—maximizing future three-way interoperability and value for money.

AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE

The United States operates the world's most sophisticated, experienced, and capable amphibious forces. Increasingly, however, those forces and supporting capabilities such as sealift are under strain as a result of budgetary constraints and other priorities.⁹⁴ At the same time, Australia and Japan are looking to build their own amphibious capabilities, as noted above. This presents significant opportunities to pursue federated amphibious approaches—building a regional “amphibious architecture.”⁹⁵

In the short term, Australia, Japan, and the United States should maximize the potential for the U.S. Marine Corps in particular to guide and support the development of Australian and Japanese amphibious capabilities. Forward-deployed Marine forces in Japan, Guam, and northern Australia offer opportunities for combined exercising and personnel exchanges. The three countries should:

- Develop an integrated series of regular trilateral amphibious exercises, including steadily increasing JSDF participation in the biennial Talisman Sabre series hosted in Australia as well as ADF involvement in Japan-U.S. amphibious exercises conducted in Guam and Japan.
- Seek to take advantage of trilateral operational opportunities, including HADR missions, to build amphibious interoperability.
- Exchange amphibious warfare experts and embed them in relevant units and headquarters.
- Collaborate on the development of amphibious warfighting doctrine and capabilities.
- Australia should consider joining Japan in acquiring U.S. AAV-7 assault amphibious vehicles.
- Use trilateral amphibious cooperation as a platform to build interoperability with—and the capabilities of—other regional partners; the rotational U.S. Marine presence in Darwin is a good starting point for broadening as well as deepening regional amphibious cooperation.

⁹⁴ See Franz-Stefan Grady, “Is the US Navy Too Weak to Fight in the Asia-Pacific?,” *The Diplomat*, October 22, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/is-the-us-navy-too-weak-to-fight-in-the-asia-pacific/>; and Bryan Clark, “Deploying Beyond Their Means: The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps at a Tipping Point,” on *The National Interest*, November 18, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/deploying-beyond-their-means-the-us-navy-marine-corps-14378?page=show>.

⁹⁵ See Colonel Grant Newsham, “‘Amphibiosity’ in the Asia-Pacific,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (November 2015, Vol. 141/11/1,353).

The most significant constraints in this area are likely to be high operating tempos and other calls on the three countries' amphibious forces, which may limit combined exercising opportunities. Service cultures, doctrine, and operating concepts also differ.

In the longer term, however, each of the three countries' amphibious forces should be capable of operating seamlessly and interchangeably off each other's platforms. For example, if necessary, U.S. Marine personnel, aircraft, and vehicles should be able to deploy on an Australian or Japanese amphibious vessel, which in turn should be able to be supported by vessels and aircraft of any of the three countries—forming a pool of federated amphibious capabilities.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT AND LOGISTICS

Federated approaches to capability development and logistics reduce wasteful duplication, making better use of scarce defense resources, and promote interoperability and integration. Early in their respective acquisition processes, the United States, Japan, and Australia should address the potential for a federated approach to investment in each key capability. There should be trilateral consultation and, where possible, alignment of strategic requirements, timelines, supply chains, sustainment arrangements, and export controls.

The reality is that successful collaboration in this area will often depend on U.S. ability and willingness to provide assistance, technology, and equipment. At the same time, U.S. defense companies are looking beyond the domestic market. Realizing these strategic and commercial opportunities will depend on greater efforts to reform U.S. export controls and the Foreign Military Sales program.⁹⁶ However, Japan and Australia are not only close strategic partners but advanced economies with their own sophisticated manufacturing, research, and defense industrial capabilities; as well as being trusted with sensitive U.S. technologies, each can bring much to the table. (Both countries have also recently restructured their capability acquisition and sustainment organizations.)

Trilateral development of conventional submarines is an obvious starting point. This includes not only potential construction of Australia's replacement submarines but subsystems such as sonar and new lithium ion battery technology, as well as through-life support, upgrades, and next-generation capabilities such as UUVs (as noted above). Other potential areas for trilateral collaboration could include:

- Australian participation in the existing U.S.-Japan SM-3 Block IIA interceptor program.
- Advanced radar technologies, including over-the-horizon radar (OTHR) and phased array radar.

⁹⁶ See Stephanie Sanok Kostro and Rhys McCormick, *Institutional Foundations of Federated Defense* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth UK: Rowman & Littlefield, January 2015).

- Maritime strike, including upgrades to Harpoon antiship missiles deployed by all three countries; the Naval Strike Missile⁹⁷; and mounting Harpoon or LRASM (a precision-guided antiship standoff missile) on maritime surveillance and strike aircraft.
- Land-based contributions to sea denial; for example, Japan's Type-12 antiship cruise missile system could meet the requirement identified in Australia's *2016 Defence White Paper* for deployable land-based antiship missiles to protect deployed forces.⁹⁸
- F-35 support and sustainment (Australia and Japan will each host regional support hubs).
- Cyber.
- Space.

As military commanders learned during the Pacific War, the vast distances entailed in operating in the Asia Pacific place a premium on logistics. Limited munitions stockpiles—particularly of precision-guided munitions (PGMs)—are a significant challenge facing U.S. and allied military planners and would quickly affect operations in most plausible scenarios.⁹⁹ Strategic mobility (including aerial refueling and heavy lift by air and sea) is another constraint facing U.S. Pacific Command planners.¹⁰⁰ The Australia-Japan Access and Cross-servicing Agreement, which entered force in 2013, complements longstanding U.S. bilateral logistical cooperation arrangements with Japan and Australia, and provides a foundation for integrated trilateral logistics:

- Australia, Japan, and the United States should explore acquiring—and where appropriate pre-positioning—common munitions stockpiles.
- They should also consider reaching industrial agreements to allow mutual resupply (potentially also exploiting greater efficiencies and economies of scale).
- They could develop pooled strategic air and sea lift and shared access to sustainment facilities in each country.

UPDATE TRILATERAL INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY

Existing trilateral institutional arrangements have played an important role but need updating to keep pace with a more ambitious strategic agenda and the need for intensified operational engagement. For example, enhanced trilateral defense arrangements would facilitate submarine cooperation—at the operational level but also the involvement of Japanese

⁹⁷ A multirole variant, the Joint Strike Missile, could be deployed by U.S., Japanese, and Australian F-35 aircraft.

⁹⁸ *2016 Defence White Paper*, paragraph 4.46.

⁹⁹ See Australian Department of Defence, *Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025*, 159–63.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 163–69.

industry, by providing a clear legitimating framework for collaboration with Australian and U.S. defense companies.

The Trilateral Strategic Dialogue should continue in its present form and should meet annually. In addition, however:

- The leaders of the three countries should also meet annually to give continuing high-level guidance and momentum to trilateral strategic cooperation (following the successful meeting in the margins of the Brisbane G-20 meeting).
- The existing trilateral Security and Defense Cooperation Forum should be elevated to deputy secretary level so it can drive federated trilateral defense collaboration.
- Working groups should be established and meet regularly to coordinate trilateral cooperation in ISR, amphibious warfare, undersea warfare, capability development, and logistics—reporting to the deputy secretary-level forum and through them to defense secretaries and leaders.

BRING IN INDIA

As this paper has emphasized, maritime cooperation between Australia, Japan, and the United States should be deepened and strengthened as a matter of priority. The pace of strategic change in maritime Asia means there is no time to lose. Accordingly, that should be the main focus in Canberra, Tokyo, and Washington. However, in many cases it will also make sense to engage India in the “mini-lateral” maritime activities explored in this paper. Establishment of an Australia-India-Japan trilateral is encouraging.¹⁰¹ While the (Australia-India-Japan-U.S.) Quadrilateral Dialogue remains a worthwhile long-term objective, attempting to reconstitute it as a formal entity now may be premature. However, “functional” quadrilateral maritime cooperation involving India has a clear logic, as the 2004 tsunami Core Group demonstrated.¹⁰²

- Where New Delhi is interested and where Indian participation will not delay or constrain the scope of trilateral cooperation, this should be pursued on a case-by-case basis.
- Australian participation in the India-led Malabar exercise series should be an early priority.

¹⁰¹ The first trilateral senior officials’ meeting was held in June 2015; national security advisers from the three countries met earlier in the margins of the Brisbane G20 meeting. For background, see Vishal Ranjan, *Australia, India and Japan Trilateral: Breaking the Mould*, ORF Occasional Paper 79 (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, December 2015).

¹⁰² See also Lisa Curtis, Walter Lohman, Rory Medcalf et al., *Shared Goals, Converging Interests: A Plan for U.S.-Australia-India Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific* (Heritage Foundation Special Report #99 on Asia and the Pacific, November 3, 2011), www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/11/shared-goals-converging-interests-a-plan-for-u-s-australia-india-cooperation-in-the-indo-pacific.

- Australia, Japan, and the United States should engage India on the prospects for ISR cooperation to build greater maritime domain awareness—particularly in the eastern Indian Ocean, as outlined above.
- The United States, Japan, and Australia should work more closely with India to promote freedom of navigation and other shared maritime interests in regional forums such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting.

Conclusion

Along with its forward-deployed military forces, the United States' alliances with Japan and Australia have underpinned stability and prosperity in Asia for more than half a century. Those alliances remain vital, and both are adapting to rapid strategic change in the Asia Pacific. Yet while reinvigorated bilateral alliances are necessary to meet the security challenges of the twenty-first century, they are not sufficient. The shifting maritime balance of power in the Western Pacific, the growing strategic importance of the Indian Ocean, competing threats in the Middle East and Europe, and continuing constraints on defense spending all reinforce the importance of federated approaches to defense in the Asia Pacific and securing the maritime commons in particular.

Integrated U.S.-Japan-Australia maritime cooperation can help to redress capability shortfalls, enhance coalition warfighting, and strengthen deterrence and reassurance in the Asia Pacific. Its wider importance, however, lies in the contribution it can make to shaping a more benign regional security environment and thereby to supporting a peaceful and prosperous Asia Pacific underpinned by inclusive regional institutions, open economies, and adherence to longstanding rules and norms such as freedom of navigation.

Engaging China on maritime issues can also help to advance that objective, and the United States, Japan, and Australia should seek to work with China where possible to tackle challenges such as counter-piracy and HADR—as they did, for example, in the search for the missing Malaysian airliner MH370. Such collaboration can boost the capacity available to respond to shared regional maritime problems. It also develops operational familiarity, increasing transparency, and, over time, building mutual confidence.

This does not preclude simultaneously deepening trilateral cooperation, however. China cannot be expected to like the development of networked maritime capabilities that serve—among other purposes—to counter its own growing military power. But ultimately trilateral maritime cooperation should be seen as stabilizing rather than provocative. More integrated and interdependent coalition maritime capabilities can be instrumental to ensuring that Beijing has realistic expectations about the extent to which other countries will tolerate changes to the regional order—and thereby positively influence China's behavior and choices. In this sense, the initiatives proposed in this paper will help to set the foundation for more-stable relationships, by clarifying for Beijing the full potential costs of maintaining its

current assertive course and further undermining the pillars that support the regional order. The risk for China is that those consequences could eventually include establishment of the collective security arrangements in Asia that purportedly so concern it.

Deepening maritime cooperation between Australia, Japan, and the United States—and ultimately with India—makes compelling strategic, operational, budget, and political sense. It is consistent with the U.S. rebalance to Asia, Japan's recent security reforms, and the strategic direction laid out in Australia's just-released *2016 Defence White Paper*. Pursuing it will require difficult decisions by governments as well as challenging institutional, bureaucratic, and cultural changes. It will take persistence and a long-term perspective. Yet each has too much at stake—and too much to gain—to pass up this opportunity.

About the Author

Andrew Shearer is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C. Previously Mr. Shearer was national security adviser to Prime Ministers John Howard and Tony Abbott of Australia. In that capacity he played a leading role in formulating and implementing Australian foreign, defense, and counterterrorism policies. He provided high-level advice that shaped decisions by the Australian government on major defense acquisitions, responses to international crises, and longer-term policy challenges.

Mr. Shearer has extensive government experience, including in the Australian Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Prime Minister & Cabinet, and Defence. As a senior diplomat in Washington he worked at the coal-face of the Australia-U.S. alliance to strengthen defense, security, and intelligence cooperation. He was director responsible for relations with Japan in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and also worked at the Office of National Assessments, Australia's preeminent intelligence analysis organization. As the deputy secretary advising the Victorian state premier on international engagement, he led the development of a comprehensive trade and investment program, establishing new representational offices in China and Indonesia, leveraging business, academic, and cultural relationships, and modernizing the state's Chinese language curriculum.

Mr. Shearer is a respected commentator on Asia-Pacific strategic issues. He was director of studies at the Lowy Institute for International Policy in Sydney. His analysis has been published widely in books and journals and in leading U.S., Australian, and Asian newspapers. He has a master's degree in international relations from the University of Cambridge and honors degrees in law and arts from the University of Melbourne. He was awarded a UK Foreign Office Chevening Scholarship and is a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

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