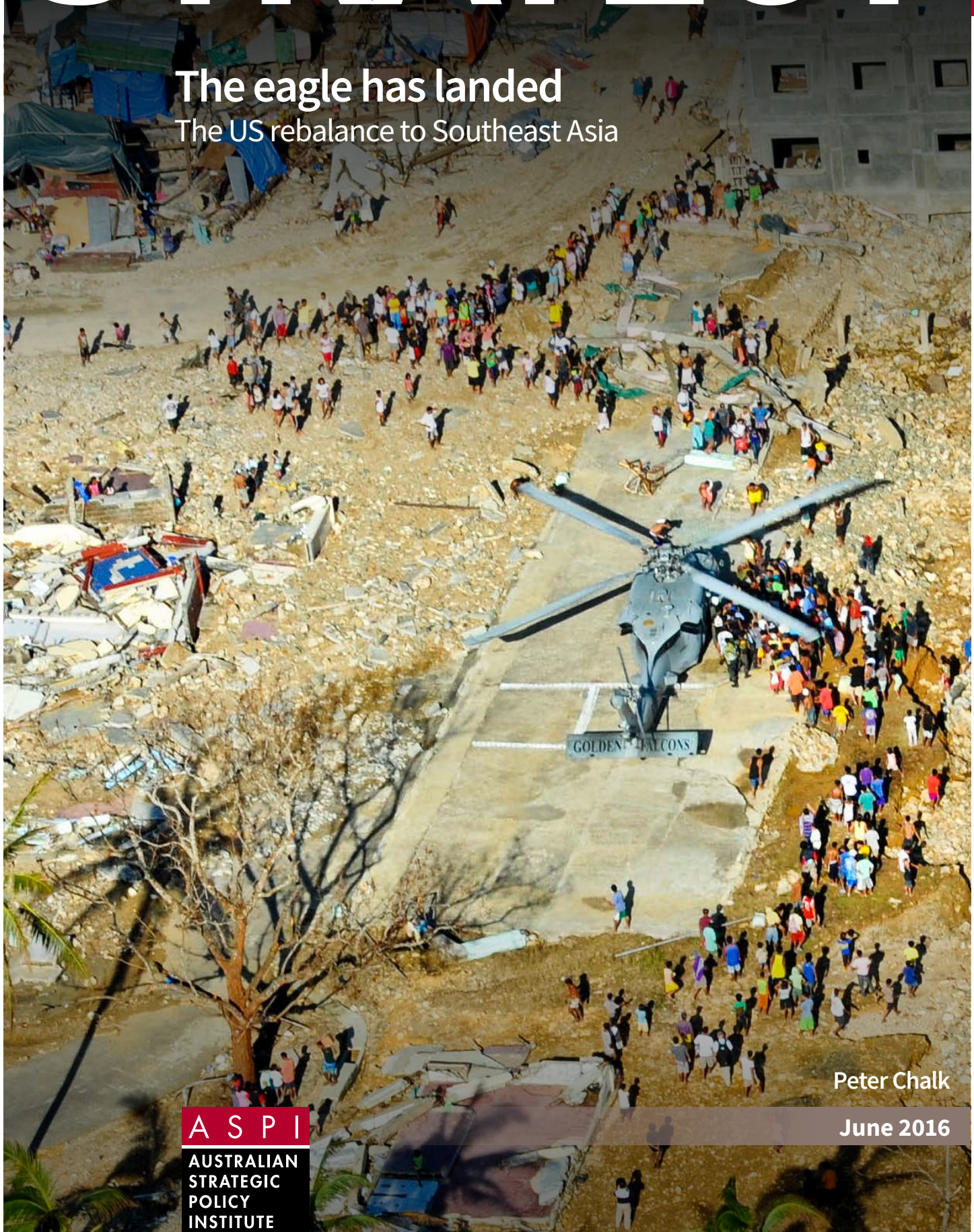


STRATEGY

A S P I

The eagle has landed
The US rebalance to Southeast Asia



Peter Chalk

June 2016

A S P I

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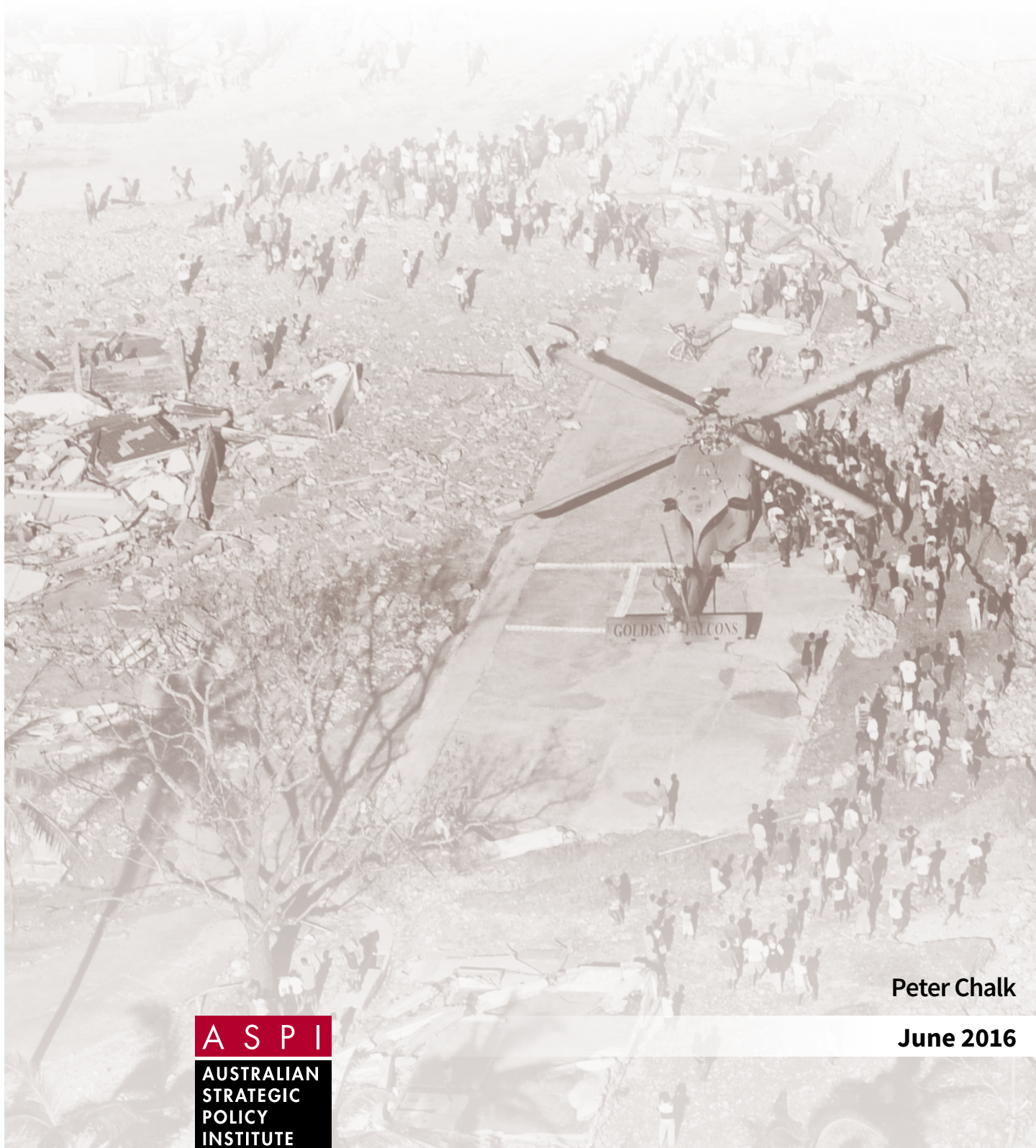
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Cover image: Philippine citizens gather around an MH-60S Seahawk as it delivers relief supplies to support Operation Damayan in Guiuan, Philippines, 17 November 2013. Image courtesy US Department of Defense.

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US President Barack Obama right, stands with Malaysia's prime minister, Najib Razak, left, at a meeting of ASEAN, 15 February 2016. © AP/ Pablo Martinez Monsivais/ via AAP.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early in his administration, President Barack Obama announced the ‘Asia rebalance’, a US reorientation that became official policy in January 2012. This so-called ‘pivot’ explicitly recognises the need for America to re-embrace partner nations in Asia, leveraging their significant and growing capabilities to build a network of states that nurtures, strengthens and sustains a rules-based order that’s capable of effectively addressing regional challenges.

In this context, the US has pursued four main areas of cooperation as part of its bilateral and multilateral engagement with Southeast Asia:

- supporting the development of the ASEAN Community, which was formally launched at the end of 2015
- buttressing defence reform and restructuring
- facilitating humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations
- providing assistance to address transnational terrorist and criminal threat contingencies.

To be sure, this functional and programmatic engagement is indicative of ASEAN’s increasing importance as a unified collective bloc, the frequency at which large-scale natural disasters affect this part of the world and the existence of a wide range of mutually concerning trans-regional security challenges. However, it’s also very much related to Beijing’s growing power in the wider Asia–Pacific and, more specifically, to heightened Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea (SCS) and the concomitant threat that this is seen to pose to freedom of navigation in a critically vital maritime trading and energy corridor.

Has the rebalance worked? In one sense it has, by providing the US with both institutional (ASEAN) and geostrategic/geographical (invested partner nations, basing options) opportunities to balance and offset the rising regional influence of the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

However, a case could also be made that growing American involvement in Southeast Asia (and the Asia–Pacific as a whole) might merely serve to encourage an already paranoid Beijing to adopt increasingly aggressive policies for protecting its self-defined national interests. Moreover, it could be argued that the rebalance has lacked substance, at least in terms of balancing the PRC. While Washington has engaged in a multitude of activities in Southeast Asia, how much these strands have deterred aggression and mitigated attempts at coercion by Beijing is questionable—particularly in regard to the SCS disputes.

Issues of effectiveness aside, perhaps an even more fundamental question is whether the US will continue with its current ASEAN-centric policy as part of a broader program of Asian engagement. Indeed, in an election year that might see a non-Democratic president returned to office, Washington’s priorities may well change and return to a concerted focus on contingencies in Europe and the Middle East. Equally, cuts to the defence budget could make the type of large-scale investment needed for underwriting a robust forward presence in Southeast Asia simply untenable.

Assuming that the rebalance survives, it's clear that a central challenge will be convincing China that the return to Southeast Asia isn't a thinly veiled strategy of Sino-containment but, rather, an effort to revitalise and strengthen partnerships in a key part of the world. Achieving such an outcome will require a nuanced and agile strategy that couples engagement with balancing. The optimal and most sustainable outcome will be the emergence of a regional order that promotes risk-averse behaviour by Beijing and insulates against the type of unilateral action that could quickly escalate out of control to threaten American and local allied interests.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The US has been involved in Southeast Asia for a long time. During the Cold War, the region assumed considerable importance as a theatre for countering the strategic threat emanating from the USSR. To that end, Washington committed to a protracted conflict against communist forces in Vietnam, concluded major defence and basing treaties with Thailand and the Philippines and instituted a wide variety of bilateral agreements that spanned the social, political and economic realms.

However, American interest in this part of the world waned after the collapse of the Soviet Union as more pressing hotspots emerged in Western Europe, the Middle East and Northeast Asia. Indeed, under such conditions it's somewhat surprising that the entire US alliance system in Southeast Asia didn't simply collapse. It endured, partly because of simple inertia, shared concerns over terrorism after 9/11 and the unique humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) capabilities that the Pentagon's Pacific Command (PACOM) could mobilise to help deal with catastrophes such as the unprecedented tsunami that devastated Aceh in 2004.

Nonetheless, the focus on Southeast Asia (and the Asia-Pacific as a whole) remained largely marginal in public visibility and strategic priority, overshadowed by wars first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq (Ott and Ngo 2014).

All that began to change with the election of President Barack Obama, who entered office committed to winding down US military engagements against the Taliban and Sunni jihadists in the Middle East. Early in his administration, he announced the so-called 'Asia rebalance'—a reorientation, or pivot, that became official policy in January 2012 with the release of a new Defense Strategic Guidance. That document explicitly enunciated the need to re-engage partner nations in Asia, leveraging their significant and growing capabilities to build a network of states that nurtures, strengthens and sustains a rules-based order that's capable of effectively addressing regional challenges (DoD 2012, Fuchs 2015).¹

At the heart of this effort are the 10 countries that make up ASEAN. As a collective, this bloc has a consumer base of 620 million people, a combined GDP that exceeds A\$2.9 trillion (US\$2 trillion)—roughly equivalent to 3% of global GDP—and a healthy foreign direct investment to GDP ratio of 52%. It also constitutes the US's fourth-largest trading partner and remains the principal business destination for American private sector companies, currently hosting more than US\$150 billion (A\$207.5 billion) in foreign direct investment (Fuchs 2015, Petri and Plummer 2013:3, IBD 2013).

Besides its economic salience, ASEAN has strategic import for the US. It includes two of Washington's major non-NATO allies (the Philippines and Thailand), as well as the world's largest Muslim nation, Indonesia, which has been a key partner in the global war against terrorism. As a region, ASEAN straddles some of the world's busiest sea lanes, connecting the People's Republic of China (PRC), Japan, South Korea, Australia (which ranks as one of

America's closest military partners), Europe and the Middle East (USCoC n.d.). ASEAN is also highly relevant as an institutional forum for managing China's rapidly rising influence as Beijing seeks to define its regional and global roles (Bower 2012).

Washington has pursued what's been termed a 'rebalance within the rebalance'. ...this aims to place appropriate emphasis on Southeast Asia as one of the most dynamic parts of the world...

Recognising these traits, Washington has pursued what's been termed a 'rebalance within the rebalance'. Essentially, this aims to place appropriate emphasis on Southeast Asia as one of the most dynamic parts of the world, which needs to be engaged more deeply and broadly than ever before. The US has sought to give concrete expression to its recalibrated orientation through an intensive diplomatic campaign. By the end of 2015, this effort had included return presidential visits that have focused exclusively on Southeast Asia (a first since the Vietnam War); the creation of a financial post within the Treasury Department dedicated to the region; the appointment of an Ambassador to ASEAN as a group (a position currently held by Nina Hachigan); and the conclusion of a major defence accord with Manila granting the US military basing rights in the Philippines (discussed below) (Simon 2015; Bower 2012; Philippines Government 2014; Downing 2014).

The centrality of Southeast Asia in Washington's current rebalance to Asia is further reflected in various speeches and official statements by Obama in the context of his self-styled role as the US's first 'Pacific President' (Hung and Lee 2011:18; see also Bower 2011). For example, he told the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Town Hall in Yangon, Myanmar, in November 2014:

As President of the United States, I've made it a priority to deepen America's ties with Southeast Asia ... I do this for reasons that go beyond the fact that I spent some of my childhood in Southeast Asia, in Indonesia ... I do it mainly because the 10 nations of ASEAN are home to about one in ten of the world's citizens. About two-thirds of Southeast Asia's population is under 35 years old. So this region—a region of growing economies and emerging democracies, and a vibrant diversity that includes oceans and islands, and jungles and cities and people of different races and religions and beliefs—this region will shape the 21st Century. (OPS 2014a)

More recently, in November 2015, Obama firmly rejected the charge that his rebalance was preventing him from focusing on more pressing global events, such as terrorism. Speaking at a press conference at the conclusion of a three-day visit to Malaysia, he affirmed:

This region is not a distraction from the world's central challenges ... [It] is absolutely critical to promoting security, prosperity and human dignity around the world. That's why I've devoted so much of my foreign policy to deepening America's engagement with this region. And I'm pleased that on this trip we made progress across the board. (OPS 2015a)

Perhaps the most concrete sign of growing US engagement with Southeast Asia is its expanding military presence across the region. American forces are conducting more exercises than before, and showcase drills such as Cobra Gold in Thailand and the Balikatan manoeuvres in the Philippines are bigger than ever (Simon 2015).² Washington has also inked some important bilateral defence force access deals. In November 2011, the Obama administration concluded an agreement with Australia allowing US Marines to deploy in and out of Darwin every six months.³ Although not a strictly Southeast Asian accord, the compact will certainly facilitate the rapid movement of US troops to address contingencies that might arise in this part of the world, such as natural disasters.⁴ More pertinent

was the Agreement on Enhanced Defense Cooperation (AEDC) that was reached with Manila in April 2014, which among other things permits American forces to access and use designated defence facilities in the Philippines on a rotational basis. This is a significant development, as it will provide the US with a forward basing option in the heart of Southeast Asia that it hasn't enjoyed for more than a quarter of a century.⁵

Washington has also assumed a somewhat more visible presence in the South China Sea (SCS), largely in response to the PRC's more forceful stance in claiming sovereignty over this entire body of water and the concomitant fear that this will inevitably threaten freedom of navigation in one of the world's most important maritime corridors (discussed in more detail in Section 3).⁶ In October 2015, the destroyer USS *Lassen* conducted a maritime patrol within 12 nautical miles of an artificial reef that had been constructed in the Spratlys, sparking a strong rebuke from Beijing. The following month, American B-52 bombers flew a series of sorties near other territories claimed by China, while in December a P-8 Poseidon reconnaissance plane was deployed to Singapore to support 'maritime security efforts' in disputed areas of the SCS. Most recently, in January 2016, the guided missile carrier USS *Curtis Wilbur* undertook a freedom of navigation operation near Triton, which is part of the disputed Paracel island chain, in what the Pentagon said was an exercise to ensure the right of 'innocent' passage.⁷

Furthering bilateral and multilateral economic and security cooperation in Southeast Asia is important to US foreign policy objectives for several reasons. First, it will help build effective and self-sufficient partner-nation defence capabilities, directly contributing to burden sharing (a mantra of the Pentagon, given current concerns about military overstretch). Second, it will enhance US-ASEAN trade and investment ties, which are both significant and rising. Third, it will assist with the promotion of mutually beneficial long-term American - Southeast Asian relationships that can then be leveraged to gain regional access in times of crisis. Fourth, it will promote the collective diplomatic and political 'voice' of the region to independently offset (non-US) outside influence.

In this context, the US is currently pursuing four main areas of cooperation as part of its bilateral and multilateral engagement with Southeast Asia:

- supporting the development of the ASEAN Community (AC), which was formally launched at the end of 2015
- buttressing defence reform and restructuring
- facilitating HADR operations
- providing assistance to address transnational terrorist and criminal threat contingencies.

CHAPTER 2

Supporting the development of the ASEAN Community

The AC formally came into being at the end of 2015. This nascent institutionalised communitarian regional bloc is built on three distinct pillars:

- The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which is aimed at consolidating a single and competitive market for the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labour among ASEAN's member countries.
- The ASEAN Political–Security Community (APSC), which has the overarching goal of ensuring that the peoples and constituent states of ASEAN live in peace with one another and the rest of the world in a just and harmonious environment.
- The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), which seeks to contribute to the realisation of the wider AC by building a region that is people-oriented, socially responsible and based on relations of enduring solidarity and unity.

If consolidated, the AC would for the first time provide Southeast Asian countries with a single regime of intergovernmental collaboration that can be used to draft, implement and refine joint policies and courses of action. Such a development would greatly facilitate future proactive planning and assist in the emergence of comprehensive and codified forms of supranational collaboration and governance. More specifically, it would better situate ASEAN to achieve its core goal of 'centrality', a term coined to emphasise how internal cohesion can be leveraged to both advance economic progress and manage the bloc's relations with external partners.⁸

As alluded in the introduction to this paper, the AC and the threefold communitarian integration it entails dovetail with Washington's own interests in Southeast Asia, not least by providing greater symmetry to institutional mechanisms for managing the economic, political and security affairs in this part of the world. Therefore, the US has sought to make a significant contribution to fostering the growth of the nascent AC. Initiatives have been especially pronounced with respect to the AEC.

In 2012, President Obama announced the Enhanced Economic Engagement Initiative to promote intra-ASEAN trade, facilitate standards development and practices, and establish an open and transparent investment environment. Through the provision of regional assistance funds, the US has also helped to create an electronic ASEAN single-window customs system to expedite trade between the bloc's member countries and improve the efficiency of commercial data processing and coordination (OPS 2014b, Fuchs 2015, MMITI 2015).

Beyond economic engagement, the US has supported the AC in various other ways. The US departments of State, Commerce and Energy have worked with ASEAN partners on a range of projects aimed at advancing infrastructure priorities, establishing effective public health sectors and promoting environmentally sustainable energy sources. To foster good governance and fundamental human freedoms, the US has been instrumental in augmenting the efficacy of legal frameworks to combat human trafficking and generally empower and protect the rights of women and children (OPS 2014b). Finally, Washington has constructively contributed to joint ASEAN deliberations on

maritime security, HADR and counterterrorism. Most of this input has been channelled through the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus 8 (ADMM+8),⁹ the debates of which directly inform the agenda of the ADMM—the highest security policy mechanism within ASEAN.¹⁰

There are several ways by which the US could build on these underpinnings of engagement to further advance the institutional development of the AC. Economically, Washington could help to deepen integration through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). This US-led initiative, which was signed in Auckland on 4 February 2016, aims to promote trade and investment through the establishment of marketplaces that are transparent and accountable. It currently involves Canada, Chile, Peru, Mexico, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and four ASEAN members—Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore. Together with the US, those nations account for 40% of the global economy (BBC 2016).

Washington has cast the TPP as an essential step to revitalise an open, rules-based global economic system that will provide more jobs for American workers and conservatively add US\$100 billion (A\$138 billion) a year to US growth (OPS 2015b, BBC 2016). However, the pact's timing also suggests that it's a response to major commercial and financial deals recently instituted by the PRC, such as the expansion of the China–ASEAN Free Trade Area in 2015,¹¹ the completion of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that same year¹² and ongoing efforts to conclude a 21-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEPA).¹³ As President Obama announced on the signing of the accord, 'Partnership would give the United States an advantage over other leading economies ... The TPP allows America—and not countries like China—to write the [economic] rules of the road in the 21st Century.'¹⁴

...if a prime goal is to counter Beijing's expanding regional economic influence, a strong case could be made for expanding the TPP to include other dynamic, reform-minded Southeast Asian economies.

It remains to be seen how successful the TPP will be, as signatories now have two years to ratify the agreement. However, if a prime goal is to counter Beijing's expanding regional economic influence, a strong case could be made for expanding the TPP to include other dynamic, reform-minded Southeast Asian economies. This would both buttress the liberalisation that's part and parcel of high-quality trading regimes of the type envisioned in the AEC and make it more representative of ASEAN and, hence, a more attractive alternative to the PRC-backed RCEPA (Chalk 2015a, Petri and Plummer 2013:21).¹⁵

On the political and security front, the US could leverage and provide input to the ADMM's current deliberations by suggesting joint endeavours that support interoperability in a mission planning and execution capacity. The purpose of these activities would be twofold; first, to demonstrate empirically how ASEAN militaries are able to work constructively for the good of regional peace and stability (both enshrined as key objectives of the APSC); second, to revise traditional threat perceptions and associated (ad hoc, hesitant) force postures so that more focused attention can be given to the collective security imperatives that are demanded by new and re-emerging issues of mutual concern (Chalk 2015a:21; See Seng 2012).

Finally, Washington could leverage its experience with soft power¹⁶ and the general resonance it has in Southeast Asia to promote a wide array of programs and projects that are designed to fully engage civil society across the region. To ensure that those activities are consistent with the notion of ASEAN centrality, they should be executed in total accord with the member states. One viable channel for achieving this is the ASEAN–US Enhanced Partnership Plan of Action. Concluded in 2006, the agreement affirms a commitment to foster cooperation in science, interfaith dialogues, educational exchanges, and information and communications technology (ASEAN Secretariat 2014). Each of those areas falls squarely within the ambit of the ASCC, and they could all be usefully expanded to include other sociocultural elements, such as music, literature, art and sporting activities (Chalk 2015a:22).

CHAPTER 3

Buttressing defence reform and restructuring

The US is currently supporting concerted defence restructuring efforts in at least three Southeast Asian states. Two are island archipelagos (the Philippines and Indonesia), and one is a mainland state in Indochina (Vietnam). Manila, which is the only American treaty ally out of the trio,¹⁷ is unsurprisingly receiving the most assistance.

The Philippines

Main aspects of defence reform

The main thrust of Philippines defence reform is to revamp the military into a service capable of projecting a posture of credible external deterrence. This overhaul has been developed in line with the concept of 'rebuilding while performing', the overarching aim of which is to equip the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) with the necessary capabilities to perform three fundamental tasks: protect the territorial integrity of the state; offset evolving foreign defence challenges; and ensure the attainment of Manila's strategic maritime interests (Chalk 2014, DND 2012).

In 2013, then President Benigno Aquino III announced a US\$1.8 billion (A\$2.5 billion) defence upgrade plan, which prioritised three central innovations over the short to medium term. First is the establishment of appropriate strategic response efforts in all three branches of the AFP to undertake integrated defensive missions and deter potential external threats that could harm the country's core national interests.¹⁸ Second is the creation of an enhanced C4ISR (command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) system to support joint strategic defence operations and improve situational awareness through the faster collection, fusion, analysis and dissemination of shared information. Third is the development of a modern satellite communications network to work alongside improved C4ISR platforms to provide nationwide coverage for sovereignty surveillance and reconnaissance (DND 2012:10–12). Combined, these modifications are designed to provide the state with focused, coordinated and intelligence-based countermeasures for securing vital installations, energy facilities and international sea lanes that run through Manila's territory and exclusive economic zone.

US support to Philippines defence reform

The US has vigorously supported military restructuring efforts in the Philippines through the consolidation of agreements that specifically call for closer defence ties and collaboration. In November 2011, the two countries issued the Manila Declaration, which among other things affirms a mutual commitment to a balanced and responsive security partnership, including collaboration on enhancing the defence, interdiction and apprehension capabilities of the Philippines (OSp 2011). A year later, that commitment was given concrete expression on the American side when Obama announced that the Aquino administration would receive US\$40 million (A\$55.6 million) in Global Security and Contingency Fund money in a new bilateral assistance program aimed at enhancing maritime domain awareness in the SCS and surrounding areas (Kelly 2014).

Washington's deepening security alliance with Manila received a further fillip in April 2014 with the conclusion of the AEDC. The 10-year accord permits the US to access and use designated military facilities in the Philippines (although only on a rotational basis and at the invitation of the government) for the dual purposes of promoting defence interoperability and force modernisation (Philippines Government 2014; Downing 2014). To financially buttress the agreement, the White House provided a record US\$79 million (A\$112 million) in military assistance to the Philippines during FY 2015, much of which has been earmarked for the construction of a training and logistical base to strengthen the AFP (Parameswaran 2015a, Banerjee 2015).

Most recently, in November 2015, the US announced that Southeast Asia as a whole would receive around US\$140 million (A\$192 million) in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) during FY 2016 (subject to appropriation).

Most recently, in November 2015, the US announced that Southeast Asia as a whole would receive around US\$140 million (A\$192 million) in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) during FY 2016 (subject to appropriation). It has become apparent that the Philippines' share of this total will be significant and much higher than the FY 2015 FMF allocation (US\$40 million/A\$55 million) (DoS n.d.a). In an appearance on AMC network's *Headstart* program, US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg essentially confirmed the increase, stating that 'We [the US] have upped our foreign military funding to the Philippines,' before going on to add 'it will be somewhere in the range of US\$79 million this year. It's increasing and what has been proposed is something called a maritime initiative in the region.'¹⁹

Indonesia

Main aspects of defence reform

In Indonesia, a major and ongoing effort has been made to professionalise the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) and return it to its function as the primary actor for national defence. Initially, the main thrust was to erase the legacies of Suharto's authoritarian rule by strengthening democratic control over the armed forces, fully expunging all aspects of the so-called *dwi-fungsi* (dual function) that legitimised military engagement in sociopolitical affairs and divesting the TNI of any law enforcement or maintenance of public order missions (Sebastian and Iisgindarasah 2011, Laksmana 2014). Much of this work was completed under the administrations of BJ Habibe, Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Sukarnoputri. Since then, the primary focus has been to rebuild the TNI's overall combat effectiveness and readiness and transform it into a capable and respected fighting force in East Asia. The basic tenet guiding this latest phase, which commenced under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–2014) and has continued under the leadership of Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo, is the establishment of a Minimum Essential Force (MEF) by 2024 (Laksmana 2014, Mahadzir 2016).

The main idea behind the MEF is the attainment of full defence self-reliance. To achieve that goal, the TNI is to be gradually weaned off munitions procured from foreign vendors and, instead, provided with platforms that are wholly domestically produced. In line with this vision, Jakarta now requires every weapons purchase to include provisions for the transfer of technology to Indonesia's state-owned strategic entities, including shipbuilder PT PAL, land systems maker PT PINDAD and aircraft manufacturer PT DL. In addition, there has been a major boost to the country's defence budget, which has increased by more than five times since 2013. This extra money has been used to prop up national defence industries, augment local capacities for developing integrated weapons and related equipment systems and underwrite maritime security (Parameswaran 2015b). In the last of those areas, which is a

cornerstone of the current Widodo administration, the effort has primarily been aimed at overhauling the country's port infrastructure and establishing BAKAMLA, the new Maritime Security Agency, to act as a coastguard for addressing threats such as piracy, people smuggling and, especially, illegal fishing.²⁰

US support to Indonesian defence reform

The US restored full military relations with Indonesia in 2005 (they were cut in the early 1990s over human rights concerns) and since then has increasingly engaged Jakarta in its defence reform efforts. In 2010, the two countries signed a comprehensive partnership agreement to serve as the structural foundation for governing and managing bilateral ties. The accord provides for an annual Joint Commission Meeting that consists of a series of parallel cooperative deliberations held in six component working groups, one of which is dedicated to advancing Indonesian military modernisation through the transfer of essential equipment and know-how (OSp 2015a).²¹ The comprehensive partnership was significantly strengthened during Widodo's first American visit in October 2015 by the inclusion of two additional procedural items: a regular 2+2 strategic dialogue involving the Indonesian and US foreign and defence ministers, and the institution of a non-government track of negotiations to facilitate input from the business world, civil society and the academic community (Parameswaran 2015c).

Programmatically, the bulk of Washington's assistance falls under the Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI). The mission statement of this Pentagon-run program is squarely focused on military restructuring. Subject matter experts provide guidance on a range of priority areas, including defence policy and strategy; human resource management; budgetary planning; civil-military relations; logistics and infrastructure; and professional education.²²

In January 2015, Washington and Jakarta signed an action plan to significantly expand the DIRI 'footprint' in Indonesia, particularly in the area of maritime security (Wardah 2015). A key deliverable agreed on by the two governments was the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) by the end of 2015 to further collaboration in littoral defence, coastal resource management and offshore infrastructure. One specific highlight calls for greater US Coast Guard interaction and cooperation with BAKAMLA, although at the time of writing the exact details of how this will proceed have yet to be fleshed out.²³ The Obama administration has earmarked US\$10 million (A\$13.8 million) in security assistance for FY 2016 to underwrite action in these areas (Parameswaran 2015a). The MoU reflects the importance that Washington and Jakarta jointly place on the maritime domain, both in terms of the growing significance of this area within the wider Asian security landscape and Widodo's own vision of Indonesia emerging as a global fulcrum between the Pacific and Indian oceans (Parameswaran 2015c).

Vietnam

Main aspects of defence reform

Vietnam has been engaged in a concerted defence restructuring effort for several years, reflecting the fact that most of its extremely large military is outfitted with dated equipment from the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, modernisation has become an increasingly central focus of concern for the government. At the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam's 11th Congress in January 2011, the Political Report listed among the key objectives for the next five-year planning cycle the further development of defence and security scientific research to equip the armed forces with the means to participate and ultimately prevail in 'high-tech' wars against enemy states. While the priorities remained vague (armaments, ammunition and technical/electronic reconnaissance), MoUs signed with several states reveal that Hanoi is seeking help, services and assets in six major areas: the storage, maintenance and upgrading of existing military equipment; the modernisation of platforms for the army, navy and air force; an overhaul of Vietnam's defence industry; the acquisition of maritime logistics capabilities for use in the SCS; response and consequence management resources to both mitigate the effects of natural disasters such as flooding and storm damage and support search and rescue missions; and training for future involvement in UN-endorsed peacekeeping operations (Thayer 2015, Minnick 2015).

According to Vietnam's latest Defence White Paper, which was issued three years after the 2011 Congress, future priorities will concentrate on further enhancing domestic weapons production capabilities. In common with Indonesia, Vietnam's arms purchase contracts now typically include provisions for technology transfer as well as technical education on construction, maintenance and repair. For example, Hanoi has approached both India and Russia for assistance in co-manufacturing the BrahMos anti-ship cruise missile and has explored possibilities with Jakarta on jointly building fixed-wing and maritime surveillance aircraft as well as multirole helicopters. The government has also endorsed a Malaysian proposal to promote defence industry cooperation among ASEAN member states (Thayer 2015, Simon 2015).

US support to Vietnamese defence reform

The US has steadily stepped up its military engagement with Vietnam in line with Hanoi's political reorientation towards the West over the past several years. The International Trafficking in Arms Regulations, which banned the sale of lethal weapons to the country, have been significantly relaxed (and were fully lifted during Obama's visit to Hanoi in May 2016) and a range of agreements to support defence restructuring have been signed.²⁴

In 2010, Hanoi and Washington instituted the Annual Defense Policy Dialogue to review and guide bilateral ties (Parameswaran 2015e). The following year, the two governments signed a formal collaboration pact, which paved the way for a subsequent MoU that pledged a mutual commitment to strengthen cooperation in four key areas: peacekeeping, HADR, maritime security, and search and rescue operations (Munoz 2012). Relations were further elevated in June 2015 when the US Vietnam Joint Vision Statement on Defense Relations was inked. The document includes 12 areas for joint military-to-military action and highlights the need to 'expand defense trade between our countries, potentially influencing cooperation in the production of new technologies and equipment, where possible under current law and policy restrictions.'²⁵

The vision statement, which isn't legally binding, has been accompanied by concrete deliverables from the US side. As is the case with the Philippines, the US has focused mainly on assisting Hanoi to upgrade its maritime capabilities to help offset Chinese adventurism in the SCS. The Obama administration has announced that US\$18 million (A\$25.25 million) will be allocated to the Vietnamese Coast Guard for the purchase of Metal Shark patrol vessels (Parameswaran 2015e). A further US\$20.5 million (A\$28.07 million) has been earmarked for FY 2016 (subject to appropriation) to bolster intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and command and control within the country's maritime agencies (Parameswaran 2015a).

American defence firms have also indicated that they could provide niche capabilities to meet Hanoi's maritime modernisation needs. For example, Lockheed Martin has floated the possible sale of its Sea Hercules patrol craft for coastal surveillance, while Boeing has suggested that it could sell its ISR technology for installation on business aircraft that had been converted for green, brown and blue water reconnaissance. These are but a few of the potential defence trade areas, and certainly others could be successfully developed for the Vietnamese market, including offshore radar platforms, satellite communication systems, and maritime logistics, maintenance and electronic networks (Thayer 2015, Minnick 2015).

US support for defence reform and the South China Sea disputes

As noted, a significant component of US support to defence reform and modernisation in the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam has focused on the maritime realm. A primary driver motivating this emphasis—particularly in terms of American support to Manila and Hanoi—is the PRC's growing assertiveness in the SCS. This body of water stretches from the Taiwan Strait to Singapore, provides 10% of the global fish catch, carries around US\$5.3 trillion in annual shipborne trade and contains what are believed to be sizeable reserves of oil and natural gas (Glaser 2015).²⁶ Beijing has asserted ownership of over 90% of this area, justifying its claim on the basis of initial discovery and historical disputes that date back to the 2nd century BC. A map drawn by the Kuomintang in 1947 that depicts nine

unconnected dotted lines covering the vast majority of the SCS has also been taken as further support for Chinese jurisdiction over this body of water and all land and submarine features within it (Glaser 2015, Simon 2015).²⁷

The PRC has moved steadily to enforce its self-defined hold in the SCS. In 2007, the country raised the status of the administrative authority overseeing the Paracel and Spratly island groups (which are also claimed by Vietnam and the Philippines, respectively) to that of a county-level 'city' in Hainan Province. Three years later, for the first time, China listed its claims in the SCS among its core national interests, alongside Taiwan (Chang 2012:4). In 2012, the PRC not only announced that the Spratlys, the Paracels and Macclesfield Bank (the last is jointly claimed by Hanoi and Manila) had become a Chinese region known as Sansha City with its own governing officials, but also confirmed that it was dispatching a military garrison to guard those living on these island groups (Kurlantzick 2012; Perlez 2012a, 2012b). In July 2013, Beijing created the new unified Coast Guard Agency that subsequently saw 16,000 of its personnel deployed to the SCS; the move came on the heels of earlier large-scale naval exercises in the area involving ships from all three of China's regional fleets (Simon 2015:591). Most recently, in 2014, 2015 and 2016, satellite images have shown that the PRC has been undertaking extensive reclamation work in the Spratlys and Paracels and has made rapid progress in building airstrips, radar systems and other facilities that reportedly could be suitable for military purposes (BBC 2014).²⁸

The US has clearly balked at these actions, interpreting them as a direct threat to freedom of navigation in what remains one of the world's most strategically vital maritime corridors. Indeed, ensuring that the PRC isn't allowed to assume uncontested sovereignty over the SCS is now arguably one of the most pressing American concerns in the Asia-Pacific. Supporting defence reform in Vietnam and the Philippines, to the extent that it buttresses Washington's own actions to stymie Chinese claims in this body of water, has thus been viewed in a positive light. Equally, assisting Indonesia to emerge as an effective Southeast Asian maritime power in its own right is deemed important, as it will lend greater political weight to ASEAN's collective role in establishing a new code of conduct to resolve competing claims in the SCS—something that Jakarta has directly supported.²⁹

CHAPTER 4

Facilitating HADR operations

The geography of Southeast Asia makes it highly susceptible to natural disasters, particularly those that are weather related. Hurricanes, flooding, mudslides, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are all recurrent in the region, and some have resulted in widespread destruction.³⁰ The US has played a significant role in helping Southeast Asian countries deal with these events, bringing a wide range of relevant assets and platforms drawn from the wider defence community. An overview of those capabilities is provided in Appendix 1.

The tsunami that made landfall in the Indonesian province of Aceh in 2004 and Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in 2013 (two of the most destructive disasters to have ever occurred in the region) provide good examples of the type of assistance that Washington has rendered in this part of the world. In both cases, American relief operations were subdivided into four main categories: transport and logistics; medical support; command, control and communications (C3); and intelligence.

The Aceh tsunami

On 26 December 2004, a massive magnitude 9.0 earthquake occurred under the Indian Ocean off the west coast of northern Sumatra, about 155 miles south-southeast of Banda Aceh, the capital of the Indonesian province of Aceh. The event triggered a huge wave that expanded at a speed of 2.5 kilometres per second and extended for 1,200 kilometres from northwest of Sumatra to the Andaman Islands, eventually spreading to the entire Indian Ocean basin. The tsunami, which arrived in a series of waves that retreated and advanced in cycles of over 30 minutes between each peak, caused massive loss of life and population displacement, particularly in northern Sumatra, Sri Lanka, India (including the Andaman and Nicobar islands) and Thailand. In Aceh, apart from the human toll, the damage included the devastation of 110,000 houses, 3,000 kilometres of roads, 14 seaports, 11 airports and airstrips, 1,620 bridges (120 major, 1,500 minor), 2,000 school buildings, and 8 hospitals. The destruction of the main coastal highway, the primary arterial transport link along the west coast of Aceh, also prevented heavy vehicle access to settlements and communities in the affected region (Rofi et al. 2006, Jayasuriya and McCawley 2010).

PACOM initiated Operation Unified Assistance to support the relief effort. A variety of lift and logistical platforms were subsequently deployed to the affected areas. Those assets were originally grouped as Joint Task Force (JTF) 536 under the authority of the commander of the 23rd Marine Expeditionary Force. However, as other countries arrived and started to provide assistance, JTF-536 was redesignated as the Combined Support Force-536 (CSF-536), which was based at the Utao airbase in Thailand under the command of US Marine Corps Lieutenant General Robert Blackman (Dorsett 2005).

Specific components of American support to the relief effort in Aceh are summarised in Table 1 and described in more detail in Appendix 1.

Table 1: US HADR support following the Aceh tsunami

Transport and logistics	Naval ships: USS <i>Abraham Lincoln</i> , USS <i>Bonhomme Richard</i> ; vessels from Marine Expeditionary Strike Group Five Air platforms: SH-60 and MH-60 helicopters
Medical	Dispatch of military doctors, nurses and trauma counsellors Provision of hygienic supplies, medicines and triage equipment Deployment of the 1,000-bed USNS <i>Mercy</i> ; USNS <i>San Jose</i>
Command, control, communications	Activation of CSF-536, which aimed to combine a unified command structure with a decentralised system of operational control Establishment of a dedicated CSF for Indonesia (based at Medan) Restoration of downed phone lines, cellular phone towers and other communications infrastructure Provision of Non-secure Internet Protocol Router Network (NIPRNET) to transmit messages within and between local and international relief groups working in Aceh
Intelligence	Institution of the Contingencies Operational Intelligence Cell: an all-source information capability structure that was specifically designed for quickly responding to emergencies within the PACOM area of responsibility.

Typhoon Haiyan

On 8 November 2013, a so-called ‘super typhoon’ tore through the middle of the Philippines archipelago. Named ‘Haiyan’, or ‘Yolanda’, the storm set records for sustained winds of 250 kilometres per hour (160 mph), with gusts up to 320 kilometres per hour (200 mph). Even more catastrophic was the 5-meter (16-foot) tidal surge caused by the typhoon, which resembled a tsunami and swept away the port city of Tacloban. The devastation spread across six of the Philippines islands, affecting 11 million people, before going on to kill a handful of people in Vietnam and southern China. Initial fatality tolls stood at 2,300. However, updated figures as of mid-January 2014 estimated that at least 6,201 died and more than 28,000 were injured. Overall, USAID believes that Haiyan probably affected more than 16 million people and was directly responsible for the forced displacement of 4.1 million as a result of the full or partial destruction of some 1.2 million homes (CEDMHA 2014; see also Economist 2013a, 2013b).

For Typhoon Haiyan, then Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel directed PACOM to support US humanitarian assistance in the Philippines, designating the Commander of the Marine Corps Forces (Pacific) as the executive agent for the operation. The central administration in Manila determined that the American relief effort should focus on Tacloban and Samar (the areas most severely affected by the typhoon), with other international forces taking care of the areas to the west (Robson and Rushing 2013). Operation Damayan was subsequently put into effect, and military assets began moving in on Sunday 11 November. To determine how best to use available personnel and resources, a 215-strong humanitarian assistance survey team was deployed under the leadership of Brigadier General Paul Kennedy, the deputy commander of the Marines’ 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB).

Specific components of American support to the relief effort in the Philippines are summarised in Table 2 and described in more detail in Appendix 1.

Table 2: US HADR support following Typhoon Haiyan

Transport and logistics	Naval ships: USS <i>George Washington</i> (later relieved by USS <i>Ashland</i> and USS <i>Germantown</i>), USS <i>Antietam</i> , USS <i>Cowpens</i> , USS <i>Mustin</i> , USNS <i>Charles Drew</i> and USS <i>Lassen</i> Air platforms: MV-22B Osprey helicopters; KC-130 Hercules transport carriers
Medical	Dispatch of doctors, nurses, hygienic supplies, medicines and triage equipment (delivered by sea and air) Construction of mobile field clinics Provision of casualty treatment on board the USS <i>George Washington</i>
Command, control, communications	Activation of Joint Task Force 505 (based at Camp Aguinaldo in central Manila), which coordinated the relief work of major subcommands and civilian organisations Institution of the Marines Deployable Joint Command and Early Entry System, which enabled effective real-time communication between American and Filipino troops and first responders Provision of rapid response kits to the AFP
Intelligence	Institution of a Joint Operations Center (based at Camp Courtney in Okinawa, Japan) to fuse information collection, analysis and dissemination Dispatch of P-3C Orion aircraft and crew to assess damage, identify suitable landing zones for MV-22B Osprey helicopters and conduct search and rescue

HADR and wider US security interests in Southeast Asia

The relief efforts instituted in Indonesia and the Philippines revealed the type of wide-ranging capabilities that the US is able to mobilise in response to large-scale disasters. While this assistance has value in itself, by saving lives and alleviating human suffering, it has also allowed Washington to further broader American security cooperation goals in Southeast Asia. This is true in at least five respects.

First, the provision of assistance has helped the US to establish positive political–military ties in the region. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Indonesia following the 2004 Aceh tsunami. In that case, Washington’s intervention literally transformed a bilateral relationship that had previously been fairly ‘cold’, largely because of the suspension of military ties following the East Timor crisis in 1999.³¹ In one survey conducted in Indonesia in November 2004, two-thirds of the respondents said that they held a negative view of the US. According to a poll conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute in the aftermath of the disaster, not only had this figure dropped to 54% by February 2005, but a full 65% of those who participated confirmed that they now viewed America in either a ‘much more favourable’ or ‘somewhat more favourable’ light (Qodari 2006:8).

Operation Damayan in the Philippines also reinforced existing confidence in the US as an ally. In that case, the American relief operation undoubtedly sent an extremely powerful message to the Filipino public and political elite about the importance of the bilateral relationship. Surveys conducted in December 2013 showed that trust in the US was at an all-time high following its HADR intervention, surpassing all levels that had been recorded since 1994 (Rood 2014).

Second, HADR has led to general defence cooperation and access arrangements. Operations Unified Assistance and Damayan are again illustrative. In Indonesia, Washington’s actions were well received and subsequently helped to pave the way for a full and sustained resumption of US military assistance to the country. In January 2005, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that Washington would relax some of its aid restrictions so that C-130 spare parts could be sent to assist ongoing relief operations in Aceh (Smith 2005:1). This concession set the tone for a rapid thaw

in military-to-military relations. In February 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced that Indonesia would be eligible for full International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program funding and three months later confirmed the resumption of non-lethal foreign military sales to the country. Improvements culminated in March 2006, when the Bush administration declared that the export of lethal defence articles could recommence as well, effectively returning Washington's military engagement with Jakarta to its pre-1992 condition (Myerscough 2006).³²

In the Philippines, the US disaster relief effort came at a time when Washington was engaged in talks with Manila on increasing the rotational presence of American forces in the country. While the Aquino government was keen to come to an agreement on this matter—motivated in large part by Beijing's increased territorial assertiveness in the SCS—opposition parties were reluctant to accede, asserting that any arrangement of this sort smacked of imperialism and also bordered on being unconstitutional (Harding 2013). It appears that the response to Haiyan may have provided an opening to this impasse, with (then) Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario making a strong and increasingly influential case that the typhoon showed why the Philippines needed to grant the US greater access, especially during times of disaster (Quismundo 2013). Those sentiments were arguably given concrete expression in April 2014, when the Philippines concluded the AEDC—elevating the American–Filipino alliance to a higher plane of bilateral engagement.

Third, by mitigating the debilitating impacts of major environmental calamities and expediting affected states' recovery and return to pre-disaster levels of prosperity, HADR has ensured stability in a region of growing political, economic and security importance to the US. Moreover, it has helped to build confidence, trust and interoperability between Southeast Asian militaries. Disaster assistance has assumed a high profile on the ASEAN political agenda and is now routinely discussed at the leaders level. This prominence has created additional opportunities for member states to visibly demonstrate their contribution to regional security by participating in transparent and cooperative emergency relief operations and exercises (Yates and Bergin 2011:14).

Fourth, HADR has provided the US with a non-contentious channel to offset expanding Chinese influence in Southeast Asia and more broadly across the Asia–Pacific, not least by emphasising the continuity of American strategic engagement with the region. This was certainly evidenced by the American response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, which substantially strengthened what were already highly robust bilateral ties. Moreover, China's paltry aid effort, which initially constituted an offer of a mere A\$142,000 in relief,³³ opened up a perfect no-risk opportunity for Washington to score political points at the expense of Beijing.³⁴

Finally, conducting joint HADR missions has allowed US forces to operate alongside partners in a mission command and control capacity. This has proven to be extremely helpful in fostering the type of capabilities that can quickly morph into more standard or conventional security capabilities. A number of emergency response modalities have obvious parallels with those needed for broader military modernisation, including airlift, integrated intelligence, C3, distribution and supply-chain management, and medical triage. By strengthening those various functional areas, the US has equipped its partner nations with an effective dual-use capability that can be applied to both traditional and non-traditional threat settings.

CHAPTER 5

Providing assistance to address transnational terrorist and criminal threats

The US has worked with Southeast Asian states for many years to address transnational terrorist and criminal threats. Washington's assistance is mainly channelled through the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (DoS) and the Department of Justice (DoJ); USAID plays a more limited role in the areas of development and governance.³⁵ The DoD administers two major political-military efforts—IMET and FMF; the DoS runs a dedicated anti-terrorism assistance (ATA) effort and oversees a broader suite of measures instituted through the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) scheme; the Department of Justice is responsible for overseeing the International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP); and USAID (with policy guidance from the DoD) manages the Economic Support Fund (ESF). These initiatives are described in Appendix 2.

Transnational terrorism

Over the past two decades, the principal terrorist threats in Southeast Asia have stemmed from three main areas: conflict zones in Indonesia; Mindanao and surrounding islands in the southern Philippines; and the Malay Muslim provinces of Yala, Patani and Narithiwat in Thailand. These hotspots continue to account for the bulk of militant activity in the region, and the US has worked closely with each of the states concerned to dampen extremist violence taking place within (and across) their territorial boundaries.

Indonesia

Considerable counterterrorism (CT) assistance has been given to Indonesia, reflecting the country's longstanding experience with both local and transnational threat groups. In June 2003, Washington used its ATA program to help with the creation of Densus 88 (D-88, or Detachment 88). The elite force consists of four divisions that respectively focus on investigations, intelligence, logistical support and hostage rescue (through a crisis response team) (Conboy 2008:48, Haseman 2004). The unit was largely responsible for the neutralisation of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)—which between 2000 and 2008 was regarded as the most dangerous *jihadi* outfit in Southeast Asia—and is now spearheading Jakarta's kinetic response to the spreading influence of the so-called 'Islamic State' across the archipelago.³⁶

The US has also played a highly active role in helping Indonesia develop an effective civilian rules-based system for dealing with terrorism. Extensive IMET, INCLE and ICITAP support has been made available to foster civil-military relations and support the creation of model legal codes, criminal litigation and terrorist prosecution. Equally, a major emphasis has been given to the ESF, which has been employed to consolidate democracy, bolster transparent and accountable governance, facilitate economic growth, and expand educational opportunities. Washington

regards all these areas as critical in furthering and entrenching Indonesia's democratic transition and ensuring the general emergence of a domestic setting that's hostile to political violence (Chalk et al. 2009:174).

The Philippines

The Philippines is the largest benefactor of US FMF backing in East Asia, with overall allocations rising from US\$28 million (A\$38.5 million) in FY 2009 to US\$40 million (A\$55 million) in 2015. As noted in Section 3, the bulk of this money has been used to support defence reform and modernisation. However, since late 2001 a significant component has been earmarked to underwrite Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines, a bilateral defence program aimed at countering local and transnational threat groups in Mindanao and the wider vicinity of the Moro Gulf.³⁷ Primarily directed at elite Filipino military units,³⁸ training has mainly focused on intelligence fusion, unit interoperability, logistics, engineering and hearts-and-minds initiatives.³⁹

In addition to FMF, Manila continues to be one of the main recipients of US IMET. In FY 2015, a request of US\$2 million was submitted for the country, the highest allocation since FY 2008.⁴⁰ Buttressing the IMET Program has been a steady flow of ESF assistance to root out pervasive corruption (particularly in law enforcement agencies), as well as to tackle poverty and unemployment—both of which are regarded as powerful drivers for political violence in the south of the country.⁴¹

Unlike Indonesia, the Philippines receives only modest amounts of INCLE, ICITAP and ATA assistance. This would seem to reflect a general belief in the US that the military is the best-equipped entity for ameliorating militant challenges in the broader Mindanao theatre. That said, funds have been made available and used to further three main objectives: to garner greater professionalism, transparency and competence in the criminal justice system (particularly in relation to ameliorating corruption, boosting police investigatory abilities and streamlining prosecutorial procedures); to establish more effective legal regimes for countering the financing of militant extremism; and to improve Manila's ability to secure its borders through the installation of the computer-based Terrorism Interdiction Program (TIP) (Chalk et al. 2009:177–178).

Thailand

All DoD-related security assistance to Thailand was suspended following the May 2014 coup d'état that replaced the civilian Pheu Thai Party with a military junta under the leadership of General Prayut Chan-o-cha. Before that, Bangkok had been a major recipient of American CT support. A very robust IMET program had been in place and was used to train tens of thousands of Thai officials, many in top command positions. Before the coup, US\$2.1 million (A\$2.8 million) had been requested to support the program in FY 2015, which would have surpassed the allocation to the Philippines and been exceeded only by that earmarked for Indonesia (US\$2.4 million/A\$3.2 million) (DoS, n.d.c:3).

While defence-related CT programs have been curtailed as a result of the 2014 coup, DoS-administered initiatives haven't been affected, and Washington continues to provide concerted assistance to Thai civilian agencies in several areas. INCLE funds have been used to augment police skills in crime-scene investigation, analysis and forensics. An ATA-funded bomb incident countermeasure training effort has been in place since 2008, and now involves follow-on instruction for responding to chemical, radiological and biological attacks. As in the Philippines, ATA funds have also been invested both to improve institutional structures for disrupting terrorist financial flows and to expand and continually update computerised Terrorism Interdiction Program (TIP) watch-lists covering all ports of entry into the country (Chalk et al. 2009:171).

Apart from these areas, Washington and Bangkok have enjoyed an established and intimate information-sharing relationship for over 15 years. The Central Intelligence Agency works closely with Thai counterparts drawn from the police and specialised branches of the military, sharing facilities and exchanging data in a joint counterterrorism intelligence centre that has been operational since 2001. The most publicised result of this enhanced coordination

was the arrest of Riduan Isamuddin (aka Hambali)—the purported linkman between al-Qaeda and JI—outside Bangkok in August 2003 (Chanlett-Avery et al. 2015:8). The centre has since been used to investigate the wider parameters of attacks that have been disrupted prior to execution (such as the alleged Hezbollah plot in 2014), as well as bombings that have occurred—notably the August 2015 explosion at a Buddhist shrine in Erawan Plaza.

Transnational crime

A plethora of transnational criminal threats (or ‘grey area’ phenomena) exists in Southeast Asia, ranging from various types of illicit trafficking (people, narcotics, weapons, timber, wildlife) to maritime piracy, cybercrime, money laundering, and illegal or unreported fishing.⁴² How much these challenges affect individual states varies across the region, but there’s a consensus that they constitute concrete security threats and therefore necessarily require decisive responses. In January 2015, Thai officials warned that a more integrated region under the ASEAN Community could exacerbate cross-border crime and possibly lead to new threats. Nine months later, Malaysia, which held the ASEAN chairmanship in 2015, emphasised that bold action needed to be taken to tackle transnational crime; to this end Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi reiterated the importance of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Combating Transnational Crime and its call for a renewed plan of action to deal with the issue (the last one was adopted back in 2002) (Parameswaran 2015f, 2015g).

The US has worked closely with Southeast Asian states to address cross-border crime. INCLE and ICITAP funds have been made available to ameliorate corruption; to boost judicial and law enforcement capacities for investigating, detaining and prosecuting perpetrators; and to generally streamline and improve interagency and intra-agency coordination. The last form of assistance has been deemed especially important, given the complex nature of transnational criminality and the need to institute multifaceted responses that draw on skills and expertise culled from a range of security forces that cross the civil–military divide (Chalk 2012:13).

Helping to establish better regimes of border security is an additional task that Washington has actively supported.

Helping to establish better regimes of border security is an additional task that Washington has actively supported. This has been a critical area of engagement, not least because many of the most serious manifestations of transnational crime occur and are most endemic in areas where surveillance and interdiction capabilities are weak or absent. Pertinent examples include maritime piracy (Indonesia, the Philippines), drug trafficking (Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, the Philippines), illegal fishing (Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand), gun running (Indonesia, the Philippines) and people smuggling (Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand).

Countering the illicit production and smuggling of narcotics is one specific transnational crime that has attracted considerable American support, reflecting the extensive opiate and amphetamine-type stimulant (ATS) trade that exists in Southeast Asia. In 1998, Washington funded the creation of the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok. At the facility, which is open to officials from across the region, law enforcers receive legal training and instruction on how to promote more effective standard operating procedures for mitigating cross-border crime. Courses are mostly taught by the Royal Thai Police, the Thai Office of the Narcotics Control Board and various US agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Homeland Security (Chanlett-Avery et al. 2015:8).

The US has also cooperated with several states on a bilateral basis to counter drug flows, notably with:

- Myanmar (the world's second-largest producer of refined heroin and a leading manufacturer of ATS)
- Laos (a major cultivator of poppies that has long 'fed' the infamous Golden Triangle)
- the Philippines (a prominent producer of ATS)
- Thailand and Cambodia (both key transit states for Myanmar-sourced narcotics).

Some of the more important INCLE/ICITAP programs and initiatives undertaken in these five countries are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: US counter-narcotics assistance to Myanmar, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia

Myanmar ^a	Judicial and law enforcement capacity building
	Intelligence sharing
	Joint drug enforcement investigations
	Port control training
	Technical and educational assistance to support drug demand-reduction programs
	Supply interdiction support
Laos	Judicial and law enforcement capacity building
	Funding to support coordination between Lao counter-narcotics officials and foreign partners
	Provision of equipment and training for the national Drug Control Department, provincial counter-narcotics units and Lao Customs
	Legal assistance to combat money laundering
	Funding to support a UN Office on Drugs and Crime pilot project on community-based treatment for drug users
The Philippines	Provision of basic equipment and training to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency
	Technical and educational assistance to support drug demand-reduction programs
	Funding for airport interagency drug interdiction task groups
Thailand	Specialised narcotics interdiction training (Task Force 399)
	Focused investigative instruction (Sensitive Investigative Unit)
	General law enforcement and judicial capacity building
	Intelligence sharing
	Long-term project to further professionalise all Thai substance-use treatment staff
Cambodia	Law enforcement training
	Intelligence sharing

^a In 2014, President Obama signed a national interest waiver allowing the US to provide direct counter-narcotics assistance to Myanmar. The move reflected the country's prominence as a source of opiates and ATS as well as efforts on the part of the then Thein Sein administration to institutionalise a more democratic system of governance. For more on the reform process in Myanmar, see Chalk (2013).

Source: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *2015 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, DoS, Washington DC, 2015.

Besides action against drugs, the US has sponsored various high-level meetings aimed at suppressing other manifestations of transnational crime. In 2015, they included:

- an Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security that was co-hosted with Japan and the Philippines and focused on best practices for enhancing maritime safety, countering piracy and combating illegal fishing
- a seminar co-chaired with Malaysia on mitigating illicit wildlife trafficking and how best to apply the standards and obligations enshrined in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
- a workshop jointly arranged with Myanmar on security, stability and international migration in the ASEAN region, which reviewed priorities in addressing the security challenges associated with irregular and illegal migration (OSp 2015b).

While the DoS and the DoJ provide the bulk of American assistance to deal with transnational crime, USAID and the DoD have also played a role. In May 2012, the Pentagon used the army's Export Control and Related Border Security Program to bring together officials from Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand to prioritise cross-border threats of mutual concern and formulate standard operating procedures for countering those challenges. The conference heralded the beginning of the so-called Gulf of Thailand Initiative, which has since involved several rounds of talks at both the strategic and tactical levels, as well as the signing of specific MoUs to promote information exchange and general interagency cooperation between the participating states.⁴³

Among other things, USAID has been instrumental in the creation of the Southeast Asian Oceans and Fisheries Partnership (which held its inaugural meeting in 2015) to implement regional initiatives and projects aimed at countering illegal fishing. The program, which is being supported with US\$4.3 million (A\$6.1 million) from the ESF, is designed to promote national policies that foster sustainable and legal fishing practices, increase the transparency of fishery supply chains and facilitate international research cooperation (OSp 2015b). The partnership gives concrete expression to the ASEAN Regional Forum Statement on Strengthened Cooperation on Marine Environmental Protection and Conservation, which the US sponsored with Singapore, Vietnam and China in August 2015.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

President Obama's so-called 'pivot' to Asia has seen the US actively engaging the states of Southeast Asia in both functional and programmatic areas. On one level, growing American involvement in the region is indicative of ASEAN's increasing importance as a unified collective bloc, the frequency at which large-scale natural disasters affect this part of the world, and the existence of a wide range of mutually concerning trans-regional security challenges.

However, it's also very much related to the growing power of the PRC in the wider Asia-Pacific and, more specifically, to heightened Chinese assertiveness in the SCS and the concomitant threat that this is seen to pose to freedom of navigation in a critically vital maritime trading and energy corridor. While Washington has repeatedly asserted that it has no interest in pursuing a strategy of Sino containment in Southeast Asia, it's clear that a main motivating driver for supporting defence reform in countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia has been the US's need to consolidate the emergence of capable and reliable partners that are more readily positioned to resist intemperate pressure from Beijing in this body of water.

Has the rebalance worked? In one sense it has, by providing the US with both institutional (ASEAN) and geostrategic and geographical (invested partner nations, basing options) opportunities to balance and offset the rising regional influence of China. As Kevin Rudd, the former prime minister of Australia and now a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security has observed, had Washington not moved to re-engage this part of the world, and particularly Beijing's hardline realist view of international relations, the world could easily have concluded that an overstretched US had lost its staying power in Asia (Rudd 2013). Under such circumstances, the PRC's risk-benefit calculation of pursuing a more adventurous stance in places such as the SCS would likely tilt in favour of the latter.

Empirical support for the rebalance can also be found. In a July 2014 survey conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 79% of respondents across Asia welcomed the goal of the pivot. Arguably more importantly, a majority (59%) also thought that the US would continue to play the leading role in shaping the definition of order in this part of the world over the coming decade (Green and Szechenyi 2014:v).

That said, a case could be made that growing American involvement in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific as a whole is merely encouraging an already paranoid China to adopt increasingly aggressive policies for protecting its self-defined national interests. Many commentators believe, for instance, that the PRC's current focus on military modernisation—particularly the development of advanced anti-access/area denial capabilities⁴⁴—is directly related to what it has perceived as undue American interference in its own strategic 'backyard' (Chalk 2012:14). The purported result has been a central administration in Beijing that's more willing to confront rather than cooperate with Washington on sensitive issues, such as the SCS disputes.⁴⁵

It could also be argued that the rebalance has lacked substance, at least in terms of balancing the PRC. While Washington has engaged in a multitude of activities in Southeast Asia, how much those strands have deterred

aggression and mitigated attempts of coercion by China is questionable. This is certainly true of the SCS, where there doesn't appear to have been any genuine effort on the part of Beijing to resolve ongoing territorial disputes with the Philippines, Vietnam and other claimants. By contrast, the PRC has taken an increasingly belligerent stance, undertaking highly contentious unilateral actions to consolidate and solidify control over all the territories behind its so-called Nine Dash line (Green 2016:9). In this light, a tenable charge could be made that the pivot has largely failed to ensure the emergence of a China that acts as a 'responsible stakeholder' in underwriting and buttressing the existing regional order.

Issues of effectiveness aside, perhaps an even more fundamental question is whether the US will continue with its current ASEAN-centric policy as part of a broader program in Asian engagement. Indeed, in an election year that might see a non-Democratic president returned to office, Washington's priorities may well change. Republicans across the board have already stated the urgent need for US foreign policy to refocus on Europe and the Middle East in order to address Russian territorial expansionism in places such as Ukraine and to decisively counter the Islamist extremism of so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.⁴⁶ GOP members in Congress have also voiced opposition to the TPP on the grounds that the Obama administration sold out major American industries in a final rush to secure the partnership (Berman 2015).

Even if partisan politics doesn't 'unbalance' the pivot to Southeast Asia, fiscal constraints could. The East Asia and Pacific Bureau in the State Department had 12% less funding in 2014 (Lyon 2016). This, combined with a pre-sequester defence budget cut of US\$500 billion (A\$704 billion) out to 2020, means that ASEAN nations will now need to contribute more to sustain the various strands of American involvement currently at work. Unfortunately, most member states lack the fiscal capacity to do so (Simon 2015:577, 578). Thus, as Rod Lyon observes, while the pivot exists, it continuously 'struggles for oxygen' (Lyon 2016).

Budgetary pressures could also undermine the credibility of the rebalancing effort. In April 2014, Assistant Secretary of Defense and Acquisition Katrina McFarland cast considerable doubt on American willingness to sustain the reorientation to Asia when she candidly remarked: 'The pivot is being looked at again, because candidly, it can't happen.' Convincing regional allies that there'll be continued investment in developing a robust forward presence at a time when the overall defence pie is shrinking will be challenging at best and highly problematic at worst.

Assuming that the rebalance survives these potential pitfalls, it's clear that a central challenge will be in convincing the PRC that the return to Southeast Asia isn't a thinly veiled strategy of Sino-containment but, rather, an effort to revitalise and strengthen partnerships in a key part of the world. To achieve such an outcome, it would seem that there's a realistic potential to cooperate with China in the areas of HADR and transnational security as a means of providing the necessary level of confidence to deal with the more sensitive issue of claims in the SCS. More specifically, Washington should impress on Beijing that the two governments share a common need for cooperation to deal with an array of global threats—including many of the cross-border challenges that are manifest in Southeast Asia—and that this would be harder to effect (with deleterious consequences for both parties) in an environment of sustained regional power competition.⁴⁷

Consolidating a non-conflictual or at least stable working partnership of this sort will obviously be tricky and will depend in large part on Washington's ability to quickly and appropriately respond to unexpected changes in PRC policy. This will require a nuanced and agile strategy that couples engagement with balancing.⁴⁸ The optimal and most sustainable outcome will be the emergence of a regional order that promotes risk-averse behaviour on the part of China and insulates against the type of unilateral action that could quickly escalate out of control to threaten American and local allied interests.

APPENDIX 1

US HADR support in Southeast Asia

Overview of HADR capabilities

The US DoD can mobilise a range of capabilities in the event of a major disaster. Airlift to move humanitarian supplies, palletised cargo, food and medicine packages is perhaps one of the most visible forms of assistance. Large transport planes such as C-130s, C-17s and C-5s are often regarded as the main workhorses because they can carry heavy payloads. However, in many cases the extensive runways that they need are either unavailable or have been rendered unusable by the destructive force of cyclones, hurricanes or earthquakes. Consequently, smaller fixed-wing and rotary aircraft have also been highly useful, particularly the US Army's CH-47 Chinook and the US Marine Corps' MV-22 Osprey and Ch-46 Sea Knight helicopters (Moroney et al. 2013:7, DoD 2011).

In most post-disaster situations, there's an urgent need to clear destroyed buildings, set up temporary shelter, provide expeditionary bridging, reopen harbours and airports, rebuild communication and transport infrastructure and restore critical services. Often, assets owned by or contracted out to the DoD are the only available means for achieving these objectives. Units from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Seabees' naval mobile construction battalions are particularly relevant in this area, as both can establish forward-deployed teams for executing large-scale, resource-intensive overseas humanitarian missions within a few days (Moroney et al. 2013:8).

The DoD also has considerable experience and expertise in supply-chain and distribution management logistics. This support is generally tasked through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, based on forward-deployed pre-positioned HADR stock procured from the Defense Logistics Agency and boxed and moved on platforms provided by the US Transportation Command.⁴⁹ When necessary, these supplies can be augmented with others drawn from the affected country as well as from commercial and multinational sources. To ensure that humanitarian support is channelled as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, each combatant command has a Joint Deployment and Distribution Operations Center that's responsible for linking the provision of disaster aid with relief functions on the ground (Moroney et al. 2013:7–8).

Medical support is a further form of assistance that can be rendered. It may take the form of medicinal supplies, field treatment tents and mobile clinics. Major fundamental inputs to capability systems can also be deployed. One good example is the use of the two American hospital ships, USNS *Mercy* and USNS *Comfort*. Those vessels now form the backbone of Exercise Pacific Partnership—an annual multi-month training event sponsored by the US Pacific Fleet designed to improve HADR preparedness in the wider Asia–Pacific (Yates and Bergin 2011:38).

The DoD's communication infrastructure provides several additional opportunities for information sharing between military responders and their civilian counterparts. In the Pacific area of command, the All-Partners Area Network (formerly known as the Asia–Pacific Area Network) is an especially relevant tool. Taking the form of an open-source website that is housed at the command's headquarters and can be accessed in non-classified settings, it has become an important information and coordination portal connecting DoD officials with international humanitarian

partners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Moroney et al. 2013:8).

Finally, the DoD has a number of joint mechanisms at its disposal for coordinating its HADR response efforts and ensuring consistency with other agencies and aid donors. Within the Asia–Pacific, they include:

- the Pacific Outreach Directorate and two relevant subgroups: the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (which establishes collaborative relationships with other US Government departments to facilitate support for PACOM HADR actions and strategy), and the Public–Private Partnership Group (which advances and institutionalises interactions between public and private stakeholders)
- the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team, which promotes partnerships with 31 states and the global humanitarian community to improve multinational interoperability and facilitates the rapid and effective execution of international HADR operations
- the Directorate for Joint Force Development, which is responsible for developing operationally effective joint force structures that can be deployed in multinational disaster assistance missions and exercises (Yates and Bergin 2011:43).

US support to the relief effort in Aceh in 2004

Transport and logistics

Of all the transport platforms that the US made available in Aceh, naval ships arguably had the most visible presence. The USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) carrier strike group (CSG) arrived off the coast of Aceh on 31 December 2004—five days after the tsunami struck—and began to provide immediate logistical support (Jutai 2005). On 5 January 2005, the amphibious assault frigate USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) joined the CSG, along with vessels from Expeditionary Strike Group Five (ESG-5) and six additional ships. The ESG-5 carried 22 helicopters, 5 landing craft (each with a 60-ton capacity), 40 high-riding 7-ton trucks to traverse ruined roads, and desalinators capable of making unlimited quantities of fresh water. The vessels also transported backhoes, bulldozers, generators, portable floodlights and 2,200 Marines to rebuild bridges, treat the injured and restore electricity (Baum 2009).

Operationally, however, the provision of air transport to move personnel and humanitarian supplies to disaster zones had the greatest immediate impact. Because the tsunami destroyed much of the road infrastructure in Aceh, helicopters played a vital role in delivering relief supplies and transporting people requiring medical attention. In Aceh, SH-60 and MH-60 helicopters—which have a long range and medium payload capacity—were made available to transport emergency relief from Medan to isolated areas in the province. The scale of this effort was enormous. During one 15-day period, for instance, rotary aircraft from ESG-5 delivered around 1.5 million pounds of supplies to badly affected areas (Clemenston and Fisher 2011:14–16).

Medical support

The US, along with the UK, Canada, Germany, India, Japan, the Netherlands and Singapore, provided significant medical aid in the aftermath of the tsunami. This assistance primarily took the form of medicines, mobile or field clinics, and hospital ships staffed by military doctors, nurses and other trauma professionals. The US deployed the 1,000-bed USNS *Mercy*, which arrived on station on 3 February. The vessel was supported by the USNS *San Jose* (T-AFS 7), a Military Sealift Command combat stores ship that provided replenishment at sea and served as a staging platform for two MH-60S Knighthawk helicopters (Wiharta et al. 2008: Annex C). For six weeks, *Mercy's* personnel conducted a wide range of onshore and offshore medical and dental assistance programs, performing 19,512 procedures that included 285 surgeries. Military epidemiologists, entomologists, hygienists, microbiologists and others tested water, soil and air samples for diseases and pathogens that could threaten the safety of aid workers and displaced residents. The teams helped to identify and treat contaminated wells, killed flies and mosquitoes, and trapped and removed rats from refugee camps (DoD 2014).

Command, control, communications

PACOM established its C3 operating centre for CSF-536 at the Utapao airbase in Thailand. Working with the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, CSF-536 determined what the requirements for disaster relief were, how best to meet those needs and what the most effective means were for deconflicting and synchronising the operations of military forces engaged in regional HADR (Guillory and Fry 2005; see also Kimber 2005). CSF-536 aimed to combine a unified command structure with a decentralised system of operational control. To achieve this, each of the three countries most affected by the disaster (Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka) was assigned a dedicated combined support group that was specifically tailored to address the particular nation's unique needs. In the case of Aceh, the Combined Support Group—Indonesia was established under the command of Marine Brigadier General Christian Cowdrey. Headquartered in Medan, it operated in close coordination with the US Embassy, the UN, the Indonesian Government, NGO representatives and foreign military forces deployed to the province (McCartney 2006:24).

Given the destruction of phone lines, cellular phone towers and other communications infrastructure—as well as the large number of Indonesian and international government agencies and NGOs involved in the tsunami response effort—access to on-ground information-sharing tools was of vital importance. To meet that need, the US military brought in a robust communications capability. However, the American aircraft carriers didn't have the bandwidth to handle unsecure electronic communications of the sort used by many of the main relief agencies working on the ground. While the Combined Support Group had an effective but classified Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) to talk with other US military units, that was of no use for communicating with non-American agencies. As a workaround, CSF-536 chose the open NIPRNET as the primary means to transmit messages within and between local and international relief groups working in Aceh (Koch 2011:3–6; see also Daly 2007).

Intelligence

Information for needs assessment was also a critical requirement in order to prioritise and optimise the use of resources. PACOM played an important role in the early planning and intervention of military and humanitarian actors. As the response unfolded, it also assumed central responsibility for assessing the evolving situation in the province, providing force protection to American personnel on the ground and coordinating with the TNI to ensure the smooth flow and synchronisation of threat data. Coincidentally, four months before the tsunami, PACOM had also established the Contingencies Operational Intelligence Cell as an all-source information capability structure that was specifically designed for quickly responding to emergencies within the PACOM area of responsibility. The new unit began round-the-clock operations within hours of the disaster. With the support of embedded liaison officers who were able to reach back to their host agencies in the US, it proved highly successful in delivering critical intelligence to forward-deployed forces (Dorsett 2005).⁵⁰

US support to the relief effort in the Philippines in 2013

Transport and logistics

Initial US support to the Philippines in 2013 included the immediate dispatch of four MV-22B Ospreys and five KC-130J Hercules. The aircraft were respectively assigned to the Marine Corps Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262 and Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152, both of which were part of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing based in Okinawa, Japan. The MV-22s' capacity for short or vertical take-off was particularly useful, allowing the aircraft to access very rugged areas where there were no available landing strips. Four days after the typhoon struck, Marine C-130s commenced operations, assisting in the delivery of 38,000 pounds of relief supplies provided by the Government of the Philippines, as well as the transport of 210 aid workers (Lewis 2013).

The marines' deployment was followed by the arrival of aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* (CVN 73), together with the cruisers USS *Antietam* (CG 54) and USS *Cowpens* (CG 63) and the destroyer USS *Mustin* (DDG 89). Two more supply ships joined the flotilla as it moved closer to land—USNS *Charles Drew* (T-AKE-10) and USS *Lassen* (DDG 82).

Those naval assets played a critical role in the early emergency response, delivering more than 335,000 litres of water and 36,360 kilograms of food in the first few days after the typhoon. The supplies were moved to different safe landing zones throughout the islands by *Cowpens'* helicopter squadron, which also provided vital search and rescue and medical evacuation support (Sheerin 2013).

As international relief operations gained momentum, the US announced that USS *Ashland* (LSD 48) and USS *Germantown* (LSD 42) would relieve the *George Washington*. These two amphibious ships subsequently assumed the main responsibility for the dispatch of ship-to-shore assets, including shallow-draft, manoeuvrable small craft, land vehicles and rotary-wing refuelling equipment.⁵¹

On 24 November, the US Government announced that all of its relief efforts would be gradually transitioned to the Philippines Government. By that time, the armed forces had logged nearly 2,400 flight hours, delivered more than 4 million pounds of emergency supplies and equipment, transported some 2,000 relief workers into Tacloban and airlifted almost 20,000 survivors from the affected areas (Lum and Margesson 2014:8).

Medical support

Apart from assisting with transport and logistics, US air and naval assets played a central role in the provision of medical support. Helicopters delivered hygienic supplies, such as hand sanitiser, baby wash, bandages, disinfectant and other equipment, to the airport at Tacloban. Doctors and nurses in mobile field clinics treated injured Filipino citizens and medics on board the *George Washington* conducted a healthcare needs assessment in the Guiuan area in Samar. The San Diego-based hospital ship USNS *Mercy*, which had performed invaluable services in the wake of the 2004 Aceh tsunami, was also activated on 13 November for possible deployment to the Philippines. The vessel was never dispatched, however, largely due to its distance from the disaster zone.⁵²

Command, control, communications

Upon arrival in the Philippines, the 3rd MEB assumed responsibility for establishing rapid on-the-ground C3. To that end, the brigade instituted its Deployable Joint Command and Control Early Entry System, placing the unit under the technical authority of the Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division. The system enabled effective real-time communication between troops and first responders working in the affected areas, providing three separate internet networks, operator positions for up to 40 users, video teleconferencing, voice-over-internet phone capabilities (open and secure), satellite links and supporting infrastructure. In addition, the 3rd MEB provided the AFP with two rapid response kits, which greatly helped with the general coordination of American and Filipino relief efforts (Barker 2013).

To streamline the overall US emergency response and ensure complementarity with the operations of the DoS and USAID, PACOM activated JTF-505 on 16 November.⁵³ Operating from a forward element based at Camp Aguinaldo⁵⁴ in metropolitan Manila, the 100-strong taskforce coordinated with major subordinate commands and civilian organisations to supply deployed forces with what they needed to ensure the timely and efficient provision of HADR.

Intelligence

Finally, the US provided crucial information capabilities to assist with the targeted distribution of aid to some of the more remote and isolated areas affected by Haiyan.⁵⁵ In addition, P-3C Orion aircraft and crew, together with a detachment of maintenance professionals, were repositioned from the Kadena Air Base in Okinawa to Clark Airfield in northern Luzon to assess damage, identify suitable landing sites for MV-22B Osprey helicopters and conduct search and rescue operations for populations cut off from sources of food, clean water and medical care. The data they compiled was then sent in-flight to intelligence specialists who collated the products and provided them to marines coordinating American military relief efforts on the ground. This integrated procedure enabled US commanders to identify specific humanitarian assistance requirements in real time and prioritise them to where they were needed the most.⁵⁶

APPENDIX 2

Primary US security assistance programs for dealing with transnational terrorist and criminal threats

International Military Education and Training

IMET's main purpose is to sponsor serving officers in allied armed forces to undertake professional military education in the US. The hope is that by attending those courses they'll gain a thorough understanding of macro areas such as civil-military relations, rules of engagement, threat analysis and strategy formulation that can then be passed on to their home units and institutions. An ancillary benefit from the program is the networking opportunities it entails, allowing students to establish solid cooperative relationships with their US and regional counterparts.

Foreign military financing

FMF primarily consists of a trust fund, administered by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, that is set up in a recipient country. Money's deposited into the account and then used to purchase US defence articles and services as provided through the American foreign military sales system. These financial resources are mostly used to support defence modernisation and restructuring, although allocations have also been earmarked for CT purposes.

Anti-terrorism assistance

The ATA program was authorised in 1983 after Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act. According to this piece of legislation, the purpose of ATA is to:

(1) enhance the antiterrorism skills of friendly (1) countries by providing training and equipment to deter and counter terrorism; (2) strengthen the bilateral ties of the United States with friendly governments by offering concrete assistance in ... area[s] of ... mutual concern; and (3) increase respect for human rights by sharing with foreign civil authorities modern, humane and effective antiterrorism techniques.

The DoS Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism provides policy guidance and funding for ATA programs, which are then implemented by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Antiterrorism Assistance. Support mainly consists of underwriting tactical and strategic CT training courses and furnishing grants for the procurement of relevant hardware (such as small arms, bomb detection/disposal equipment, vehicles and computers) (GAO 2008:5-6).

International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

INCLE programs are mainly designed to bolster the police and judicial capacities of partner governments and generally promote their ability to meet the criminal and terrorist threats of the 21st century. Initiatives are undertaken with law enforcers, judges, prosecutors, defence attorneys, border security officials, financial intelligence units, anticorruption bureaus, narcotics control agencies, socioeconomic groups and relevant NGOs. Component modules cover the full spectrum of training, technical assistance, interagency cooperation and institutional sector development (DoS n.d.b).

International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program

ICITAP was initiated in 1986 in response to a request for DoJ assistance in training Latin American police forces in counter-narcotics operations. Since then, the program has expanded to the global level with the aim of establishing professional civilian-based law enforcement institutions. ICITAP is closely coordinated with INCLE⁵⁷ and is directed towards five main objectives:

- enhancing basic and enhanced investigative and forensic functions
- assisting with the development of academic instruction and curriculums for police officials
- improving the administrative and management capabilities of law enforcement agencies (particularly in relation to career advancement, personnel evaluation and internal disciplinary procedures)
- improving the relationship between state agents of law and order and the communities they serve
- creating or strengthening the capacity of partner nations to respond effectively to new or emergent criminal justice issues (Department of Justice 2015).

Economic Support Fund

The ESF is mainly aimed at supporting US foreign policy interests by providing assistance to key American allies and countries in democratic transition. The funds are mostly used to finance economic stabilisation and job-creation programs, assist with the development of transparent and accountable systems of law and order and bolster the efforts of local NGOs to offer critical services in target communities.⁵⁸

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NOTES

- 1 In its opening statement, the Defense Strategic Guidance explicitly states: 'US economic and security interests are inextricably linked to developments in the arc extending from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean region and South Asia creating a mix of evolving challenges and opportunities. Accordingly while the US military will continue to contribute to security globally, *we will of necessity rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region* (emphasis in original text). Our relationships with Asian allies and key partners are critical to the future stability and growth of the region. We will emphasize our existing alliances, which provide a vital input for Asia-Pacific security. We will expand our networks of cooperation with emerging partners throughout the Asia-Pacific to ensure collective capability and capacity for securing common interests.'
- 2 Cobra Gold and Balikatan are annual exercises that focus on promoting force interoperability, with a strong emphasis on HADR. The former also involves Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka, while the latter is purely bilateral.
- 3 The agreement sanctions the initial stationing of 250 US Marines to Darwin, with troop levels ultimately rising to 2,500 by 2015.
- 4 See, for instance, DeSilva-Ranasinghe (2013), Tow (2013) and Teare (2011).
- 5 The last accord that granted US defence forces direct basing access in Southeast Asia was the Military Bases Agreement (again with the Philippines), which was terminated in 1991.
- 6 See, for instance, Simon (2015:573).
- 7 Tomlinson (2016); 'US Navy challenges China in South China Sea, again', *navaltoday.com*, 1 February 2016, online; 'Singapore greenlights US spy plane deployment amid South China Sea disputes', *rt.com*, 7 December 2015, online.
- 8 See Chalk (2015a).
- 9 The ADMM+8 includes all 10 ASEAN member countries in addition to eight dialogue partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the US).
- 10 Author interviews, US officials, Jakarta, January 2015.
- 11 The China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, which reduces tariffs on 7,881 product categories (or 90% of imported goods) to zero, originally came into effect in 2010 between China, the five original ASEAN signatories (Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia) and Brunei. It was expanded to the remaining four member states in 2015.
- 12 The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is a multilateral investment institution that will focus on the development of infrastructure and other productive sectors in Asia, including energy and power; telecommunications and transportation; agriculture; water supply and sanitation; environmental protection; urban growth; and logistics. The bank formally came into existence on 25 December 2015 after 15 states ratified the agreement.
- 13 The RCEP will link the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area with Australia, New Zealand and India to create a single Asian-oriented trading bloc. If established, this zone will be a significant economic boon for the region, providing

an institutional mechanism for stimulating a major increase in inter-state trade in this part of the world. Negotiations on concluding a final agreement have been difficult, however, both on account of the number of parties involved and because the grouping contains members whose relations with Beijing have been strained in recent years (notably the Philippines and Vietnam, due to competing claims in the SCS).

- 14 Obama, cited in BBC (2016).
- 15 See also Green (2016:8). Logical candidates for inclusion in the TPP include Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.
- 16 The US has developed an extremely sophisticated understanding of soft power (a concept that Joseph Nye first developed at Harvard University during the 1990s) and has at its disposal a diverse portfolio of tools to apply the concept, including diplomacy, trade, investment, humanitarian aid, education, culture and branding. At the same time, aspects of the American model resonate widely in Southeast Asia, especially in the areas of vocational training (secondary and tertiary) and pop culture (movies, television programming, video games and music).
- 17 In 1951 the Philippines and US signed the Mutual Defense Treaty, which commits each party to come to the other's support in the event of an external attack.
- 18 To achieve this objective, the Philippines aims to procure several advanced maritime and aviation assets by 2017, including two new frigates, three fast patrol boats, two antisubmarine helicopters and eight amphibious assault platforms. See Simon (2015) and AFP (2013).
- 19 Ambassador Philip Goldberg, quoted in Banerjee (2015).
- 20 Author interviews, US and Indonesian officials, Jakarta, January 2015. Widodo has characterised illegal fishing as nothing less than a national emergency, costing the country an estimated US\$20–25 million (A\$27–34 million) a year through poaching.
- 21 See also Hiebert et al. (2013:8–9).
- 22 For more on DIRI (and other Pentagon-run defence programs), see DSCA (2011).
- 23 It's been suggested that the failure to finalise a work plan between the US Coast Guard and BAKAMLA is largely a product of organisational, personnel and financial constraints that have hindered the latter's operational development. There have also been claims that it reflects entrenched opposition from influential groups in the Indonesian Army and Navy who view the very existence of the agency as a threat and who thus have no interest in advancing coastguard cooperation with the US. Author interviews, Jakarta, January 2015. See also Parameswaran (2015d).
- 24 It should also be noted that US military contracts with Vietnam will still be subject to provisos on human rights.
- 25 Cited in Thayer (2015). See also Parameswaran (2015e) and Minnick (2015).
- 26 'The South China Sea is an important world energy trade route', *Today in Energy*, no date, online.
- 27 As Simon points out, Beijing's claims in the SCS are considered legally weak under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Many of the features encapsulated within the nine-dash perimeter are as close as 50 nautical miles to the Philippines and as far as 550 nautical miles from China's southern Hainan Island. Moreover, a significant number are non-habitable rocks or are fully submerged at high tide.
- 28 In response to criticism of this work, China has accused the Philippines of building an airport and expanding a wharf in the Spratlys and Vietnam of constructing docks, runways, missile positions, office buildings, hotels, lighthouses and helicopter pads on more than 20 shoals.
- 29 Author interviews, Jakarta, January 2015.
- 30 Southeast Asia is within the wider Asia–Pacific region that includes the so-called 'Ring of Fire', a 25,000-mile long horseshoe-shaped area that is associated with a nearly continuous series of oceanic trenches, island arcs, volcanic mountain ranges and plate movements.
- 31 For more on this episode, see Chalk (2001: Chapter 3).

- 32 The FY 2006 Foreign Operations Appropriation contained a clause that allowed the Secretary of State to waive the restrictions on military assistance to Indonesia for reasons of national security (in this instance, the terror threat emanating from the country).
- 33 After coming under considerable criticism, China eventually provided 10 million yuan (approximately A\$2 million) in relief supplies and sent the hospital ship *Peace Ark* to the Philippines.
- 34 It was in this light that *Philippine Star* columnist Romualdez remarked: ‘The rapid response of the US in deploying its air and naval assets/hardware at the quickest possible time is sending a clear message to all, particularly China, that the US can flex its muscle in the Asia–Pacific region at short notice [and that] “disaster diplomacy” is doing [a great deal] more to promote US interests in the region.’ See Romualdez (2013).
- 35 It should be noted that in 2015 the DoD instituted a new Counterterrorism Partnership Fund to provide the American military with a more flexible mechanism for rapidly responding to extremist threats in an arc extending from South Asia to the Sahel. However, the program doesn’t include Southeast Asia (it’s focused only on five specific regions (the Levant/Syria, Yemen, Sahel/Maghreb, the Lake Chad Basin and East Africa) and is primarily designed to support stabilisation operations in Syria, the Maghreb and Central/East Africa as well to address the challenge emanating from Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIL). For more on the initiative, see OUD (2015).
- 36 For more on the so-called Islamic State’s threat to Indonesia (and Southeast Asia in general), see Chalk (2015b).
- 37 The main threat groups operating in the southern Philippines include the Abu Sayyaf Group, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, the Moro Liberation Front (although a final peace deal with this movement is pending), and elements of the New People’s Army. In addition, three shadowy Islamist entities emerged in 2014 in support of ISIL: the Ansar Khalifah Sarangani, Jamaal al-Tawid Wal Jihad Philippines and the Khalifah Islamiyah Mindanao.
- 38 Relevant units include the Special Forces, Scout Rangers and Sea Air and Land (SeAL) maritime battalions, as well as several army reconnaissance companies.
- 39 For more on Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines, see Dunigan et al. (2012, Chapter 3).
- 40 See comparative figures in DoS (n.d.a).
- 41 Author interviews, Manila, January 2016.
- 42 For a detailed analysis of many of these cross-border crimes, see UNODC (2013).
- 43 The author has participated in all these conferences, the most recent of which took place in Cambodia in August 2015. That was the last one to be sponsored by the Export Control and Related Border Security Program; the expectation is that the DoS will assume responsibility for future events.
- 44 As part of this effort, Beijing has made significant investments in advanced combat aircraft, submarines, modern surface frigates, anti-ship ballistic/cruise missiles and C4SIR, space and cyber capabilities. See Thayer (2012:6–9).
- 45 See, for instance, Ross (2012).
- 46 Republican criticism of Obama’s foreign policy, especially in terms of the ‘lack’ of a clear focus on ISIL, has been a consistent theme in primary debates during the 2016 presidential race.
- 47 This is something that’s explicitly recognised in the Pentagon’s *Sustaining US global leadership: priorities for 21st century defense*, which affirms: ‘Over the long-term, China’s emergence as a regional power will have the potential to affect the US economy and our security in a variety of ways. Our two countries have a strong stake in peace and stability in East Asia and an interest in building a cooperative bilateral relationship. However, the growth of China’s military power must be accompanied by greater clarity of its strategic intentions in order to avoid causing friction in the region.’ See DoD (2012:2).
- 48 In this light, it’s worth noting that China and the US currently have in place 48 mechanisms for promoting and aligning coordination and cooperation on strategic policy issues. The Obama administration has also sought to better manage its relations with Beijing through new arrangements such as the Strategic and Economic Dialogue and the recently established Consultations on Asia–Pacific Affairs. See Thayer (2012:15–16) and Glaser and Billingsley (2011).

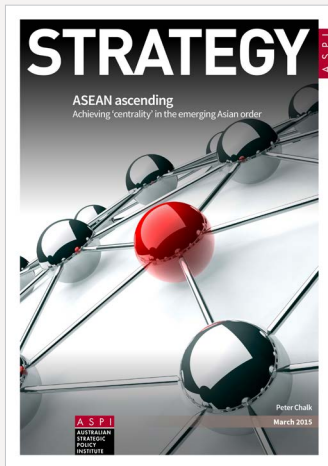
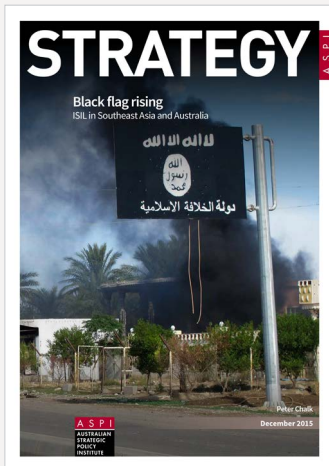
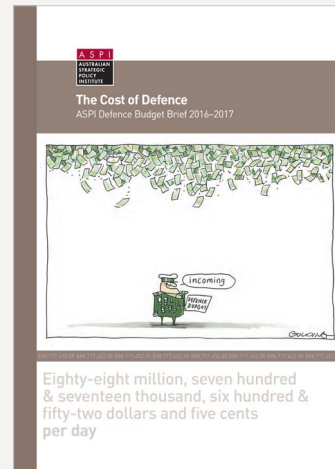
- 49 For the Asia–Pacific, the US retains pre-positioned HADR supplies at Yokosuka and Okinawa in Japan, Busan in South Korea, and Guam and Pearl Harbor in the US.
- 50 It should be noted that even with all its assets, it took the Contingencies Operational Intelligence Cell several weeks to attain a reliable picture of the situation on the ground.
- 51 ‘US Navy amphibious units assume lead role in Operation Damayan’, *America’s Navy*, 22 November 2013, online.
- 52 ‘Hospital Ship *Mercy* returns to reduced operating status’, *America’s Navy*, 26 November 2013, online.
- 53 JTF-505 was placed under the authority of Lt Gen John Wissler, the Commander of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force.
- 54 Camp Aguinaldo is the main headquarters for the AFP.
- 55 ‘JTF 505 activates for Operation Damayan’, US 7th Fleet, 18 November 2013, online; ‘JTF-505 supports Operation Damayan from Okinawa’, *Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System*, 21 November 2013, online ceased operations on 26 November in line with Washington’s decision to transition responsibility for relief efforts back to the Philippines Government.
- 56 For a detailed account of US information collection, analysis and dissemination support to Operation Haiyan, see McBride (2014).
- 57 ICITAP effectively acts as a subcontractor for the bureau that oversees INCLE. Each year, ICITAP submits a budget to the DoS. If the proposed costing schedule is approved, an interagency agreement is made and funds are transferred.
- 58 ‘Economic Support Fund’, *Security Assistance Monitor*, no date, online.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AC	ASEAN Community
ADMM	ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AEDC	Agreement on Enhanced Defense Cooperation
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
APSC	ASEAN Political and Security Community
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATA	anti-terrorism assistance
ATS	amphetamine-type stimulant
BAKAMLA	Badan Keamanan Laut (Maritime Security Agency, Indonesia)
C3	command, control, communications
C4ISR	command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance
CSF	combined support force
CSG	carrier strike group
CT	counterterrorism
DIRI	Defense Institute Reform Initiative
DoD	Department of Defense (US)
DoS	Department of State (US)
ESF	Economic Support Fund
ESG	Expeditionary Strike Group
FMF	foreign military financing
GDP	gross domestic product

HADR	humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program
IMET	International Military Education and Training
INCLE	International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement
JTF	Joint Task Force
MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEF	Minimal Essential Force
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-government organisation
PACOM	US Pacific Command
PRC	People's Republic of China
RCEPA	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
SCS	South China Sea
TIP	Terrorism Interdiction Program
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
USAID	US Agency for International Development

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The eagle has landed

The US rebalance to Southeast Asia

Early in his administration, President Barack Obama announced the 'Asia rebalance', a US reorientation that became official policy in January 2012. This so-called 'pivot' explicitly recognises the need for America to re-embrace partner nations in Asia, leveraging their significant and growing capabilities to build a network of states that nurtures, strengthens and sustains a rules-based order that's capable of effectively addressing regional challenges.

In this context, the US has pursued four main areas of cooperation as part of its bilateral and multilateral engagement with Southeast Asia:

- supporting the development of the ASEAN Community, which was formally launched at the end of 2015
- buttressing defence reform and restructuring
- facilitating humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations
- providing assistance to address transnational terrorist and criminal threat contingencies.

To be sure, this functional and programmatic engagement is indicative of ASEAN's increasing importance as a unified collective bloc, the frequency at which large-scale natural disasters affect this part of the world and the existence of a wide range of mutually concerning trans-regional security challenges. However, it's also very much related to Beijing's growing power in the wider Asia-Pacific and, more specifically, to heightened Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea (SCS) and the concomitant threat that this is seen to pose to freedom of navigation in a critically vital maritime trading and energy corridor.

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