

FORUM



ENGAGING PARTNERSHIP

Strategic Alliances,
Multilateral Exercises Enhance Security

PLUS
Pacific Islands Telemedicine

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Members of the Indonesian Navy's marine patrol unit demonstrate their skills during a simulated anti-terror exercise at the Surabaya port in East Java in December 2019.

GETTY IMAGES



Dear Readers,

Welcome to *Indo-Pacific Defense FORUM's* issue on responsible engagement.

Responsible engagement between various Indo-Pacific security organizations builds trust, confidence, and cooperation. In working together, regional defense organizations enhance military capability and capacity to overcome shared challenges. These efforts help support

national sovereignty and enforce international norms.

The annual Cobra Gold exercise, co-sponsored by Royal Thai and U.S. Armed Forces, remains the gold standard for multilateral cooperation and responsible engagement in the region, if not the world. In this issue, Royal Thai Army Capt. Suchart Klaikaew shares his insights from Cobra Gold 2020. The exercise focuses on developing military and crisis management skills to strengthen ties between Thai and U.S. forces.

This edition embraces a range of other perspectives on responsible engagement, from providing health services for remote populations in Pacific island nations, to conducting accountable nuclear deterrence.

Dr. Alfred Oehlers, a political economist with the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, explores how the United States and its allies and partners might address urgent debt challenges to counter the People's Republic of China's leverage over nations ensnared in its One Belt, One Road infrastructure scheme. Meanwhile, Bruce McFarland with the U.S. Agency for International Development reveals how developmental assistance with the ultimate goal of self-reliance can act as the ultimate security tool in the Indo-Pacific.

Dr. Jinghao Zhou, an associate professor of Asian studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in New York, examines why the values and ambitions embraced by the Chinese Communist Party are preventing Beijing from becoming a responsible stakeholder in the region.

Sri Lankan Navy Capt. Rohan Joseph evaluates how Indonesia can lead the way to improved maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. In addition, Cmdr. Dr. Arnab Das, a retired Indian Navy officer, probes the importance of underwater domain awareness towards building acoustic capability, which is also key in executing maritime strategy.

I hope these articles energize the regional conversations on responsible engagement. I welcome your comments. Please contact the *FORUM* staff at ipdf@ipdefenseforum.com to share your thoughts.

All the best,

P. S. DAVIDSON
Admiral, U.S. Navy
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USINDOPACOM LEADERSHIP

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CAPT. SUCHART KLAIKAEW enlisted in the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion, Royal Thai Army, in 2012, finishing first in his class at Field Artillery Basic Officer School. He holds bachelor's degrees from Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) and Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy (CRMA), where he received the academy's highest awards. He earned a master's degree in energy engineering from Northeastern University in the United States, graduating summa cum laude under the Royal Thai Armed Forces Overseas Scholarship. He works as an instructor at CRMA and STOU and as a public affairs officer and interpreter for multinational military exercises in Thailand that aim to connect troops to the community. **Featured on Page 14**



DR. JINGHAO ZHOU is an associate professor of Asian studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in New York. His research focuses on Chinese ideology, politics and religions, and U.S.-China relations. He has written dozens of journal and news articles and four books, including *Chinese vs. Western Perspectives: Understanding Contemporary China* and *China's Peaceful Rise in a Global Context: A Domestic Aspect of China's Road Map to Democratization*. He is working on a new book: *Why Is the China Model Losing Its Power? Challenges and Opportunities of the Second Global Competition*. **Featured on Page 18**



CAPT. ROHAN JOSEPH is commanding officer of a Sri Lanka capital ship. He joined the Sri Lanka Navy in 1994 and graduated from Kotelawala Defence University. During his 26-year naval career, he has held key staff and command appointments and received many academic awards and service medals. He is the only Sri Lanka naval officer to be selected as the honor graduate in the U.S. Coast Guard's International Maritime Officers Course and to win the U.S. Naval War College Robert E. Batemans' International Essay Award. He holds a master's degree in conflict and peace studies from the University of Colombo and postgraduate diplomas in security and strategic studies and diplomacy and world affairs. **Featured on Page 34**



DR. INEZ MIYAMOTO joined the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in 2019. Previously, she was a special agent at the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), where she led cyber investigative teams responding to a variety of crimes and conducted strategic planning, risk analysis and compliance. She is an expert in cyber security, transnational crimes, supply chain security, resilience development and intellectual property rights. She is an FBI National Academy graduate and holds a Ph.D. in engineering management from George Washington University, among other degrees. **Featured on Page 48**



CMDR. (RET.) DR. ARNAB DAS, a retired Indian Navy commander who served for more than two decades, is a researcher, maritime strategist and entrepreneur. He founded and is a director of the Maritime Research Centre in Pune, India, which is working on underwater domain awareness. He also runs Nirdhwani Technology Private Ltd., which provides consulting and other services for maritime security solutions and marine conservation support. Das has over 70 publications and a book to his credit. He earned his master's and doctorate degrees from the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi as a uniformed officer. **Featured on Page 52**

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BANGLADESH

REUTERS

EXPANDING EDUCATION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN

Authorities in Bangladesh in partnership with the United Nations have expanded educational programs for hundreds of thousands of Muslim Rohingya children living in refugee camps who were receiving only basic lessons.

The children, who fled with their families from neighboring Burma to the camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district, attend about 1,500 learning centers run by UNICEF that provide basic education, drawing and other fun activities. Under the new program, which began in April 2020, they also now receive a formal education using a Burmese curriculum from grades six to nine, the U.N. said in a statement.

Mahbub Alam Talukder, Bangladesh's refugee, relief and repatriation commissioner, said the government agreed in principle with a proposal from the U.N. that the Rohingya children be provided with a Burmese education.

"They will be taught in Myanmar's [Burma's] language, they will follow Myanmar's curriculum. There is no chance to study in formal Bangladeshi schools or to read books in the Bengali language," he said by phone. "There's no scope for them to stay here in Bangladesh for long, so through this approach they will be able to adapt to Myanmar's society when they go back."

The U.N. said initially that 10,000 Rohingya children would enroll in a pilot program using the Burmese curriculum, which will allow them to fit into the Buddhist-majority nation's national educational system when they return to their homeland.

The decision was hailed by human rights groups and the United Nations.

"We believe this is a positive step and a clear indication of the commitment by the government of Bangladesh to ensure access to learning for Rohingya children and adolescents, as well as to equip them with the right skills and capacities for their future and return to Myanmar when the conditions allow," the U.N. said.

About 400,000 Rohingya children live in the refugee camps, and global rights groups have been demanding that the Bangladeshi government allow them to have a formal education.

More than 700,000 Rohingya have fled from Burma to Bangladesh since August 2017, when Burma's military launched what it called clearance operations in Rakhine state in response to an attack by an insurgent group. Security forces have been accused of committing mass rapes and killings and burning thousands of homes. In total, more than 1 million Rohingya refugees currently live in Bangladesh. The Associated Press

SINGAPORE

URBAN FARMS

to help increase
FOOD SUPPLY

Singapore announced new measures to accelerate local food production, including a plan to turn car park rooftops in public housing estates into urban farms.

The densely populated city-state produces only about 10% of its food needs but has plans to increase that as environmental changes and population growth threaten global food supplies.



Around the world, restrictions on population movement because of the coronavirus outbreak wreaked havoc on farming and food supply chains and raised concern of widespread shortages and price increases.

"Local food production mitigates our reliance on imports and provides buffer in the event of food supply disruptions," authorities said in a statement.

Authorities have repeatedly assured locals that the city-state has sufficient food supplies amid bouts of panic buying that gripped the island during the outbreak.

Farmers and the government have been looking at ways to overcome the shortage of land in Singapore, where only 1% of its 724 square kilometers is devoted to agriculture, and production costs are higher than the rest of Southeast Asia.

Authorities aim to speed up local food production by providing a U.S. \$21 million grant to support production of eggs, leafy vegetables and fish in the shortest time possible, and identifying alternative farming spaces, such as industrial areas and vacant sites. Reuters



REVERSING COURSE ON DAM CONSTRUCTION

Electricity-starved Cambodia will not develop new hydropower dams on the Mekong River for the next 10 years, a senior energy official said in April 2020, as the country reviews its policy to seek energy from coal, natural gas and solar.

The decision means that neighboring Laos, which has opened two new dams on the mainstream Mekong in the recent months, is the only country in the Lower Mekong Basin planning hydropower on the river that sustains 60 million people.

Victor Jona, director-general of energy at Cambodia's Ministry of Mines and Energy, said the government was following a study done by a Japanese consultant that recommended Cambodia seek energy elsewhere.

"According to the study, we need to develop coal, LNG

[liquefied natural gas], imports from neighboring countries and solar energy," he said, adding that he could not give details contained in a government master plan.

"In this 10-year plan, from 2020 to 2030, we have no plans to develop a mainstream dam," he said.

Environmentalists have warned that dams will harm fisheries and farming along the 2,390-kilometer Lower Mekong. (Pictured: A fisherman brings in his day's catch on the Mekong River.)

The river nourishes fishing grounds and farmlands as it flows from China, winding past or through Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Some other officials, however, have said a record drought and low fish catches over the past year were due to environmental changes and overfishing.

Cambodia had previously announced plans for two dams at Sambor and Stung Treng, but both projects are on hold.

Across the border in Laos, power from the new Don Sahong hydropower facility began flowing into Cambodia's grid in January 2020 under a 30-year-old deal.

In 2019, Cambodia had the worst power outages in years as a surge in demand was fueled by a construction boom accompanying Chinese investment.

Officials have said that the electricity shortage was also due to low water levels at hydropower dams on other rivers and tributaries of the Mekong across the country.

Cambodia uses hydropower for about 48% of its domestic electricity production, according to the state utility Electricite du Cambodge.

With demand growing fast, Cambodia imported about 25% of its electricity in 2019, with the bulk of it transmitted from Vietnam and Thailand, according to government statistics. Reuters

SOUTHEAST ASIA

PANDEMIC

changes wildlife trade perspective

The coronavirus pandemic has generated overwhelming support for the closure of markets selling illegal wildlife across Southeast Asia, an epicenter of the multibillion-dollar trade, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said in announcing the results of an April 2020 public opinion poll.

About 93% of 5,000 people surveyed by WWF in March 2020 across three Southeast Asian nations as well as Hong Kong and Japan said unregulated markets selling wildlife should be shuttered to ward off future pandemics.

Many scientists believe the virus that has upended the lives of billions across the globe likely originated in a wildlife market in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where bats, pangolins (pictured) and other animals known to transmit coronaviruses were crammed together in fetid conditions.

"This is no longer a wildlife problem. It is a global security and human health and economic problem," Christy Williams, WWF's Asia Pacific director, said in a news conference, giving results of the survey.

Support for a crackdown on markets was strongest in



Burma, where wildlife has for years been traded openly in the autonomous regions bordering China, while a third of respondents in Vietnam said the crisis had prompted them to stop consuming wildlife products.

"COVID is a wake-up call," Grace Hwa, Illegal Wildlife Trade program manager at WWF Burma, said in a statement. "The rampant unchecked trade in wildlife is a risk not only to health and the economy, but to the entire stability of the region."

In the wake of the outbreak, which began in Wuhan and spread across the globe, China introduced a short-term ban on all farming and consumption of live wildlife, but it did not cover the trade in animals as pets and for traditional medicine. Reuters

INDONESIA REMAINS VIGILANT

..... on

TERROR

STORY BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AND AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PHOTOS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



An Indonesian Special Detachment 88 anti-terror police unit escorts terror suspects during a news conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, on May 17, 2019.

.....

Indonesia has sentenced two leaders of an al-Qaida-linked group behind the 2002 Bali bombings that killed more than 200 people. The accused were convicted on terror charges related to sending militants to fight in Syria.

.....

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) leader Para Wijayanto and deputy Budi Trikaryanto received seven- and 6½-year sentences, respectively, in July 2020.

“The defendants prepared cadres to go to Syria, as well as

supported them financially while on the mission,” presiding Judge Alex Adam Faisal told the East Jakarta District Court.

The court said Wijayanto, 56, who took over JI’s leadership in 2009, recruited Indonesians to

fight and train with groups opposed to Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad between 2012 and 2018.

Indonesia outlawed JI in 2008 and cracked down on its network as the world’s biggest Muslim-majority nation grappled with a string of extremist attacks.

Counterterrorism police detained Wijayanto and his wife in July 2019 following the arrest of nine suspected JI members who had returned from fighting in Iraq and Syria. Wijayanto, a civil engineer who received military training at a terrorist camp in the southern Philippines in 2000, had eluded capture since 2003.

Police said Wijayanto replaced another militant, Zarkasih, as JI’s leader. Zarkasih was arrested in 2007 and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Prosecutors said Wijayanto recruited and trained members of JI’s military wing, sending some to Syria to fight with the al-Qaida-affiliated group



Jabhat al-Nusra. He also was accused of helping make bombs used in a series of attacks, including a 2004 bombing at the Australian Embassy that killed nine, and of involvement in sectarian conflict in Poso, a hotbed of Islamic militancy on Indonesia's Sulawesi island.

Jl, which also carried out a 2003 car bombing at the JW Marriott hotel in Jakarta that killed a dozen, has been overshadowed in recent years by militants loyal to the Islamic State group. The sentencing of the two Jl leaders came weeks after a married couple with links to the Islamic State were jailed over a failed bid to assassinate Indonesia's former chief security minister Wiranto in 2019.

In March 2020, Indonesia's police anti-terrorism squad shot and killed one suspect and arrested two others in a raid on the main island of Java, seizing weapons and chemicals allegedly used for bomb making. Officials said the man fatally shot by police resisted arrest by wielding a sword.

The suspects were linked to a banned militant organization responsible for recent attacks on police. The group is a local affiliate of the Islamic State known as Jamaah Anshorut Daulah, National Police spokesman Argo Yuwono said.

The country's last major terrorist attack was in May 2018, when two families carried out suicide bombings in Indonesia's second-largest city, Surabaya, killing a dozen people including two young girls whose parents involved them in one of the attacks. Police said the father of the girls was the leader of a Jamaah Anshorut Daulah cell.

A radical cleric who founded that group, Aman Abdurrahman, was sentenced to death in 2018 for inciting attacks including a 2016 suicide bombing at a Starbucks in Jakarta.

Indonesia has been battling militants since the Bali bombings. In recent years, attacks aimed at foreigners have been largely replaced by smaller strikes targeting

Brig. Gen. Dedi Prasetyo, right, an Indonesian National Police spokesman, and an aide show photographs at a 2019 news conference of items confiscated during counterterrorism raids following a knife attack on Wiranto, the nation's minister of politics, law and security.

.....

the government, police and anti-terrorism forces and inspired by Islamic State attacks abroad.

Indonesian security forces continue working to address terrorism. For example, they have conducted raids that led to hundreds of arrests and killed more than 179 suspected militants between 2003 and early 2020, The Associated Press reported.

"Indonesia has also mulled other measures as well in order to manage its terrorism challenge, including refusing to repatriate former Islamic State fighters domestically and advancing intelligence-sharing mechanisms with neighboring Southeast Asian states," according to the online magazine The Diplomat.





DEBT AND STRATEGIC COMPETITION

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR MULTILATERAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

DR. ALFRED OEHLERS/DANIEL K. INOUYE ASIA-PACIFIC CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES

International concern is mounting over the debt burdens faced by many developing countries as the economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic intensifies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, for example, recently sounded an alarm about the financial stability of nations that have a dwindling ability to service massive debt, given catastrophic reductions in export incomes. The two organizations compiled their concerns in a March 25, 2020, statement and call to action on the debt of International Development Association countries.

Defaulting debtor nations pose a risk to the stability of the international financial system. A range of international humanitarian organizations, meanwhile, are similarly distressed at an emerging crisis likely to affect millions who are already vulnerable. Warnings about the widening gap between haves and have-nots are being issued with greater frequency, highlighting consequent risks to stability, security and fragile governance structures.

The dangers to the rest of the world as a result of these deteriorating conditions are stark and real.

While these concerns provide persuasive rationales for a focus on the debt question, there is one additional dimension we should consider that gives compelling cause. Against a backdrop of geopolitical strategic competition, addressing debt — particularly through a multilateral effort led by the United States and like-minded nations — can be a highly effective way to weaken the economic and political leverage that the People's Republic of China (PRC) possesses over debtor nations. Played well, the approach may even enable a reversal of the inroads the PRC has made against nations and at the expense of the international rules-based system.

Without question, the immediate concern relates to relieving the debt burden faced by debtor nations. In international discussions, a variety of measures are proffered, ranging from the suspension and deferral of servicing repayments to emergency credit lines to enable these nations to meet their obligations. Both the IMF and World Bank, for example, have called for bilateral and multilateral creditors to urgently support a suspension of debt repayments. Both have also made available special credit lines that may be tapped to assist nations at greatest risk of default. These discussions emphasize a unified international approach to providing relief. It's encouraging that such multilateral approaches are gaining traction among the world's larger lenders.

However, one key lender has remained silent and eschewed such multilateralism: the PRC. Consistent with its debt-

Kenya's new U.S. \$3.3 billion high-speed railway, part of the People's Republic of China's One Belt, One Road scheme, has left towns like Kiu, a two-hour drive from Nairobi, without stations or adequate service. REUTERS

diplomacy playbook, it has chosen to engage bilaterally with individual debtors rather than risk being bound by any multilateral agreement aligned more consistently with internationally recognized financial norms. The PRC's rejection of a multilateral pathway for debtor nations has sent a chilling message. Debtors are growing uneasy that Chinese relief may not be in the offing or, even if it is, that it will be insufficient and perhaps tied to conditions that may worsen their predicament. Alarming news concerning the impact of the economic crisis in China and widespread doubts about the robustness of recovery have only heightened fears that the PRC government will be less than magnanimous.

In this context of doubt, a more aggressive and unified international effort to provide urgent relief to debtor nations will yield huge dividends. Juxtaposing a unified multilateral humanitarian rescue package against a stubborn insistence on bilateral negotiations will throw into sharper relief the predatory nature of the PRC's intent and marginalize it even further. A carefully constructed multilateral approach, built with safeguards preventing leakage or transfers to repay Chinese debt, will isolate any Chinese lending and facilitate direct

PRC, it may be less of a “debt trap” cunningly laid and more of a “credit trap” inadvertently fallen into — the only way out being to write off that debt, evaporating any strategic advantage.

Looking beyond immediate debt relief priorities, debtor nations in the short to medium term will also need significant support to stabilize and eventually resuscitate their economies. Much in the same way advanced nations are embarking on fiscal stimulus packages of historic proportions, debtor nations will need similar measures to prevent their economies from collapsing. In all likelihood, new lending will be required to support such programs, together with some restructuring and refinancing of existing commitments, and perhaps even the retirement of some past debt. No doubt, the PRC may compete to offer lending to support fiscal stimulus and recovery processes. As suggested above, the PRC may be severely constrained by its own economic challenges and political priorities. Given this, a multilateral alliance of lenders may have a unique opportunity. Taking advantage of historic lows in interest rates and Chinese constraints, an aggressive push to fund government fiscal efforts may succeed in crowding out Chinese lending and rebalancing

debt portfolios in debtor nations in favor of multilateral lenders. Any hegemonic economic and political influence the PRC may have enjoyed by dint of being a principal lender to the nation will be diluted or even reversed, denying it further strategic advantage.

The economic crisis also has contributed to a significant weakening of the PRC's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) infrastructure scheme. It appears increasingly likely OBOR will not survive in its present form and will be reshaped significantly. To a degree, this was already in the cards with China's slowing economic growth, demographic constraints, the trade war with the U.S. and a heavily overleveraged economy. The economic crisis has amplified these vulnerabilities and, with unemployment rising

and business failures increasing, it is highly probable the policy focus will turn inward to domestic economic revival and political stability. A much-reduced OBOR program, together with more-diligent scrutiny on the economic viability of these projects, is likely. No doubt, the resulting reductions will be cushioned by state banks. There will be casualties, perhaps including delays to some OBOR projects that were already on hold around the world. Other initiatives that are tied to OBOR such as the state-



Journalists work near a screen promoting the People's Republic of China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) infrastructure scheme at a Beijing forum in April 2019. At the time, many countries were pulling out of OBOR projects, which are now struggling under the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

attribution to Beijing of financial fallout resulting from such debt turning sour. Financially separating other assets from Chinese debt in this manner insulates debtor nations from deleterious consequences of default. With a lifeline tied to an alliance of international lenders, default on Chinese debt will have marginal impact on their credit standing. Should the PRC seek redress through punitive debt recovery measures, the world's moral censure likely will be heaped on such an attempt. In the end, for the



Sri Lankans protest in January 2017 the government's plan to lease part of the Hambantota port to a Chinese-controlled joint venture in exchange for large loans. Unable to pay outstanding debt to Chinese firms, Sri Lanka handed over the main port to China on a 99-year lease in December 2017. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

owned investment fund known as the Silk Road Fund, which primarily covers Eurasia, may also be curtailed.

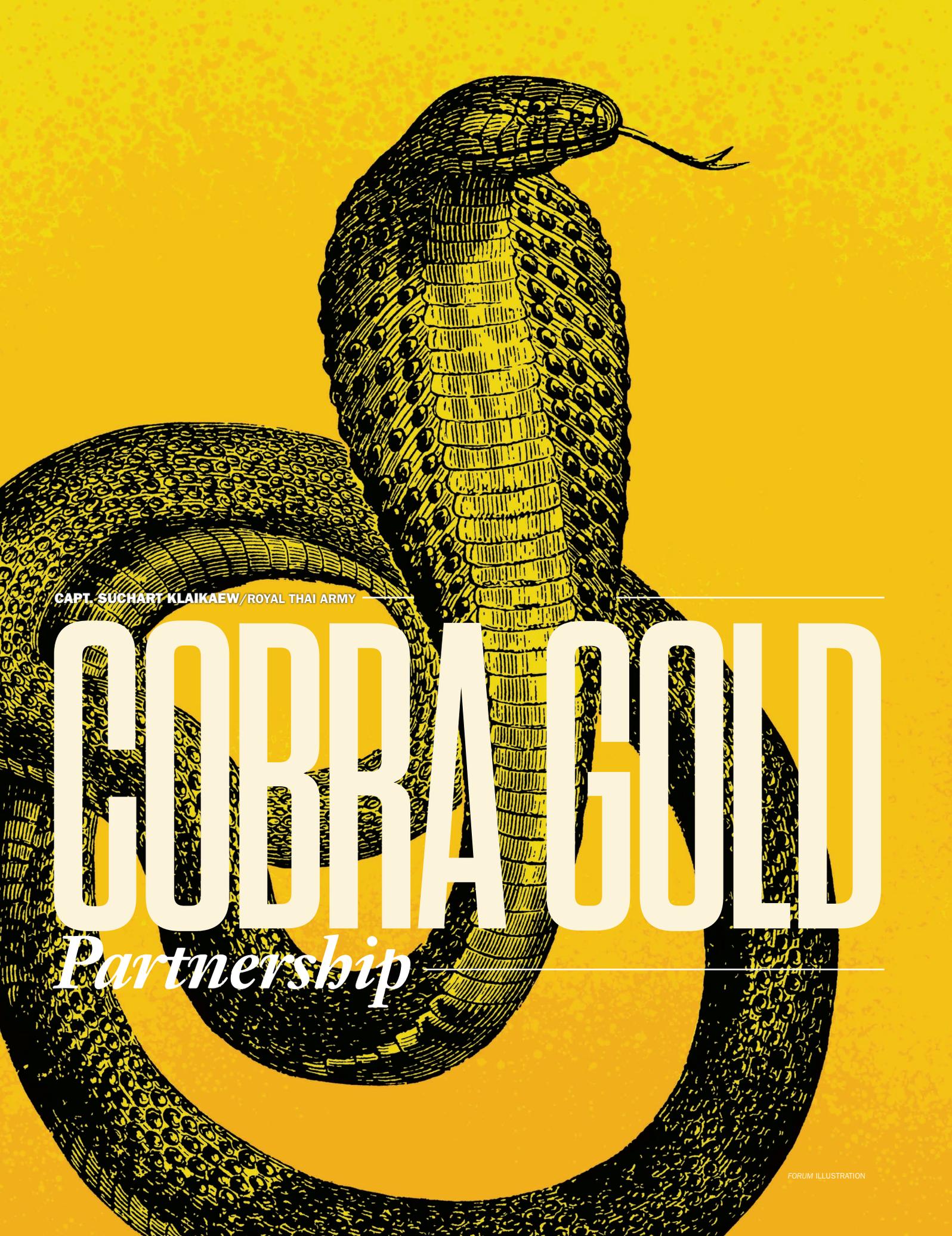
In that event, a big question for debtor nations will be: What do we do with these projects we have been saddled with, many with huge price tags and debt commitments? Some of these — for example, those in the vanity project category — can only be written off. Others may be economically viable and capable of contributing to development. An international alliance of lenders can save worthy projects, placing them on a sounder footing to resume and with a refinancing package to make them financially sustainable. As if the failure of OBOR projects would not be embarrassment enough for the PRC, this rescue would be further indictment of the folly and bankruptcy of the entire OBOR effort.

Some may ask: Where is all this money coming from? How can such a massive program of debt relief be underwritten? Isn't this extremely risky? Without doubt, mind-boggling amounts will be involved. The U.S. and like-minded partners will have to dig deep to fund this effort. And there will be risks, with inflation a prime one to consider, particularly as a recovery gathers pace. These are all reasons why it is crucial to transition the conversation from nation-focused stabilization strategies to a broader international-focused discussion, emphasizing cooperation and coordination among major economic powers to amass the wherewithal to undertake

this mission and guard against risks. What is needed is on the order of a global Marshall Plan rescuing not only nations but also the rules-based system itself. In the context of a strategic competition between a communist, authoritarian command system and a democratic, market-led system, the question should not be: Can we afford to do this? Rather: Can we afford not to do this?

This is not mere rhetoric. It is important to remember that one of the PRC's key objectives in geopolitical competition is to weaken the international multilateral financial system and create a parallel rival centered on OBOR and the so-called Beijing Consensus. A multilateral approach led by the U.S. and like-minded partners in addressing the urgent debt challenge — especially if nested within key organizations and processes of the international rules-based system — will be a powerful antidote to these destabilizing efforts. Much as the foundations of post-World War II prosperity were laid prior to the end of hostilities through the Bretton Woods Agreement, we face a similar pivotal moment. Make no mistake, what we do now in answer to the debt challenge has the potential to shape the economic and financial order of the post-pandemic world to come. We cannot afford to let this opportunity to shape our economic and financial destiny slip by. □

This article first appeared April 17, 2020, on Security Nexus, a free, open-access, international, peer-reviewed online publication for the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. It has been edited to fit FORUM's format.



CAPT. SUCHART KLAIKAEW / ROYAL THAI ARMY

COBRA GOLD

Partnership



The 39th exercise iteration provides valuable military and crisis management skills

The Cobra Gold 2020 military exercise focused on developing military and crisis management skills and reinforcing ties between Thailand and the United States. It was a special year for the annual exercise, with not only participation by the Royal Thai Armed Forces and U.S. Armed Forces responsible for the Indo-Pacific but also forces from other countries within the region. More than 9,600 Soldiers from 29 countries participated in the 39th iteration of the exercise, which ran from February 24 to March 6, 2020.

Besides being the largest Cobra Gold to date, the two-week exercise across Thailand was an extraordinary experience for military officers from developing countries. For this reason, I would like to provide my insights about the exercise, its role in transforming the Thai Armed Forces and its impact in the Indo-Pacific region.

PRESTIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

First and foremost, Cobra Gold exercises provide solid field experience in collaborative problem solving, leadership and cooperation for participating nations. Experience is our essence and ethos, and that's what the Royal Thai Army gains most when we join a world-class cooperative exercise platform such as Cobra Gold 2020.

This exercise has tremendously encouraged constructive changes in our organization. Training exercises, rehearsals and lessons learned throughout Cobra Gold 2020 introduced us to new tactics and compelled us to overcome complex challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. The experience also helped us to be agile and reinvent ourselves by replicating

and adapting to new military strategies, finding ways of doing things differently and better within our limitations, and seizing opportunities as we unfold our military capacity.

The relationship between the two host nations is mutually beneficial as U.S. Armed Forces have shared their expertise and access to world-class training exercises with personnel from different branches of the Thai military. For example, in a



A Royal Thai Army instructor demonstrates survival skills to U.S. Soldiers during Cobra Gold 2020 at Ban Dan Lan Hoi, Sukhothai, Thailand. ROYAL THAI ARMED FORCES

reconnaissance operation, I learned how important it is to restructure military units, modernize weapons systems and recruit highly qualified manpower instead of only measuring the size of a force. By applying such insights to the Thai forces, we can adapt, create an agile structure and reorganize to transform into a more effective organization.

It is imperative for the Thai military to have exercises like Cobra Gold where Thai Soldiers can take an in-depth look at how the U.S. military serves, get exposed to new ideas, approaches and analytic methodology tools, and then implement those lessons in the Thai Armed Forces.

As I have observed as an interpreter, Cobra Gold is a manifestation of how alliance cooperation between the United States and Thailand can be multilateralized. Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea also participated in the main drills in 2020. Most importantly, the exercise included the first multilateral iteration of a cyberspace field training exercise within the Cobra Gold exercises to prepare for one of the most dangerous threats in the future.

China and India participated in humanitarian civic assistance exercises. Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Fiji, France, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines and United Kingdom participated in multinational planning elements of the exercise. Another 10 countries attended as observers: Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Germany, Israel, Laos, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland and Vietnam.

NEW PERSPECTIVES

Cobra Gold has a long history with the U.S. military in the Indo-Pacific. Tens of thousands of

alumni have served in the Thai and U.S. Armed Forces. Reflecting upon the experience, we have brought back a lot of specific tools and applied them to maximize the exercise's value and benefits to improve our organization and overcome barriers of gender, culture and diversity.

As an interpreter, I came to realize that I was given numerous opportunities unavailable to previous generations of Thai officers. I met a female U.S. military officer and had the chance to discuss many topics during training sessions. She mentioned that the U.S. military had made major strides in incorporating women into its ranks, and she believes that it is more important to talk about the broader context of diversity. Not only is it about gender, I learned, but it is also about race, background and experience.

I witnessed that diversity makes the U.S. military a better force. It is indeed more important to talk about diversity in a more complete and larger scale. If we all share the same background, then a singular groupthink emerges. We should welcome different voices and meetings that encourage pushback rather than serve as echo chambers. We should strive for this so new ideas can emerge and flourish. Through my observations, I discovered that a leader sets the tone of training. I was amazed by the way the leaders communicated.



A Thai Soldier participates in an amphibious assault demonstration during Cobra Gold 2020 at Hat Yao Beach, Thailand. REUTERS

OFFICER INSIGHTS

Several of my fellow officers also benefited from the exercise and had their own takeaways. “Reconstructing manpower structure is key,” Capt. Thawat Thuaprakon, an instructor and interpreter from Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy, told me. He believes that addressing the imbalance in the proportion of officers, noncommissioned officers and conscripts, implementing a reserved army and improving gender equality throughout the ranks will enhance Thai military performance, while attracting newcomers.

“Thinking outside the box is needed in problem solving,” added Capt. Songkla Paisansukhakul, an anti-aircraft artillery battery officer with the Royal Thai Army.

This is because in the military, as in many organizations, leaders usually solve problems using their past experiences and familiarity, which can lead to military-centric solutions. Paisansukhakul said more diversity in troops will improve critical-thinking skills by fostering a diverse understanding of better solutions. This will help transform our troops into an advanced military force, he told me.

REFORMS FOR THE COMING GENERATION

The Cobra Gold experience provides a clear picture of how the Thai military can make structural changes by allowing Thai Soldiers to learn from the U.S. and other international forces. After many interviews with Thai and U.S. participants, I found the common view that we are all facing new challenges from different threats of the 21st century. We need to transform our military into a technology-intensive force structure, reducing unit size and conscript troop numbers, and modernize our defense systems.

“The force development system is needed in the Thai force,” Capt. Natthakait Sangpaisi, operation officer at 13th Cavalry Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Royal Thai Army, told me.

As I observed in Cobra Gold, the training emphasizes a modern defense system in surveillance and reconnaissance. Instead of using the conventional ways that we often adopt technology, the training promotes using robotics and intelligence-enabled technology, based on transparency and accountability, especially in the procurement process.

“Professionally, Cobra Gold has equipped me with the tools to manage complex problems from various perspectives and come up with creative solutions,” said Maj. Piyawat Chayawatsrikul, an operation officer with 5th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion, Royal Thai Army. “I know that I will leave here better able to make valuable



A Royal Thai Army instructor eats a gecko as he teaches survival skills during Cobra Gold 2020. REUTERS

Royal Thai Army Capt. Suchart Klaikaew, background, a native of Bangkok, tells U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Curran Boyce about his experiences during Cobra Gold 2020. ROYAL THAI ARMED FORCES

contributions in my future assignments.”

I have followed the development of the U.S. military during the past decade and joined in the amazing experience of Cobra Gold. Military force modernization, individual unit reconfiguration and manpower restructuring are the key takeaways that I have gained from this training and that the Thai military could replicate and implement. Aside from that magnificent contribution, the relationship with the U.S. has also provided the Thai military with unique perspectives of the military from other countries through participation in this international training experience, which has helped bridge the cultural gap between the United States and Thailand — the United States’ oldest ally in the Indo-Pacific. □



THE CCP'S GLOBAL POLITICAL EXPANSION

DR. JINGHAO ZHOU

Why Can't the Chinese Communist Party Become a Responsible Stakeholder?



A decorative plate featuring Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping appears behind a statue of the late communist leader Mao Zedong at a souvenir store next to Tiananmen Square in Beijing in February 2018. That was the year China's propaganda machine kicked into overdrive to defend the party's move to end term limits for Xi. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Since U.S. President Richard Nixon's administration opened a new chapter with the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1972, U.S.-China relations have shifted from hostile relations to normalization and from engagement to intense strategic competition. Regardless of how these relations are defined today, the reality is that the two countries have reached their lowest point since the U.S. normalized its relations with China in 1979, and the biggest challenge to the U.S. is China, ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Why have U.S.-China relations turned a circle? There are various explanations. Some experts say that confrontation is unavoidable during the rise of a new world power because the shrinking national power gap between the two nations has created U.S. anxieties about the PRC's rising power. Other experts have observed that the ideological and political differences have fueled the confrontation and that mutual unfavorable perceptions have influenced foreign policy. No matter the reason for declining relations, more attention should be paid to the intention and the ability of the CCP to drive China to become the premier world superpower.

COMPREHENSIVE SHARP POWER

China is a party-state. The CCP's power is a combination of the communist idea, system and practice with Chinese history, traditions, and culture. From Karl Marx to Vladimir Lenin and on to Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping, the communist goals are essentially the same – to dominate the commanding heights of an economy and control



The Chinese government's foreign policy is the external dimension of its domestic policy, so it aims not only to maintain the one-party system but also to replace U.S. power in the Indo-Pacific region and ultimately become the dominant superpower.

the means of production through the dictatorship of the proletariat led by the party.

The CCP has implemented a socialist system with Chinese characteristics to carry out the communist ideas. The CCP is the largest communist party on the planet with 90 million members, plus 80 million members of the Communist Youth League. The party is the sole leadership of the country, according to the constitution of the PRC and the constitution of the CCP. The CCP controls the entire country through its organization, ideology and coercive force. It possesses asymmetric advantages in competing with the U.S. because the CCP is the largest corporation of state capitalism, yet it has adopted market mechanisms.

The CCP has concrete plans for fulfilling its goal of the “China Dream” proposed by CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping at the 19th National Congress of the CCP in 2017. The dream calls for achieving “Two 100s” — the material goal of the PRC to become a “moderately well-off society” by 2021 and the modernization goal of the PRC to become a fully developed nation by 2049. Made in China 2025 aims to replace the U.S.-leading position in science and technology. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and other regional multilateral banks led by China are part of the CCP's attempt to challenge the supremacy of U.S.- and Japan-led multilateral development banks and international financial institutions. The PRC's One Belt, One Road infrastructure scheme seeks to counter the U.S. pivot or rebalance to the Indo-Pacific. The PRC's construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea and establishment of military bases in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa and Tajikistan in Central Asia shows the CCP's determination of fulfilling its China Dream. In addition to these newly established military bases, as well as PRC financing and construction of other naval bases, such as Gwadar in Pakistan, there is speculation that the effort to establish military bases abroad may not yet be finished.

The Chinese government's foreign policy is the external dimension of its domestic policy, so it aims not only to maintain the one-party system but also to replace U.S. power in the Indo-Pacific region and ultimately become the dominant superpower. As the first step toward becoming the premier world superpower, Xi proposed his new Asian security concept at a 2014 summit in Shanghai, saying that “it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia.”

Xi's goal is to drive the U.S. out of Asia and destroy U.S. alliances in the region. Today, the



PRC's footprint is global. The Chinese military has broken out of the first island chain of major archipelagos from the East Asian continental mainland coast and is breaking through the second island chain and component of the CCP's three island chain strategy. In coming decades, the intensive competition between the two countries will be largely in the Indo-Pacific region.

SAME GOAL, DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

The China Dream is the CCP's persistent objective, but the CCP has employed different strategies in different times. At the end of the Korean War, CCP Chairman Mao Zedong made it clear that China's goal was to surpass the United Kingdom in 15 years and surpass the U.S. in two decades. In 1971, Mao changed the CCP's foreign policy strategy from confrontation to engagement with the U.S. In the early 1980s, then-party leader Deng Xiaoping set up the strategic principle of "keeping a low profile and getting something done" to attract foreign investment and exploit the global trade system, which would enable the Chinese economy to eventually surpass Japan's economy. In the early 2000s, the CCP began to emphasize a new strategy of "peaceful rise" in response to "China threat theory."

After Xi came to power in 2012, he tried to

A soldier wearing an usher uniform stops journalists from getting too close to the Great Hall of the People as delegates arrive to attend China's National People's Congress in Beijing in March 2019. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

develop a new model of great power relations with the U.S., while accelerating global expansion through economic aid, military expansion and exporting Chinese politics. These policies, along with the changes in U.S. policy, especially trade policy, that accompanied the administration of President Donald Trump, led to an increase in bilateral tensions. When Xi met a group of U.S. and European chief executives in 2018, he said: "There is a saying in the West that if someone hits your left face, you have to stretch your right face. In our culture, we punch back, called making a tooth for a tooth," according to *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper.

Xi has publicly abandoned the low-profile foreign policy and is ready to implement "a tooth for a tooth" foreign policy. The CCP could promise a lot during negotiations to reach its strategic goal, but it could also break its promises anytime. Xi, for example, promised former U.S. President Barack Obama in September 2015 that he would not militarize the artificial islands created



atop coral reefs in the South Chian Sea, but Xi had done so by the end of 2016. Thus, it is more important to see the party's deeds than its words while dealing with the party-state.

MAGIC WEAPONS FOR CCP SURVIVAL

The CCP had only 12 delegates when it held the first National Congress in Shanghai in 1921, but by 1934, it had organized 300,000 members in its Red Army. After the Nationalist government launched five campaigns against the Red Army, only about 20,000 soldiers survived when Mao rose to power at the Zunyi Conference in 1935.

Yet slightly more than a decade later in 1949, the CCP would defeat the Nationalist Party troops who had once been dominant before fighting for years of war. Although China was isolated in the international community from the 1950s to the early 1970s, the CCP would endure the disastrous period between 1958 and 1962 in which over 30 million Chinese people starved to death largely due to bad government policies. The party also survived the turbulent period of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 in which Mao persecuted about 60 million Chinese people.

In the 1970s, the Chinese economy was on the verge of collapse, but the CCP was able to turn it around and came back to the global stage

A man wearing a mask walks by a mural with a modified Chinese Communist Party emblem in Shanghai in January 2020. REUTERS

through the CCP's Reform and Opening-Up policy. Since 2010, China has become the world's second-largest economy and quickly expanded its global footprint. In the past two decades, the PRC dramatically expanded its national power. Over the coming decades, the PRC will seek to equip itself with a world-class military, secure China's status as the preeminent power in the Indo-Pacific region and further expand its international influence, according to the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense's 2019 report to Congress.

It is only a partial explanation to suggest that China's global ambitions have been successful because Washington made mistakes based on false assumptions about China. The achievements of China's global expansion largely rely on the CCP's traditional magic weapons: its mass line, or ability to mobilize its citizens, and its propaganda. The CCP's mass line is the political, organizational and leadership method, developed by Mao, to consult the masses, interpret their suggestions within the framework of communism and then enforce the resulting policies. The two weapons are overlapping: The mass movement is part of the

party's propaganda, and the CCP has used selective information filtered by its censorship system to inspire mass movement.

CCP GLOBAL PROPAGANDA

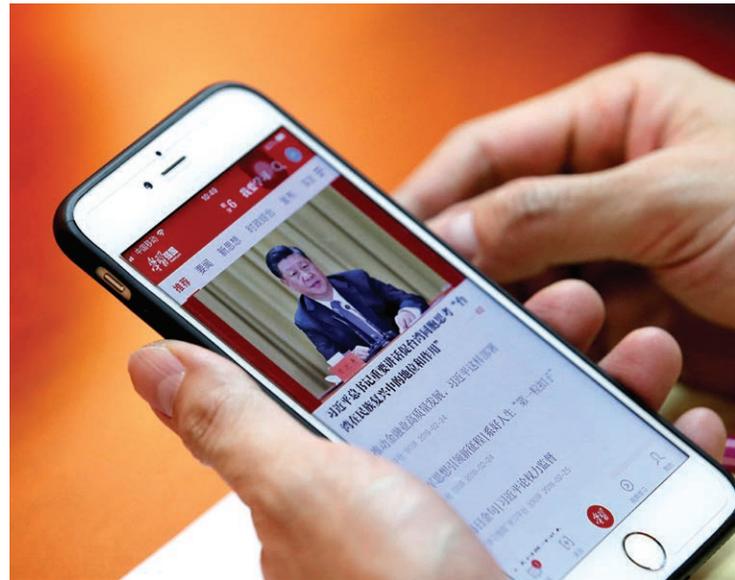
One way the CCP has rallied Chinese people around it is by propagandizing Chinese culture. The CCP promotes the belief that China, before the 17th century, was one of the most advanced countries in the world. The earliest irrigation systems have been found in China. China is the home of ancient inventions, including the compass, gunpowder and block printing. China began to adopt the civil service examination system in the Han dynasty from 206 B.C. to 220 A.D. and established the most advanced civilian government in the world.

China periodically dominated the region through a hierarchical order that spanned nearly 1,300 years, from the start of the Tang dynasty in 618 to the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Howard French explains in his book, *Everything Under the Heavens: How the Past Helps Shape China's Push for Global Power*. Countries in the region acknowledged the cultural and political superiority of China and showed their respect to Chinese authority in order to trade with China. They also benefited from the acknowledgment because in return they received generous gifts from China and obtained the Chinese emperor's goodwill. The Chinese government enjoyed the tributary system (*chao gong*, 朝贡) before the first Opium War.

Chinese leaders believe the China Dream is simply reclaiming the nation's proper global position in world history. This is Beijing's default mindset and in China's DNA, which will drive Beijing to behave more and more like an old Chinese empire, according to author Richard McGregor. "The CCP never forgets the glorious past of a China-centric world and now hopes to reclaim the status of global center," he points out in his 2017 book, *Asia's Reckoning: China, Japan, and the Fate of U.S. Power in the Pacific Century*. As China quickly gains global market, Western societies are facing a dilemma: Hold the principle of universal values but lose business in China or kowtow to the CCP to make profits from China. It is dangerous for China to build an empire that forces an inevitable war, as political scientist Graham Allison points out in his 2018 book, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?*

Meanwhile, the CCP has launched a global propaganda campaign, attempting to influence people's worldview, improve China's image and shape policymakers' ideas in a certain direction.

The CCP has spent billions of dollars on China's international media agencies, such as Xinhua News Agency, China Central Television (CCTV), China Radio International (CRI), *China Daily* and *Global Times*. The agencies have opened more than 300 bureaus abroad and hired staff around the world. The CCP has regularly run workshops in Beijing to train foreign journalists to tell good China stories. China has established about 1,000 Confucius Institutes worldwide to expand Chinese global cultural influence. In addition, the CCP has increasingly strengthened its propaganda overseas by purchasing foreign media platforms, promoting global censorship by requiring Western



A party member uses his mobile phone to attend a weekly study group for a Chinese Communist Party propaganda app called *Xuexi Qiangguo*, which means "study to make China strong."

REUTERS

journals to block access to articles about Chinese political science and international politics in China, and requesting foreign governments to ban international conferences related to Chinese politics. More alarmingly, the CCP is also trying to reshape international norms by exerting and increasing its influence in international governing bodies, including more organizations within the United Nations.

INCITE NATIONALISM AGAINST WEST, CCP LOYALTY

Another strategy the CCP uses to rally people is to weaponize nationalism against the West. China had its glorious past but gradually weakened after its defeat in the first Opium War — the starting point of the century of humiliation, from roughly 1840 to 1949. As a result of losing the war, the

Qing dynasty was forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing that required China to grant diplomatic immunity, pay indemnities totaling U.S. \$21 million, accept tariffs, offer Britain most-favored nation treatment, open five new ports for trade and cede Hong Kong to the British for 150 years. The Treaty of Nanjing, along with more than 700 other unequal treaties, forced China to gradually sink from an independent country to a semi-colonial country. China considered itself the center of the world and the only civilization in the world. The Opium War and its aftermath revealed that China was no longer a unified state with an effective central government.

The CCP has used the narrative of the century of humiliation as a bargaining chip during negotiations with Western governments on many issues and also to incite nationalism against Western societies, especially the U.S. and Japan. In the past three decades, the CCP has used nationalism in response to various international events. A survey on national identity conducted by the International Social Survey Programme shows that China has the highest level of nationalism among all countries and regions. Since the recent trade war and global coronavirus pandemic, the strength of Chinese nationalism has become unprecedented. Chinese nationalism will continue to play a role in U.S.-China relations. The CCP believes the PRC should obtain what it wants because Western governments bullied China during the century of humiliation. Xi has promised to restore China to its rightful great power status by 2049, as *The Washington Post* newspaper reported in October 2017.

The CCP has used Chinese traditional culture to consolidate its hierarchical power while manipulating nationalism to divert the Chinese people's attention from domestic issues. Chinese traditional culture includes three religions and nine schools of thought. Confucianism, however, became the dominant Chinese traditional culture during the Han dynasty. Confucius developed a set of principles, including the Five Constant Virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sincerity) and Five Relationships

(ruled is subject to ruler; son is subject to father; wife is subject to husband; younger is subject to elder; and friends must trust each other). All these principles are about the regulation of human relations to maintain the hierarchical social order. Confucius put it this way: "Let



the father be indeed father, and the son son; let the elder brother be indeed elder brother, and the younger brother younger brother, let the husband be indeed husband, and the wife wife: Then will the family be in its normal state. Bring the family to that state, and all under heaven will be established." The doctrine of Confucianism is father-centered, and the core of Confucianism is loyalty: Be loyal to father at home, and be loyal to emperor in society.

The CCP has emphasized the traditional Confucian idea of "right relationships" in family, society and political hierarchies to reinforce loyalty to the party. Every CCP leader has called for Chinese people to unite around the CCP and unconditionally obey the top leader. Xi has further centralized his power and made his presidency a lifelong proposition by amending the constitution of China. Xi repeatedly emphasizes that the party leads everything in Chinese society. Now, Xi has a new title, "people's leader," which is the same as dictator Mao's title. The CCP sets the same principles for Chinese people to follow: "Be loyal to the party" and "Follow the party unconditionally." Many have called Xi the 21st-century emperor of China.



CCP WILL NEVER SURRENDER ITS ONE-PARTY SYSTEM

The mindset of Chinese leaders is deeply influenced by China's long history as an agricultural nation. China became an agricultural society 4,000 years ago. By the 13th century, China was the most sophisticated agricultural country in the world. Rural areas accounted for 88% of China's land when the PRC was established in 1949 and 82% when China started the reform movement in 1978. The industrial revolution began to transform China after 1978, about 200 years after the Western industrial revolution. China still struggles to maintain the balance between its traditional culture and modernization and to absorb Western thinking.

The agricultural society has naturally produced a patriarchal social order and political system. The emperor was the sole source of power, final authority and all laws. The government is an enlarged family and the emperor was the father of the nation. The government in Chinese, *guo-jia* 国家, means "nation-family." The communist revolution largely relied on Chinese peasants. The philosophy of Chinese peasant uprisings is that whoever seizes power keeps power forever. This patriarchal culture requires Chinese foreign policy to consolidate the one-party system. In the post-Mao era, the "second red generation" (红二代) views China as its family dynasty and wants to keep the red regime forever.

Chinese leaders apply notions of filial piety and familial obligation to international relations. The Xi administration has been seeking predominance

A tour guide lectures near a photo of General Secretary Xi Jinping in the history museum at the Party School of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

in the regional and global order. China's global expansion is an attempt to expand the communist "red family." Influenced by the patriarchal culture, the CCP believes that "China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact," as Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi said at the ASEAN Ministers Conference in Hanoi in July 2010. China will not treat other countries equally but will act as a big brother.

Clearly, the CCP wants to turn China into the world's dominant superpower while retaining its one-party system at home. Determined by the nature of the CCP, China will not become a responsible stakeholder in the U.S.-led international order as long as the CCP retains its power. When the China Dream meets "America First," the confrontation between the two countries becomes inevitable. To preserve its values and sovereignty, the United States must prepare for a long-standing ideological war and potential military confrontation with China over the Indo-Pacific region while decisively competing with the CCP in many areas, especially trade and high technology. It is critical to understand the nature of the CCP to win the second global competition with communist China. □

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Chinese Communist Party members hold copies of the party's constitution in Yanan, China. REUTERS

SUBVERTING THE GLOBAL NARRATIVE

The Chinese Communist Party's Propaganda Apparatus Seeks to Rule the World's Media

FORUM STAFF

In its quest to control the global story line, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) propaganda machine is operating at full bore.

In the past decade or so, the CCP has dramatically increased its efforts to systematically gain control of the world's media to implement its agenda, which seeks to trample democracy, free speech and human rights globally, according to analysts. To spread its coercive messages, the CCP is employing a range of strategies and tactics, from increasing its international broadcasting capacity to undertaking extensive advertising campaigns abroad to subverting foreign media outlets.

The scale, scope and nature of the CCP's propaganda organization and overall strategy could undermine the foundation of civil governance worldwide, many experts worry. "While some aspects of [the Chinese party-state's] effort are in line with traditional public diplomacy, many others are covert, coercive, and potentially corrupt," according to "Beijing's Global Megaphone," a December 2019 report published by Freedom House, a nongovernmental organization funded by the U.S. Congress.

"The CCP and its proxies have demonstrated no qualms in deploying economic leverage to neutralize and suppress critical reporting — not only on events within China, but also on China's engagement abroad. There is ample evidence that the PRC has used propaganda and disinformation to influence voters in democracies. Meanwhile, many of the same tactics are being applied in sectors beyond the scope of this report, like education,

the arts, literature, and the entertainment industry," Sarah Cook, a senior research analyst for Freedom House, wrote in the report.

By infiltrating foreign media organizations, the CCP is damaging legitimate journalism, which serves as a critical check and balance on the power base of countries around the world, experts contend. "What is at stake is not only the Chinese authorities trying to spread their own propaganda ... what is at stake is journalism as we know it," Cedric Alviani, East Asia Bureau director of Reporters Without Borders, told *Time* magazine in March 2019.

The CCP not only restricts press freedom in China but also is repressing journalists overseas by using tactics similar to those the party uses at home to silence dissent, including "employing blackmail, intimidation and harassment on a massive scale," according to "China's Pursuit of a New World Media Order," a 2019 report by Reporters Without Borders. For example, "Chinese ambassadors extend their role outside of the regular diplomatic roles. They denigrate journalists anytime they write something that does not meet Chinese propaganda," Alviani told *Time*.

"There are limits to the [CCP] campaign's effectiveness at present, but the strategies being pursued have long-term implications, particularly as the CCP and its international affiliates gain greater influence over key portions of the information infrastructure in developing countries," Cook concluded in the Freedom House report. "The potential future impact of Beijing's practices should not be underestimated."

BUILDING AN INFLUENCE NETWORK

How did the CCP and various Chinese government-related entities get to this point? While world leaders have largely been focused on security and economic threats in the Middle East, the CCP has been steadily building its influence network everywhere else. In 2002, the CCP revised the People's Liberation Army's doctrine to include the use of media warfare to influence foreign governments and populations to view the party favorably, according to *The Guardian* newspaper. Since then, the Chinese party-state has embraced the internet as a battlefield in recognition that whoever controls the information, and the tunnels through which that information flows, will win the ideological war.

To fight this information operations war, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been spending heavily. The regime spent between U.S. \$7 billion and U.S. \$10 billion in 2015 alone to amplify its global media outreach, *The Guardian* reported. The Chinese government pays for much of these efforts through a propaganda tax imposed on public businesses, according to Anne-Marie Brady, professor of political science at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. The rise of social media over the past decade has helped the CCP's media expansionism by obfuscating awareness of the breadth and depth of the CCP's financial stake in global media infrastructure.

Besides money, three key tactics make the CCP's

strategy effective. First, the Chinese party-state focuses on the long term, which experts contend is the only way to erode a population's ideological base. Other countries generally demand immediate short-term wins and effects, which do not permanently change behavior. The CCP understands that lasting behavior change is a slow and methodical process conducted over a long period of time. Many first-world countries and militaries do not appreciate this requirement. Those that do often lack the patience or political wherewithal to implement such long-term strategies, experts observe.

Second, the CCP uses every state-owned enterprise in every country where it operates as an asset to collect, distribute, influence or fund the party's propaganda. In this way, the CCP "borrows boats" in foreign countries and dispatches them to do its bidding. The CCP-controlled, state-owned radio company introduced the strategy *jie chuan chu hai*, or "borrowing a boat to go out to the ocean," to pursue financial control of foreign radio stations and their programming content. CCP-controlled companies also use their host nations' own laws and freedoms against them, another tactic that democratic countries are not generally willing or inclined to leverage.

Third, the CCP pushes its centralized ideology down to every node that can disseminate information. There are no authorities, no permissions and no legal roadblocks, provided an entity pushes the messages that the CCP wants.



Protesters in Hong Kong walk on photographs of Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping on October 1, 2019.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Policy Recommendations to Counter the CCP's Propaganda Machine

Policymakers in democratic nations should help counter the negative impact of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) foreign media influence campaigns. They can, according to the nongovernmental organization Freedom House:

- **Increase transparency.** Governments should adopt or enforce policies that enhance publicly available information about Chinese media influence activities in their countries. These could include reporting requirements for media outlets' spending on paid advertorials, ownership structures and other economic ties to Chinese state actors.
- **Impose penalties for transgressions by Chinese officials.** When Chinese diplomats and security agents overstep their bounds and attempt to interfere with media reporting in other countries, the host government should vigorously protest, warning that such behavior may violate diplomatic protocols. If the act in question is repeated or particularly egregious, the host government should consider declaring the offenders *persona non grata*.
- **Scrutinize international censorship and surveillance by PRC-owned companies.** Lawmakers in democracies should hold hearings to better understand the scope, nature and impact of politicized censorship and surveillance on Tencent's WeChat platform, ByteDance's TikTok, and Chinese-made mobile phone browsers, then explore avenues for pressuring the companies in question to uphold users' rights to free expression and privacy. Politicians who choose to use WeChat, TikTok or other Chinese government-owned or controlled platforms to communicate with constituents should monitor messaging closely to detect any manipulation, register their accounts with international phone numbers when possible, and republish messages on parallel international social media platforms.
- **Tighten and enforce broadcasting regulations.** Media regulators should revise or better enforce their broadcasting rules to curb abusive practices by the People's Republic of China's state media and related companies, such as the airing of forced confessions by prisoners of conscience or the manipulation of media distribution infrastructure in which the companies have acquired an ownership stake. Regulatory agencies should conduct investigations into potential violations and impose



The Chinese Communist Party runs the *Beijing Evening News* newspaper. A June 2019 edition depicts General Secretary Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang. REUTERS

conditions on purchases and mergers to address conflicts of interest.

Source: "Beijing's Global Megaphone," Freedom House, December 2019

GLOBAL PENETRATION

The level of CCP influence and propaganda is at global proportions. The CCP and PRC have been investing as much as U.S. \$1.3 billion annually to increase the footprint of Chinese media. With such funds, Chinese state-run TV and radio outlets have significantly expanded their international reach. China Global Television Network is seen in 140 countries, according to the Reporters Without Borders 2019 report. The network also operates propaganda production centers in London, Washington, D.C., and Nairobi, Kenya, to spread CCP influence across Europe, Africa and the United States, the report found.

The CCP has also used such funds to buy up the global airwaves. State-run China Radio International (CRI), which broadcasts in 65 languages, operates more than 70 stations from Finland and Nepal to Australia and the U.S., Reuters reported. CRI also wholly owns

Guoguang Century Media Consultancy, which in turn holds a 60% stake in three subsidiaries: GBTimes, Global CAMG Media Group, and G&E Studio Inc., according to Reuters. Global CAMG Media Group, for example, operates 70 foreign radio stations, according to Reporters Without Borders; 11 of the stations are in Australia, *The Guardian* reported. Host country governments have allowed the PRC to buy and lease AM radio stations unencumbered for the most part. Beijing's 60%-owned WCRW AM radio station, for example, broadcasts into Washington, D.C., the U.S. capital, according to Reuters. From Mexico, XEWW AM broadcasts PRC propaganda into Southern California, according to insideradio.com.

The CCP manages a formidable print news portfolio as well. *People's Daily*, the official mouthpiece of the party and the nation's largest newspaper, has a circulation of 3 million. Its offshoot *Global Times*, an ultra-nationalist, state-run tabloid, has a print run of 1 million copies.

CCP's Toolbox for Global Media Influence



Source: <https://freedomhouse.org> | FORUM ILLUSTRATION



Demonstrators don bear costumes and display banners with insults to General Secretary Xi Jinping during a coronavirus-related protest March 27, 2020, in Brazil. REUTERS



Protesters display a banner criticizing Chinese Communist Party leaders including General Secretary Xi Jinping in protest over proposed amendments to an extradition law in Hong Kong in June 2019. REUTERS

Its English-language version, launched in 2009, has a print run of 100,000. Its website, which is produced in 10 languages, claims to have 15 million visits a day. Published solely in English, *China Daily*, which is a fully owned subsidiary and propaganda arm of the CCP, targets non-Chinese people, English-speaking Chinese and the diaspora. It claims a print run of 900,000 copies and a total of 150 million readers for its print and online versions combined. *China Daily* spent more than U.S. \$20 million on influence operations in the U.S. alone between 2017 and 2019, according to a June 2019 article in the *Human Events* newspaper. The CCP has struck deals with at least 30 foreign and U.S. newspapers to carry “China Watch,” a four- to eight-page propaganda insert, which has an estimated circulation of 5 million.

The CCP has also acquired major stakes in newspapers worldwide and continues to censor their content in insidious ways. Companies linked to Beijing hold a 20% share in South Africa’s second-largest media group, Independent Media, for instance. When a South African journalist and columnist wrote an article for the Independent Online in 2018 highlighting the CCP’s human rights abuses of Muslim minority Uighurs, his syndicated column “At the World’s End” was canceled, according to Reporters Without Borders.

Meanwhile, Xinhua, the CCP’s state-run news agency, had established 162 foreign bureaus as of 2017 and was projected to have at least 220 bureaus by 2020, according to a 2018 U.S. Department of Defense report, “Assessment on U.S. Defense Implications of China’s Expanding Global Access.”

The CCP also strives to make its state-controlled media seem legitimate. In Thailand, Xinhua signed a memorandum of understanding with Matchon Group, parent company of Thailand’s *Khaosod* newspaper, to enable *Khaosod* to publish Xinhua’s news wire at no cost, *Foreign Policy* magazine revealed in a 2019 report. This

allows Xinhua’s propaganda to reach *Khaosod*’s 13 million Facebook followers and the 900,000 daily readers under the guise of a legitimate newspaper. The *Khaosod English* news chief served as a liaison for the deal and is also a contributor to the “China Watch” insert. Xinhua also pushes its content through similar agreements to Laos’ *Vientiane Times*, Cambodia’s *Khmer Times* and *Cambodia Daily*, and the Philippines’ *Manila Bulletin*.

WIELDING MEDIA WEAPONS

After acquiring its media arsenal, the CCP has craftily wielded its weapons. During the past five years, for example, the CCP has gained influential control over four foreign boats in Cambodia: Fresh News, *People’s Daily* and *Phnom Penh Post* newspapers and NICE TV, according to the Reporters Without Borders report. With Beijing’s help, Prime Minister Hun Sen won Cambodia’s parliamentary elections in 2018. The Cambodian government later arrested, killed or drove out all journalists, including Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, as well as human rights watchdogs who spoke out against the government, and anyone who highlighted the Chinese government’s land grab of Sihanoukville or its secret agreement to build and use that province’s Ream Naval Base, a move that would violate Cambodia’s Constitution, *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper reported. The CCP’s use of foreign boats externally influenced Cambodian politics to the detriment of its people.

The CCP similarly uses its media weapons to control the environmental narrative. The PRC is the world’s largest producer of greenhouse gases and the largest consumer of coal, as documented by the Climate Action Tracker website, yet its various media platforms promote propaganda about the PRC’s so-called green forest cities and other supposedly green activities. The PRC is engaged in some of the Indo-Pacific’s worst environmental degradation in the Mekong region, where

its dam-building along the great river is destroying entire ecosystems and people’s livelihoods and challenging sovereignty of the Mekong countries, as Dr. Brahma Chellaney, a professor of strategic studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research, explained in a 2019 article in the *Taipei Times* newspaper. These dams will put the countries along the Mekong at the mercy of the PRC and its ruling party, which will effectively control the flow of the river. The PRC is potentially infringing on the sovereignty of the Mekong countries with each dam it convinces these countries to let it build, all abetted by the CCP propaganda machine.

The 50-Cent Army is yet another propaganda tool the CCP has been using to sway online followers. In 2004, the Chinese party-state launched the 50-Cent Army, also called the 50-Cent Party, which consists of roughly 2 million people who are used to disrupt mobilization and collective action, derail and dilute criticism, and promote a positive CCP narrative online. While predominantly used within the PRC’s domestic platforms to control and monitor the country’s people, the Chinese government

also employs these online trolls to support propaganda efforts targeting the outside world. During the Beijing Olympics in 2008, CCP operators virtually attacked foreign athletes who defeated Chinese competitors. The CCP also deployed the trolls to push its agenda during the runup to Taiwan’s 2020 elections and the Hong Kong protests and to cover up abuses in Uighur “reeducation” camps and organ harvesting operations, according to media accounts. The Chinese party-state’s biggest fears are a domestic and global collective action and the mobilization of a movement or idea counter to the CCP, experts explain.

For this reason, much of CCP propaganda targets overseas Chinese and non-Chinese foreign audiences. For many years, the CCP has also applied political levers to control the content of foreign media even in the U.S. For example, in 2013 Bloomberg News nixed an investigation into the accumulation of wealth by elite members of the CCP because its executives feared repercussions by the Chinese government, NPR reported. Bloomberg feared it would lose access

Chinese State Media’s Misleading Taglines

Chinese state media outlets are active on global social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, which are blocked in China. They have accrued large followings, in part, because promotional ads and deceptive descriptions obscure their state-run origins.

Media Outlet	Facebook Self-Identification	Actual Identity	Facebook Followers (Main Account, December 2019)
 <i>People's Daily</i>	“The biggest newspaper in China”	Official mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party	72 million
 <i>Xinhua News Agency</i>	“The first port of call for the latest and exclusive China and world news”	Official Chinese state-owned news wire	70 million
 <i>China Global Television Network</i>	“China’s preeminent 24-hour news channel”	International arm of state-owned broadcaster China Central Television	90 million
 <i>China Daily</i>	“The leading English-language news organization in China”	Chinese state-owned English-language newspaper	84 million

Source: <https://freedomhouse.org> | FORUM ILLUSTRATION



Firefighters stand outside offices of the Xinhua news agency, which is controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, after the agency's windows were smashed by protesters in Hong Kong in November 2019. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



A woman walks by a propaganda poster with the word "wear" outside a Beijing residence in March 2020. Chinese Communist Party propaganda penetrates all aspects of Chinese society. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

to China after the investigative reporter and his wife received death threats. "It is for sure going to, you know, invite the Communist Party to, you know, completely shut us down and kick us out of the country," Bloomberg's founding editor-in-chief, Matthew Winkler, said in October 2013, according to NPR. "So, I just don't see that as a story that is justified," referring to the investigative piece.

Bloomberg's fears proved justified given the CCP's ongoing pressure to control foreign media outlets. For example, the CCP expelled journalists from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time* magazine and *Voice of America* from China in March 2020 allegedly for coverage critical of the party.

Often the CCP's propaganda campaigns backfire, however, in large part because of its "diplomatic belligerence." Its demands for absolute loyalty to the party are offensive to citizens from other countries. For example, a music video intended to highlight the PRC's efforts to aid the Philippines during the coronavirus pandemic instead stirred widespread anger because many Filipinos interpreted it as a "veiled attempt by Beijing to reassert its claims over the whole of the South China Sea," as *The Straits Times* newspaper reported. The music video appeared within days of the Philippines filing a diplomatic protest against the PRC for creating two new districts that are not internationally recognized to administer islands in the South China Sea, including expanses that the Philippines claims.

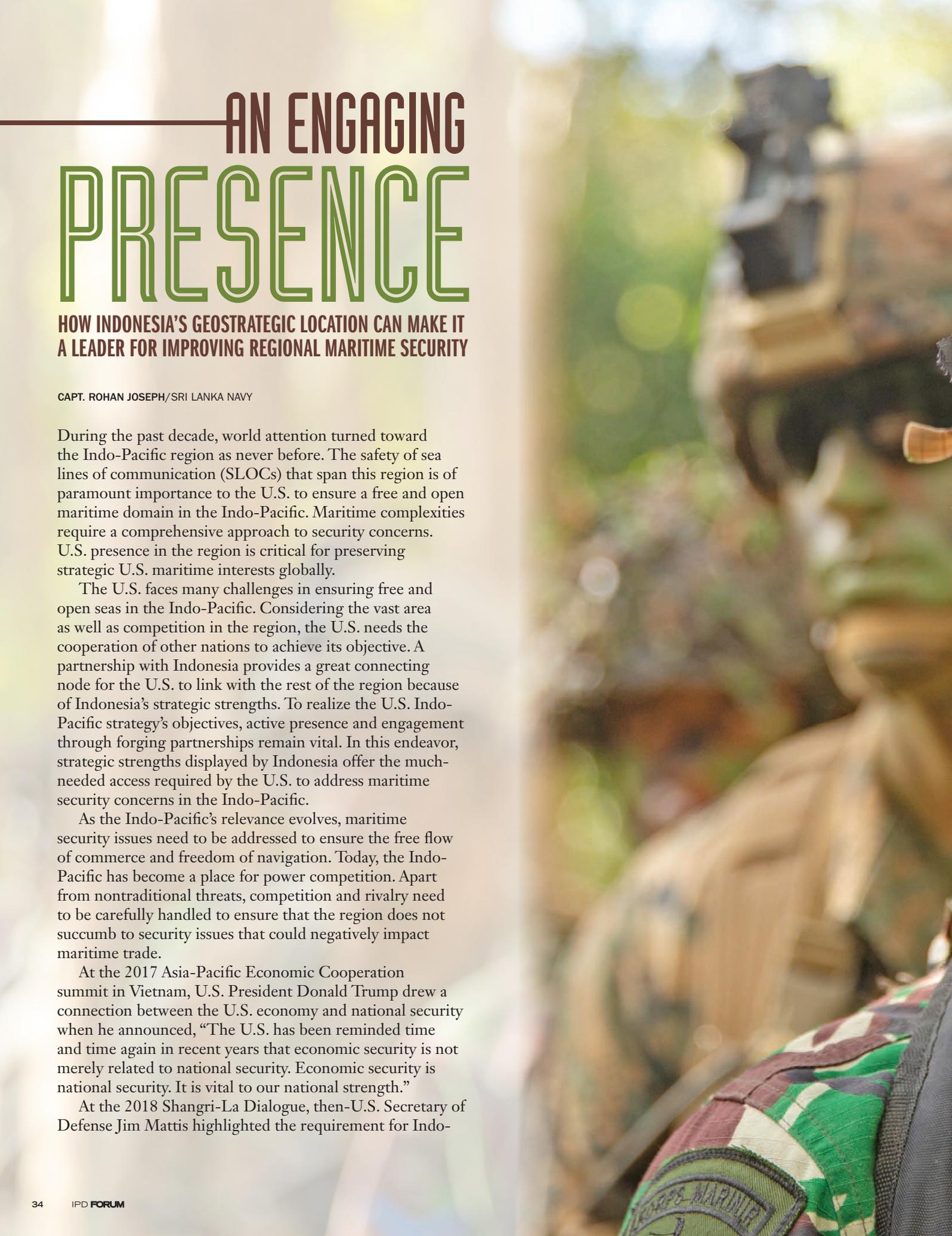
"While engaging every side in full-fledged narrative warfare may reinforce China's nationalism at home, the belligerency is antithetical to the image of a 'responsible major power' China is trying to portray and undercuts Xi's vision of 'building a community with a shared future for mankind,'" journalist Jo Kim explained in a commentary published in late April 2020 in *The Japan Times* newspaper.

EMERGING COUNTERMEASURES

To manipulate foreign audiences to ensure the CCP's perpetuity, the Chinese party-state recruits and trains foreign journalists, purchases media outlets, leases majority air time and holds influential amounts of shares in media outlets, among other approaches. In essence, the CCP pushes its propaganda in any outlet that will take its money.

World leaders are increasingly concerned about the CCP's activities that not only push its propaganda globally but also exploit fissures in democracies, divide governments and use host nation laws, bureaucracy, policies and freedom of speech against host interests. In a growing number of countries, government, military and civil society actors are awakening to the CCP's activities to deepen its foreign influence in its quest for global dominance and regional hegemony. As a result, they are exploring ways to protect media freedom and democratic structures from the harmful influence of the CCP's propaganda machine, but much work remains to implement them.

"Their efforts to identify policies and legislation to increase transparency and restrict cross-ownership, punish coercive and corrupt actions by Chinese officials, and insulate independent media from threats to their financial sustainability will not only address Beijing's encroachments, but also strengthen democratic institutions and independent media against other domestic and international threats," according to Freedom House. "Such action may require considerable political will, as certain measures designed to uphold media freedom and fair competition in the long term will be opposed by Beijing and could hinder Chinese investment in the short term. But it is increasingly clear that allowing the authoritarian dimensions of CCP media influence campaigns to expand unchecked carries its own costs." □



AN ENGAGING PRESENCE

HOW INDONESIA'S GEOSTRATEGIC LOCATION CAN MAKE IT A LEADER FOR IMPROVING REGIONAL MARITIME SECURITY

CAPT. ROHAN JOSEPH/SRI LANKA NAVY

During the past decade, world attention turned toward the Indo-Pacific region as never before. The safety of sea lines of communication (SLOCs) that span this region is of paramount importance to the U.S. to ensure a free and open maritime domain in the Indo-Pacific. Maritime complexities require a comprehensive approach to security concerns. U.S. presence in the region is critical for preserving strategic U.S. maritime interests globally.

The U.S. faces many challenges in ensuring free and open seas in the Indo-Pacific. Considering the vast area as well as competition in the region, the U.S. needs the cooperation of other nations to achieve its objective. A partnership with Indonesia provides a great connecting node for the U.S. to link with the rest of the region because of Indonesia's strategic strengths. To realize the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy's objectives, active presence and engagement through forging partnerships remain vital. In this endeavor, strategic strengths displayed by Indonesia offer the much-needed access required by the U.S. to address maritime security concerns in the Indo-Pacific.

As the Indo-Pacific's relevance evolves, maritime security issues need to be addressed to ensure the free flow of commerce and freedom of navigation. Today, the Indo-Pacific has become a place for power competition. Apart from nontraditional threats, competition and rivalry need to be carefully handled to ensure that the region does not succumb to security issues that could negatively impact maritime trade.

At the 2017 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vietnam, U.S. President Donald Trump drew a connection between the U.S. economy and national security when he announced, "The U.S. has been reminded time and time again in recent years that economic security is not merely related to national security. Economic security is national security. It is vital to our national strength."

At the 2018 Shangri-La Dialogue, then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis highlighted the requirement for Indo-



A member of the 5th Marine Infantry Battalion, Indonesian Marine Corps, receives a safety briefing before a jungle patrol during Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) in Banyuwangi, Indonesia, in August 2019.

CPL DESTINY DEMPSEY / U.S. MARINE CORPS

Pacific countries to come together in shaping the future of the region and highlighted the maritime space, among other aspects. “The maritime commons are a global good, and the sea lanes of communication are the arteries of economic vitality for all. ... Through our security cooperation, we are building closer relationships between our militaries and our economies,” Mattis said.

Based on these stated U.S. interests, maritime security in the Indo-Pacific becomes a strategic concern for the U.S. This analysis examines how the U.S. can increase presence and engagement in the Indo-Pacific by expanding the already established U.S.-Indonesian partnership that relies on the geographical centrality of Indonesia in connecting the Indo-Pacific. It also addresses the U.S.’s maritime focus on Indonesia and the acceptance of Indonesia by regional players as a strategic partner.

With this backdrop, it’s also important to highlight Indonesia’s challenges in countering maritime security issues and achieving its own maritime vision, as well as how Indonesia and regional partners respond to external influences with U.S. participation.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

U.S.-Indonesia relations have progressed since their establishment of diplomatic ties in 1949. In the intervening seven decades, bilateral relations have fluctuated, but a series of reforms implemented since 1998 made Indonesia politically stable and paved the way for increased U.S. interaction. During a visit to Indonesia in March 2006, then-U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice highlighted the term “strategic partnership,” indicating the willingness of the U.S. to partner with Indonesia to promote Indo-Pacific stability. In November 2009, then-U.S. President Barack Obama and then-Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono inaugurated the comprehensive partnership between the two countries. This partnership focused on improving cooperation and the advancement of strategic discussions on bilateral, regional and global issues, including security.

Based on strengthening ties, the U.S. government expanded the 2010 comprehensive partnership to a broader strategic partnership in 2015. The U.S. declaration of Indonesia as a strategic partner speaks to the importance placed on Indonesia and on the region.

“The U.S.-Indonesia strategic partnership is critical to the national interests of both nations and will grow more so in the years to come,” then-U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) Commander Adm. Harry B. Harris said at the U.S.-Indonesia Society and American Chamber of Commerce in August 2017.

His statement also highlighted USINDOPACOM’s broader expectations in engaging the region through expanded strategic cooperation. The U.S.-Indonesia military relations progressed despite certain setbacks at various stages. The 9/11 attacks added a new episode to the Washington-Jakarta relations. The global war on terrorism, led by the U.S., adjusted policy priorities

toward Southeast Asian nations. As a direct result, Washington-Jakarta defense relations have grown since 9/11. Perhaps most importantly, the position Indonesia holds in the Muslim world and its experience in dealing with terrorism made Indonesia a significant partner in the war.

“We probably engage with the Indonesian military more than any other nation anywhere in terms of mil-to-mil engagements,” Mattis said during his visit to Indonesia in January 2018.

Mattis also emphasized the need for maritime cooperation in the unique maritime environment that Indonesia holds by connecting the Indian and Pacific oceans. The Indonesian military continues to engage in various training missions with other regional partners and the U.S., such as USINDOPACOM’s Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training. Close to 170 bilateral military-to-military exercises are held annually between the two countries.

GATEWAY TO THE INDO-PACIFIC

Indonesia is strategically located at the center of the global maritime domain and is a pivotal state in Southeast Asia. Its geographical centrality and proximity to one of

Indonesian Navy officers salute as the U.S. Navy ship USS Blue Ridge prepares to dock at Tanjung Priok Port in Jakarta, Indonesia, in May 2019.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo, center, inspects troops during his visit at Indonesian Navy ship KRI Usman Harun at Selat Lampa Port, Natuna Islands, Indonesia, in January 2020.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



the most important maritime trade highways connecting the Indian and Pacific oceans makes Indonesia the undisputed gateway to the Indo-Pacific. Growing maritime trade through the Malacca Strait has made this waterway one of the most strategically important chokepoints with access to the South China Sea. About U.S. \$5.3 trillion worth of trade passes annually through the sea, which includes U.S. \$1.2 trillion in trade with the U.S. An estimated 50,000 to 60,000 ships transit the Malacca Strait annually. Because regional and global economies heavily depend on the Malacca Strait, its safety and security, as well as the continuity of SLOCs, have become an important strategic consideration. Therefore, the responsibility for ensuring access to the strait falls largely on Indonesia.

Piracy in the strait has decreased due to greater regional efforts. A minor attack in 2018 became the first recorded piracy attack since December 2015. Capitalizing on its location, Indonesia has been instrumental in leading cooperative anti-piracy efforts in the strait.

Indonesia's geographical position offers many advantages in addressing maritime security concerns in the region. Indonesia's active role in the formative stages and the successive progression of the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) since its founding in 1967, has been closely tied with the country's foreign policy. In 2018, Indonesia's Foreign Ministry declared the Indo-Pacific Cooperative Mechanism of the Southeast Asian countries highlighting three key aspects: respect for international norms and finding solutions through dialogue; addressing key security challenges; and creating economic hubs in the Indian and South Pacific oceans.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Indonesian foreign policy is centered on ASEAN, where its de facto leadership status provides a strong position to cooperate with members and other regional players, including the U.S. The success of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy will depend on ASEAN's centrality. Furthermore, partners in the region and beyond will be essential in achieving Indonesia's global maritime objectives. Indonesia's foreign policy enables active engagement with partners and explains why Indonesia is one of the front members of the nonaligned movement. This foreign policy stance has been a strength in establishing strong ties with countries such as Australia, India and Japan while maintaining close cooperation with global partners. The Australian government's Foreign Policy White Paper



of 2017, for example, emphasized the importance of strengthening relations with Indonesia in areas such as economy and defense.

Strategic developments in the Indo-Pacific, including the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC), make it imperative for Australia to strengthen bilateral relations with Indonesia.

The "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific," released in 2019, demonstrates ASEAN's strong commitment to preserve the international rules-based order. The Australian policy documents also indicate the importance of adhering to international norms, transparency and inclusiveness.

In South Asia, Indonesia's ties with India have progressed over the years, and Jakarta has identified that the regional dynamics require both countries to coordinate closely to become maritime powers and to address external influences. Economic dynamics and maritime potential are two main areas, among others, that India expects to improve by engaging with Indonesia. During a 2019 meeting, the countries' foreign ministers pledged to triple bilateral trade by 2025 to U.S. \$50 billion. Engineering, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, auto industry, information technology services, palm oil, coal and natural resources are some of the leading fields offering cooperation opportunities that could benefit both countries.

Policy experts consider strategic initiatives such as Act East; Asia-Africa Growth Corridor; Free, Open Inclusive Indo-Pacific; and Security and Growth for All in the Region to be pillars that support India's wider Indo-Pacific strategic objectives.

The shared vision of the India-Indonesia maritime cooperation that launched in 2018 highlights the importance of ensuring maritime security in the Indo-Pacific to achieve strategy and policy goals of both countries. India needs a neutral partner in the Indo-Pacific that could offer a sound base to launch such strategic initiatives. Partnering with Indonesia would be a major step in that direction and also offers India a strategic edge for its economic potential and ambitions to become a global maritime power.

LINKING TO NORTH ASIA

Indonesia-Japan ties have grown over the years since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1958. The 1977 Fukuda Doctrine brought several changes to economic relations. Japan has also recognized the importance of engaging with ASEAN, where Indonesia is a key player. The two countries pledged to accelerate discussions over the General Review Indonesia-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (GRIJEPA) in 2019. As an emerging Southeast Asian economic entity, Indonesia shares strong economic relations with Japan. Although India pulled out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), 14 countries, including Japan and China, agreed to it in 2019.

The RCEP has the potential to become the world's largest trade agreement. Both the GRIJEPA and RCEP provide excellent opportunities for Japan to work closely with Indonesia. Japan, an ally of the U.S., needs to have a strategic maritime partner with the potential to provide a sound footing that is essential when solving complicated issues in the Indo-Pacific. Like Australia, Japan will find the Indonesian partnership important when addressing issues that require cooperation and coordination among neutral yet like-minded partners. Even though Japan's Indo-Pacific strategy has a broader view spanning from the East African coast to the West Coast of the U.S., Japan needs a strategic node that could offer options to gain access to the Indian Ocean.

Elsewhere in North Asia, Indonesia has strengthened ties with South Korea through the Indonesia-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IKCEPA). Through IKCEPA — which was finalized in November 2019 — the countries plan to boost two-way trade to more than U.S. \$30 billion by 2022 with the removal of tariff barriers, according to Reuters.

"The global economy has been facing rising uncertainty from the rising tide of protectionism in the last few years," said Yoo Myung-Hee, South Korea's trade minister, according to Reuters. "Korea, as one of the largest beneficiaries of free trade, and Indonesia, as leader of ASEAN, are signaling to the world our true support for free, open and rules-based trade in this very challenging time."

SOUTHEAST ASIA'S IMPORTANCE

Even a small maritime nation like Sri Lanka could benefit from enhancing the already established relations with Indonesia. Sri Lanka-Indonesia relations date to the fifth century marked by the arrival of Hinduism and Buddhism. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1952, Sri Lanka and Indonesia have gradually expanded relations. During Indonesian President Joko Widodo's visit to Sri Lanka in 2018, leaders of the two countries agreed to expand cooperation on trade, economy and capacity building.

South Asia lacks a strong regional organization that has the potential to drive the entire region toward reaping Indian Ocean benefits. Sri Lanka and Indonesia are members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association, which could benefit Sri Lanka by working closely with Indonesia.

Enhancing maritime cooperation with Indonesia will bring unprecedented results for a small island nation like Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's geostrategic location in the Indian Ocean and the interest shown by some of the leading players in establishing strategic partnerships centered on the maritime domain makes Sri Lanka an ideal partner for Indonesia and vice versa.

Likewise, partnering with Indonesia remains important for the U.S. Establishing a stronger strategic partnership with Indonesia will demonstrate the



Members of the Indonesian Navy's marine patrol unit demonstrate their skills during a simulated anti-terror exercise at the Surabaya port in East Java in December 2019. GETTY IMAGES

strength of the U.S. commitment to any doubters in the region. Indonesian neutrality is a key strength that could benefit the U.S. Indonesia's access to the Indian and Pacific oceans offers the U.S. an Indian Ocean link through ASEAN. Ensuring freedom of navigation, adherence to a rules-based international order, and the security of the maritime trade and energy SLOCs should top the list of Washington policymakers. As the U.S. and China vie for influence in the Indo-Pacific, the U.S. will work harder to find a strong launching pad that supports U.S. strategic initiatives in the region. The Indonesian neutrality offers a greater opportunity for the U.S. to do just that.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The U.S. should consider areas, such as extraregional pressure and Indonesia's maritime challenges, as it continues to engage on maritime concerns in the Indo-Pacific. Many countries in the region believe that the U.S. is attempting to dominate the region through its strategy. Its unique geographical centrality in the Indo-Pacific, access to major SLOCs, economic potential, existing strong U.S. relations, prominent position in ASEAN, acceptance by regional partners and ties with the PRC make Indonesia a decisive strategic partner for the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific when addressing maritime

security concerns and in implementing the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. In this regard, consider the following recommendations:

Strategic Partnerships: Complex maritime affairs influence regional/global players to form strong partnerships. A strong position held by Indonesia in the ASEAN provides a unique platform to forge strategic partnerships with a number of countries. The establishment of multilateral strategic alliances centering on Indonesia will allow the U.S. to diplomatically counter the PRC.

Strategic Presence: To address maritime security concerns, strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific is a prerequisite. Failure to do so will grant an opportunity for others to fill the vacuum. Expansion of the USINDOPACOM area of responsibility demarcation toward the East African coast could enhance the U.S. presence in the entire Indian Ocean.

Strategic Engagement: Strategic partnership and presence building centering on Indonesia will assist the U.S. to better engage with regional partners. Engagement should focus on diplomatic, informational, military and economic aspects. USINDOPACOM should play a leading role in all four elements using a collaborative approach through its partnership with Indonesia. □

Remote | Access

Telemedicine Program Helping Pacific Islanders for 30 Years

FORUM STAFF

Diseases rarely seen in the developed world — tuberculosis, leprosy, rheumatic fever — still persist in many remote islands of the Pacific. Adding to the health challenges for island residents are conditions linked to either local culture or the environment, such as injuries caused by billfish and motorboats and even cancers caused by the custom of chewing betel nuts.

Oceans of distance and a lack of access to cutting-edge medical care once proved insurmountable for many of these patients, but U.S. military doctors in Hawaii established what has become the longest-running telemedicine program in the world providing humanitarian care, according to an article written by the program's founder in the medical journal *Frontiers in Public Health*.

The Pacific Island Health Care Project (PIHCP) has been a lifeline for Pacific islands patients and an educational training ground for physicians at Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC) in Honolulu, Hawaii, since 1990.

“It’s a great learning experience for medical personnel, and these patients are so appreciative of the care they get,” said U.S. Army Col. Mark Burnett, PIHCP medical director and a pediatric infectious disease and travel medicine physician at Tripler.

The PIHCP is federally funded through the U.S. Army Medical Command to provide humanitarian care to underserved people of the U.S.-affiliated Pacific islands and to create graduate medical educational experiences for Tripler residents and staff. The program serves patients from the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Palau. It also serves the U.S. territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. These remote islands are home to approximately 500,000 people scattered across more than 18.1 million

square kilometers of Pacific Ocean. Many survive by farming and fishing. Under the Compact of Free Association, citizens of Palau, the Marshall Islands and FSM are entitled to care through the military health system with the proper referral from their health care systems.

A Wisconsin native, Burnett came to the program as a medical student in 1992 and then returned as a resident from 1993 to 1997. In the earliest days of the program, critically ill patients would arrive at Tripler with little advance warning. “They would just fly over



This 10-year-old girl from the Federated States of Micronesia was referred to Tripler Army Medical Center to be treated for a genetic condition. REGIONAL MEDICAL COMMAND-PACIFIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

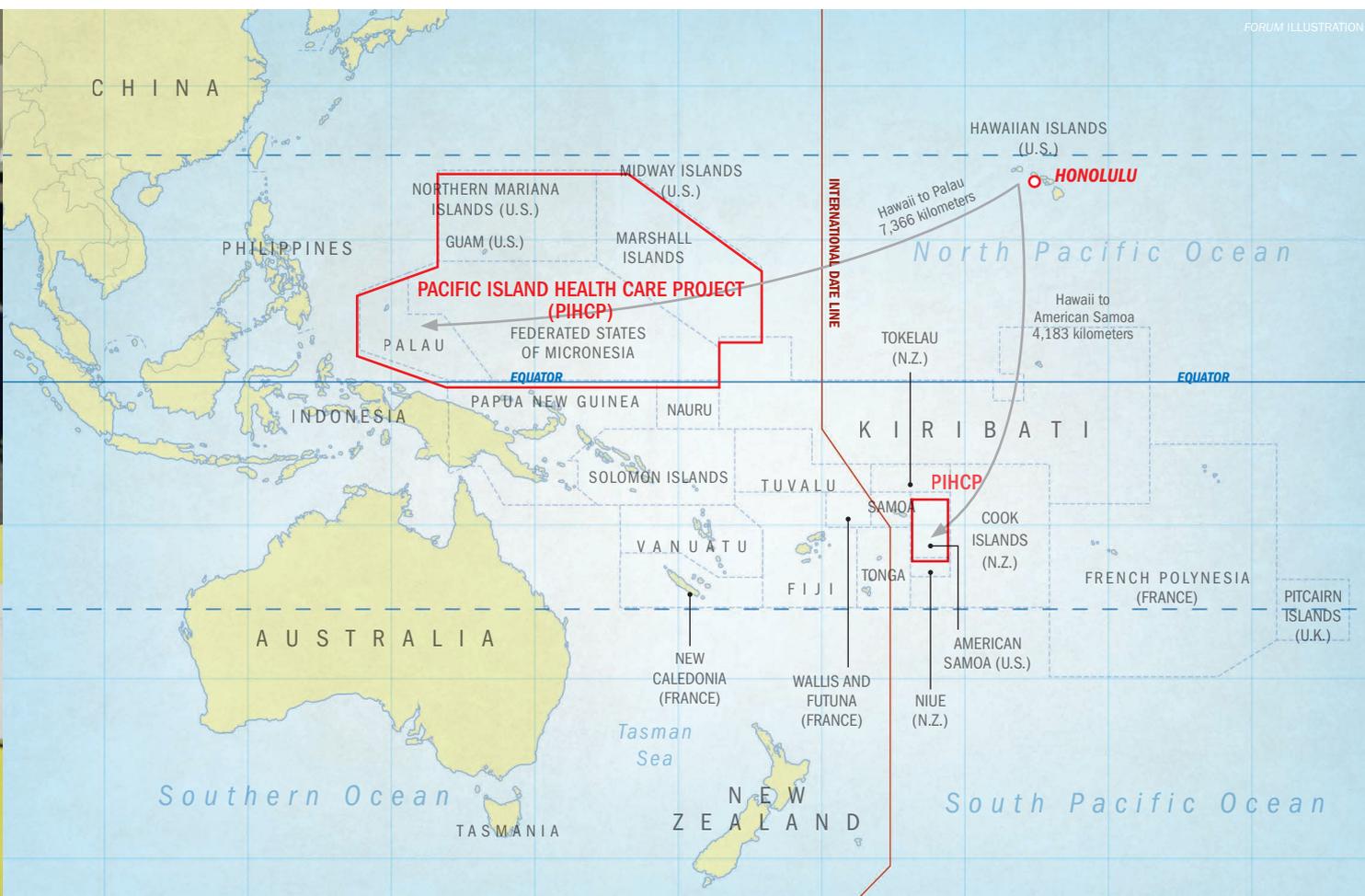
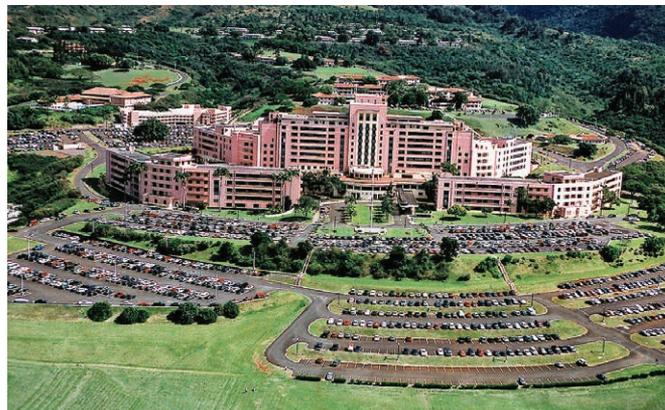
here, and we would have little idea what we were getting ourselves into,” Burnett said.

The project has undergone many changes since 1990 to improve outcomes and make the educational experiences more valuable. Unlike the earliest days of the program, when island doctors would call and immediately send ill patients to Hawaii, the program slowly equipped many island clinics with computers, digital cameras, scanners, printers and video equipment to support a web-based consultation system. The success of the program is the result of the foresight and ingenuity of retired U.S. Army Col. Donald Person, a former chief of pediatrics at Tripler who recognized how new technologies could benefit patients in remote areas.

Burnett became director in March 2012 following the retirement of Col. Person, who remains actively involved in the program and maintains many friendships with physicians in the Pacific islands. With differences in time zones and the complexity of getting patients to Tripler, the program is judicious about which patients become one of the approximately 100 to visit Tripler each year. Many are treated at local clinics on the islands after their doctors consult with Tripler physicians. “Now we’ve got a system that really works well where they will, following consent from the patient or parent in the case of a

Under the Compact of Free Association, citizens of Palau, the Marshall Islands and FSM are entitled to care through the military health system with the proper referral from their health care systems.

Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, provides cutting-edge care to patients in remote Pacific islands through the Pacific Island Health Care Project. WIKIMEDIA



FORUM ILLUSTRATION



U.S. Army Col. Mark Burnett, medical director of the Pacific Island Health Care Project, second from left, was inducted into the prestigious Order of the Military Medical Merit in 2017.

AMY PARR/REGIONAL HEALTH COMMAND

Palau resident Uchel Naito, left, was successfully treated for a blood disease by the Pacific Island Health Care Project. His wife, Mary A. Takada, right, has been the coordinator of the Palau Medical Referral Program in Hawaii for the past 15 years. Naito is now the consul general of the Republic of Palau to the state of Hawaii. PALAU MINISTRY OF HEALTH



minor, upload information about the patients — name, background, past medical history,” Burnett said. “They can upload pictures, and some places [in the islands] can do CT scans.”

Doctors attempted real-time consultation with video teleconferencing between U.S. Army Missile Defense Command on the Marshall Islands and Tripler as early as 1992. However, with major time zone differences and the ease of emailing documents and image attachments, the project moved toward a “store and forward” web-based system for nonemergency patients.

“It works out well for the doctors here,” Burnett said. “There have been attempts in the past to do synchronous telemedicine, but store and forward works better. They upload information to the system. They shoot it to us, and Dr. Person and myself will screen it.”

Giving Back

Mary A. Takada had never heard about the health care program when her husband, Uchel Naito, was referred to Tripler in 2002. Naito was diagnosed with a slow-growing blood cancer called hairy cell leukemia. His treatment from 2002 to 2005 was a complete success. “He is here to tell the story,” Takada said. “He is one of the survivors.” During the treatment, Takada volunteered to help other patients coming from Palau to Hawaii. Many required interpreters, and they also needed rides to appointments.

In 2005, Takada officially became coordinator for the Palau Medical Referral Program in Hawaii and case manager for patients coming from the nation to Tripler. “I realized this was a one-sided relationship,” Takada said. “We were the recipients, and we wanted to give something back and to be by the side of the patients coming from Palau.”

Coming to Hawaii

Patients referred to Tripler must have precisely defined and treatable conditions because the U.S. government doesn’t fund long-term needs that involve durable equipment, such as dialysis. The patients must have a good chance of making a healthy return to their lives on the islands after treatment.

For those who are sent to Hawaii, the program pays for their airfare to and from Honolulu and their inpatient and outpatient care. It doesn’t pay for durable medical equipment, transportation to and from clinic visits, or food.

Although all of the islands can consult with Tripler, their governments must provide housing in Hawaii to be able to refer patients. Right now, it’s offered only by the governments of Pohnpei State in the FSM, the Marshall Islands and Palau.

Palau provides housing in Hawaii for up to eight patients and eight family members at one time. “We are operating at full capacity right now,” Takada said.



Ear, nose and throat specialists from Tripler Army Medical Center conduct a clinic in Palau in 2016 and screen a patient for possible surgery. U.S. ARMY

The global COVID-19 pandemic caused the program to temporarily suspend the acceptance of new cases at Tripler. Patients already in Hawaii are continuing to receive care and will return home after their care is complete.

Learning Opportunities

More than 50 physicians from throughout the islands can refer patients from their clinics or consult with Tripler physicians. By doing so, they are providing valuable experiences for residents at Tripler, who are seeing maladies they would rarely see in the U.S., Burnett said. Patients coming from outer atolls sometimes have advanced cancers with large head and neck lesions that would have been treated much earlier in the U.S. Coming to Tripler, Burnett said, “is the only chance for these patients to survive.”

Other cancers are linked to a local custom. Many island residents chew betel nuts, for example, which are seeds from a type of palm tree. The nuts are chewed after being ground up or sliced and then wrapped in leaves and coated with lime. Sometimes tobacco is mixed in, creating a carcinogenic and addictive paste. “Their teeth turn bright red, and they spit it out, and it’s bright red,” Burnett said. “It’s incredibly addictive.”

Children with cleft palates are a common ear, nose, throat referral to Tripler. Oral cancers are prevalent in Palau and the states of Yap and Pohnpei in the FSM, where both

men and women chew the betel nut-tobacco mix, according to a report on the PIHCP penned by Person.

The telemedicine program is especially useful in assessing patients with gynecological cancers, the report said. Women with advanced but treatable uterine and ovarian cancers are treated in the program. In one case, Tripler surgeons removed a 90-pound benign ovarian cyst from a Marshall Islands woman.

Sometimes, maladies are unique to the environment. A boy from Kosrae state in the FSM, for example, fell on a coconut husker (spike buried in the ground) and lacerated his trachea. Life-threatening emphysema ensued before a Tripler pediatric surgeon operated. The child returned home healthy a week after the surgery.

Lives Transformed

When patients are successfully treated — either through telephone and web consultations or visits to Tripler — lifetime bonds are formed between caregivers and patients. “Patients from 20 years ago are searching me out on Facebook,” Burnett said. “We see some incredible cases. You remember these patients forever.”

Takada traveled back to Palau in October 2019 and came into contact with a high school boy who had been treated at Tripler for a heart condition when he was 3 years old. “He said, ‘Do you remember me? I play basketball now. My mom told me I was a patient of yours,’” Takada said. Such experiences make the job worth doing. “We have patients who are here 20 years later to attest to this program,” she said. “And the relationships I have with these providers has developed over the years. They make me feel like I am a part of something.”

Dr. Gregory Dever, a Palau pediatrician, remembers a case when a young boy entered the emergency room at Belau National Hospital with a headache. A CT scan revealed a mass, so the case was referred to the PIHCP website for interpretation of the images. The diagnosis was meningioma, a tumor that develops from the membrane that surrounds the brain and spinal cord.

Doctors at Tripler removed the nonmalignant mass and implanted a shunt to relieve fluid buildup. The boy eventually was operated on a second time at Tripler, according to Dever, the former director of hospital and clinical services for the Palau Ministry of Health. Now, for almost a decade, the patient hasn’t needed to return to Hawaii for additional treatment.

Without the program, Dever said, the case could have had an entirely different outcome. “This is just one story and shows the humanitarian value of the program to the islands,” Dever said. “The patient came from a humble family. The family is very appreciative that TAMC [Tripler] saved his life and that he could go on to become a substance abuse counselor.” □

Journey to Self-Reliance



Development aid helps Indo-Pacific nations help themselves

BRUCE MCFARLAND/U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Many defense professionals don't immediately think of development assistance as a security tool. Yet any strategic conversation regarding the security of the nations of the Indo-Pacific region will eventually wander into the areas of governance, education, health, economics and so forth — areas outside traditional defense activity. National security depends on many dimensions of a society.

The United States has a shared vision with many like-minded countries: a Free and Open Indo-Pacific in which all countries prosper side by side as sovereign, independent states. Internal and external threats, however, confront all nations. Malign actors, from transnational

criminals and terrorists to repressive authoritarian powers, seek to destabilize vulnerable nations, take their wealth and sovereignty, and make development vassals of them.

This undermines security, prosperity and opportunity for all people in the Indo-Pacific. Every nation in the region feels the damage these malign actors cause. States must collectively defend against these threats, just as they must collectively defend against traditional security threats. Development assistance, applied well, does much more than alleviate human misery. It can also be used to harden communities and nations against malign influences.

The journey to self-reliance is the term the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) uses to describe how to work with partner countries to assist them along their own development path. This approach is based on the deep experience USAID has gained over the past 50 years of driving global progress through the catalytic application of U.S. foreign assistance. Assistance

Workers in Nepal make flowers out of lokta bark and prepare them for export.

JASON HOUSTON/USAID

makes the greatest impact when there is commitment and capacity among the people, communities, private sector and government of the partner country. Much of what USAID does is to assist partner nations to cultivate their commitment and capacity, helping them define for themselves their objectives and pathways, and helping them build self-reliance and resilience.

USAID defines self-reliance as the capacity to plan, finance and implement solutions to local development challenges, as well as the commitment to see these through effectively, inclusively and with accountability. This definition grounds an approach to foreign assistance that reflects both the evidence the agency has gathered and the values that underpin USAID's work. As countries gain greater self-reliance, they are able to chart their own development paths and navigate obstacles along the way. Self-reliance includes resilience, which USAID defines as the ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

Self-reliance and resilience are vital components of the USAID model. It makes sense: Look at the most stable and successful countries in the world. They are countries with well-educated, healthy and prosperous populations engaged in dynamic, inclusive economies and with governments that are capable and responsive to their citizens. On the other hand, where populations suffer and economies falter, instability and misery result. Where governments fail to serve their entire populations, unrest emerges that eventually, if unresolved, leads to insecurity and chaos.

In the long run, sustainable security in the region depends on all nations coexisting equally under a common understanding of the rule of law, exercising their full sovereignty and pursuing their self-determined potential. Healthy competition and free, fair and open markets — both commercial and in the realm of ideas — balance relationships among communities and countries to secure stability and prosperity. Security, national and international, requires that each nation overcome its vulnerabilities and become a resilient, self-reliant sovereign and independent state, fully embraced by the community of nations.

USAID actualizes this approach through country road maps, which serve as USAID's primary visualization tool for assessing self-reliance in a given country, based on 17 third-party, publicly available metrics that capture the multidimensional concepts of commitment and capacity. USAID produces country road maps annually for all 137 low- and middle-income countries as classified by the World Bank and makes them publicly available. The country road maps can be viewed at <https://selfreliance.usaid.gov/>.

These road maps are used to assess where a country is on its development journey. Conversations with the

partner government, private sector, civil society and other stakeholders adds a richness to the understanding of the country's trajectory. From there, USAID can employ all the available levers to accelerate progress. Two approaches — financing self-reliance and private-sector engagement — are particularly important. Financing self-reliance is an approach to strengthen a country's ability to better marshal and manage its own resources, while private-sector engagement promotes a robust market environment and market-driven solutions to development challenges. As specific programs and activities are implemented to achieve these results, USAID engages with the partner government to focus on building commitment and capacity, strengthening the partnership as self-reliance grows.

Assistance makes the greatest impact when there is commitment and capacity among the people, communities, private sector and government of the partner country.

Although it is critically important that countries and societies determine their own pathways to self-reliance, the experience at USAID is that some pathways work much better than others. Market-based solutions that engage the private sector tend to be more sustainable than one-time investments that only fill an immediate need. Using inclusive development practices at the outset gets positive results more quickly and generates commitment from the entire society. Starting with practices that are transparent and accountable and maintaining those principles at all levels of government and society also propels success. Building human and institutional capacity across the economy, civil society, the government and the population is critical to balancing solutions to ensure they stick.

To safeguard security in the Indo-Pacific, development assistance complements defense and diplomacy. Within the combined fabric of the efforts of the United States, allies and like-minded partners, USAID's journey to self-reliance approach helps curb threats at their source, bolsters economic opportunities and commercial ties, advances liberty and democracy, and provides trusted relationships to ensure that allies and partners stand together with those in need when disaster strikes. Ultimately, the purpose of USAID foreign assistance must be ending its need to exist. All nations and territories succeed when each succeeds.

Bruce McFarland is the USAID senior development advisor to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. Although the opinions expressed are the author's own, this article is adapted from the USAID policy framework.

U.S. Increases Assistance to Pacific Island Nations

FORUM STAFF

The United States has a long-standing commitment to its Indo-Pacific neighbors and friends in promoting a peaceful, Free and Open Indo-Pacific region. Of increasing importance to the U.S. are its relationships and engagements across Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

During a September 2019 meeting with Pacific island leaders at the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced U.S. \$65 million in new assistance, which is in addition to U.S. \$36.5 million announced at the 50th Pacific Islands Forum one month earlier. On top of those commitments, the U.S. invests U.S. \$350 million annually on projects, assistance and operations to build a more prosperous future for the region, according to the U.S. State Department.

“The United States has and will continue to partner with the Pacific islands to tackle global and regional challenges, including promoting regional security and stability, advancing sustainable growth, addressing environmental challenges, responding to natural disasters, and strengthening our people-to-people ties,” the State Department said.

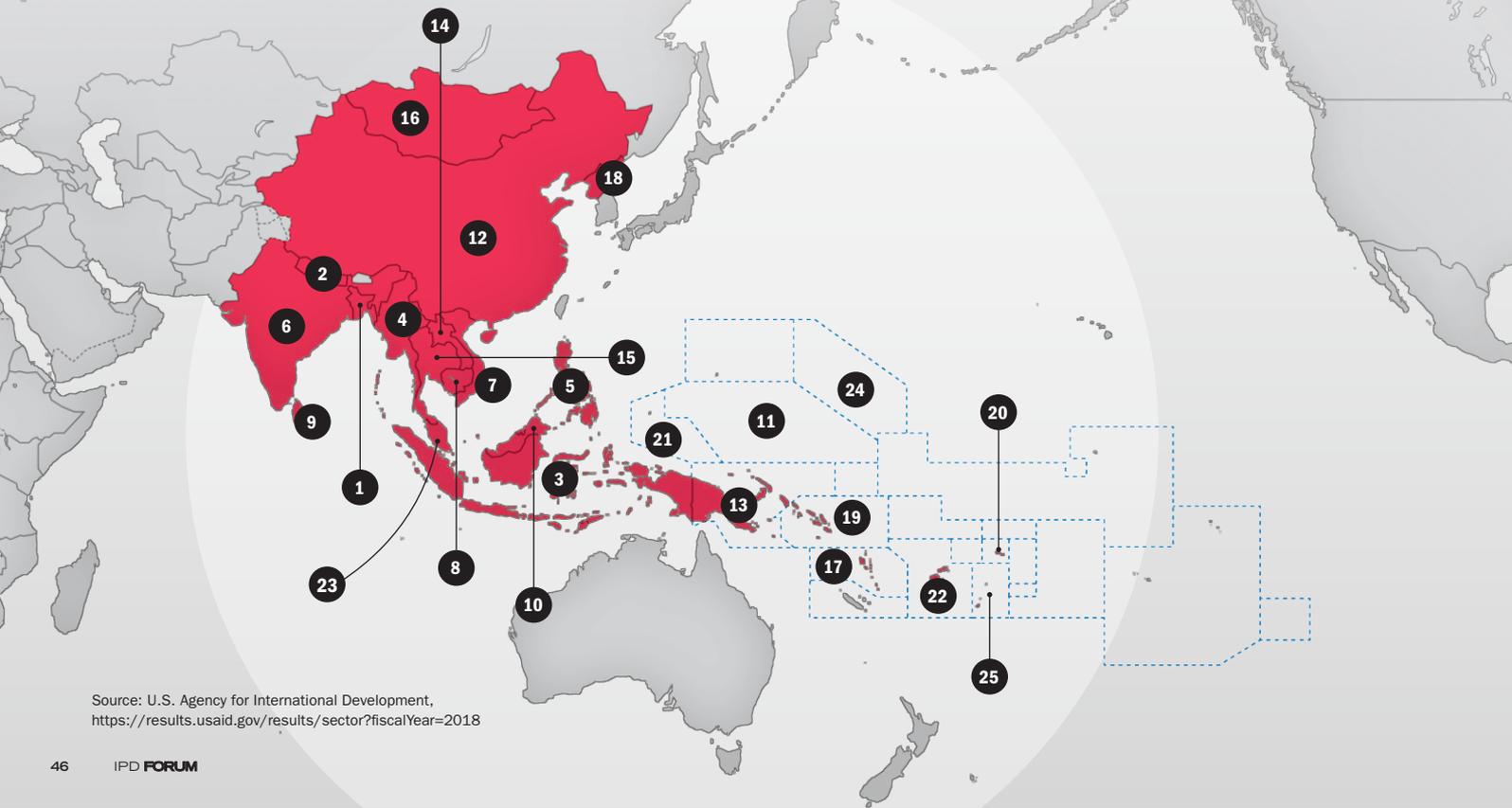
Under a Pacific Pledge as part of its Indo-Pacific strategy, the U.S. is committing more than U.S. \$100 million in new assistance to the region, with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) providing more than U.S. \$63 million in new programs, more than doubling development assistance from previous years, according to

the State Department.

Here’s a breakdown of how the State Department says the Pacific engagement money will be spent:

- **Improving resilience to environmental challenges:** The U.S. plans to commit U.S. \$10 million to provide support for disaster resilience, weather forecasting and to address environmental challenges in the Pacific region. “The United States recognizes that addressing environmental degradation and climate change is a priority in the Pacific due to the threat posed by sea level rise and the region’s vulnerability to natural disasters,” the State Department said.
- **Building resilient infrastructure and expanding connectivity:** The U.S. pledged an immediate U.S. \$23 million in late 2019 to electrify Papua New Guinea and is working with Australia, Japan and New Zealand to bring electricity to at least 70% of the greater Pacific region by 2030. USAID will also provide U.S. \$7.5 million to help expand broadband connectivity across Pacific island nations.
- **Enhancing good governance:** As part of its Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative, the U.S. will provide U.S. \$15 million “to promote sound, just and responsive governance within the region to empower citizens, help combat corruption and strengthen nations’ autonomy.” The State Department’s Global Engagement Center is also working to strengthen local

Top 25 Indo-Pacific Recipients of U.S. Agency for International Development Spending



Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, <https://results.usaid.gov/results/sector?fiscalYear=2018>

journalism training and reporting.

- **Strengthening maritime security:** USAID will provide up to U.S. \$7.5 million to help Pacific islands stop illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in their exclusive economic zones.
- **Enhancing security cooperation:** The State Department will embed advisors in Fiji, Palau and the Solomon Islands to enhance security. In Fiji, a defense strategic policy and planning reform advisor will be embedded with the Fijian Ministry of Defence. In Palau, an advisor embedded at the Ministry of Justice’s Marine Law Enforcement Division will assist with operationalizing a new Maritime Law Center. In the Solomon Islands, an advisor embedded at the Ministry of Police and National Security’s Royal Solomon Islands Police Force will enhance maritime governance and security.
- **Building cyber capacity:** The United States held a capacity building workshop in August 2019 for the Pacific islands on national cyber strategy development, risk management and incident response and managing broadband spectrum and digital connectivity.

“The United States is and always will be an Indo-Pacific nation,” according to a November 2019 State Department report titled, “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision.” “We are committed to upholding a free and open Indo-Pacific in which all nations, large and small, are secure in their sovereignty and able

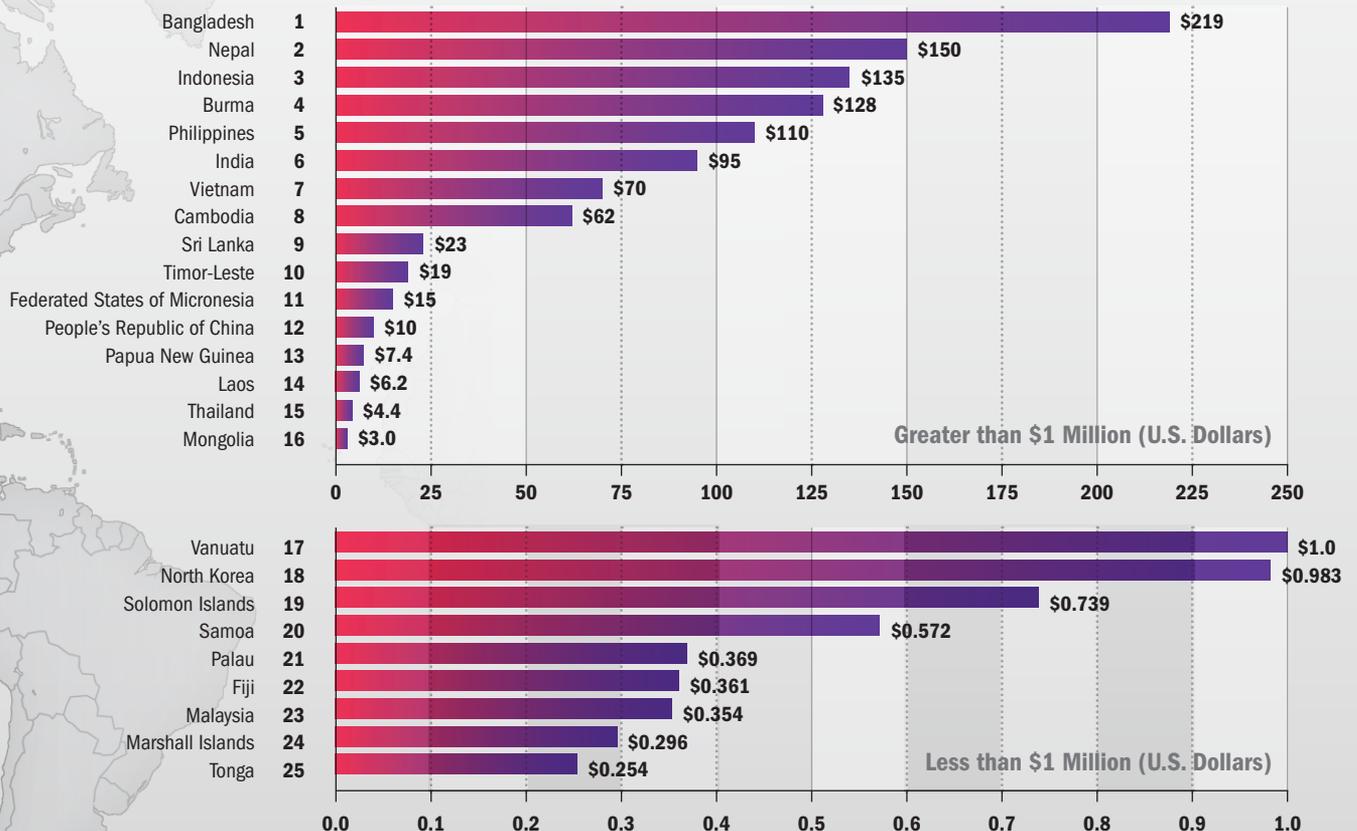


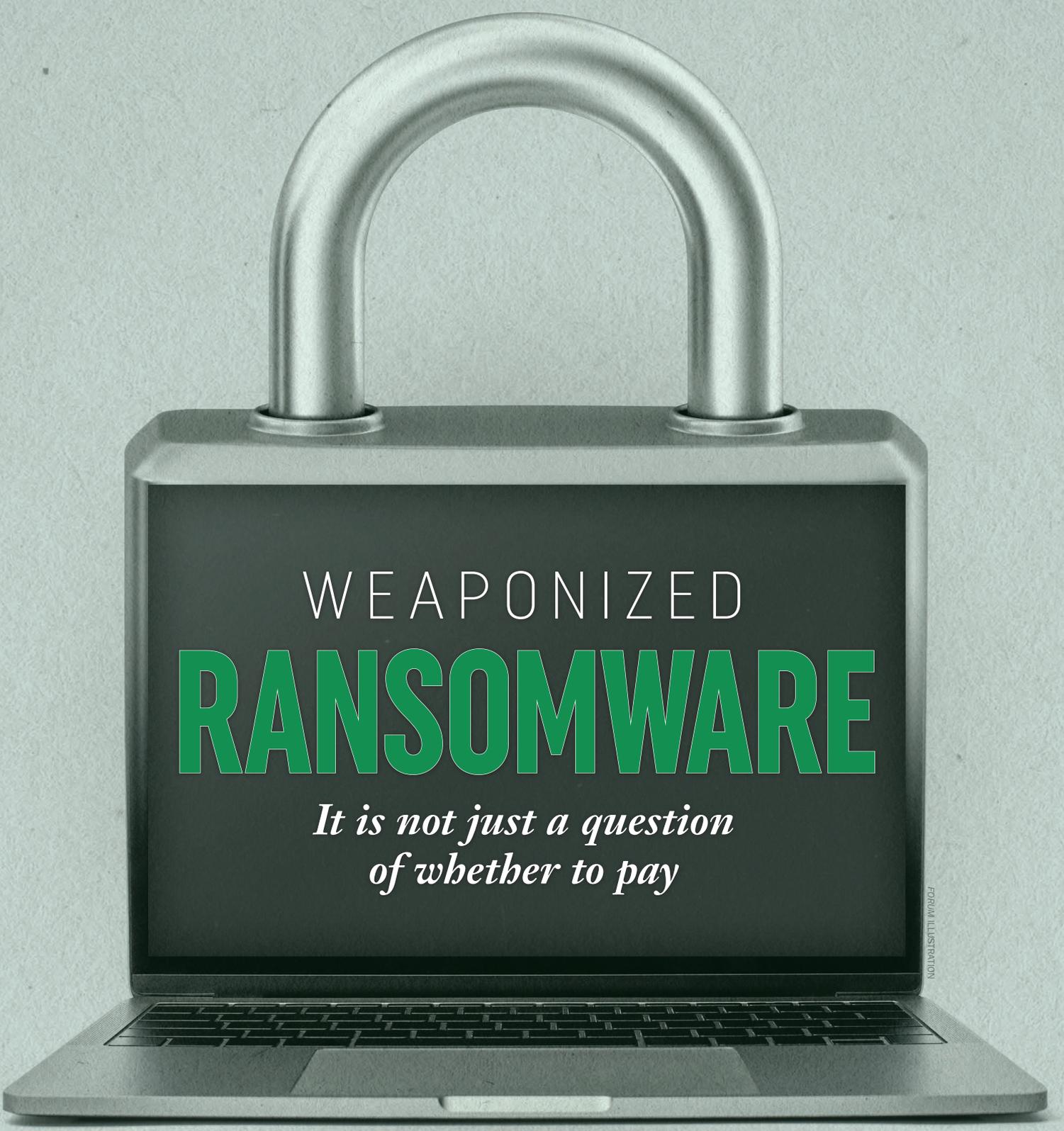
USAID activities in Bangladesh nurture the potential of schoolchildren, particularly among disadvantaged families. USAID

to pursue economic growth consistent with international law and principles of fair competition. We will compete vigorously against attempts to limit the autonomy and freedom of choice of Indo-Pacific nations.” □



Fiscal Year 2018 (Millions of U.S. Dollars)





WEAPONIZED
RANSOMWARE

*It is not just a question
of whether to pay*

FORUM ILLUSTRATION

Weaponized ransomware attacks are accelerating globally against public and private organizations. Ransomware is malicious software, or malware, used to deny victims access to their systems.

Hackers weaponize ransomware through a double-extortion tactic to intimidate victims into paying large ransoms. The scheme involves two steps. The hackers first promise to decrypt a victim's computer systems if the victim pays. Then, they pressure the victim by threatening public release of the victim's sensitive files, often increasing the ransom demand.

There are two categories of ransomware: crypto and lockers. Crypto ransomware encrypts data files on systems, requiring victims to pay to obtain a decryption key to recover data files. Locker ransomware blocks login or file access, requiring victims to pay to obtain an unlock code.

the Maze ransomware to attack a security staffing company, Allied Universal, for 300 bitcoins, or about U.S. \$2.3 million. Unbeknownst to Allied Universal, the hackers exfiltrated large volumes of confidential data before encrypting the network.

Maze hackers then increased the pressure on Allied Universal by contacting BleepingComputer, a computer help website, with details about the data breach. The hackers threatened to release 700 megabytes of Allied Universal's confidential data, according to a November 21, 2019, report by BleepingComputer. They increased the ransom to U.S. \$3.8 million, but Allied Universal did not pay. The attack became public when the hackers posted the information on a Russian hacker and malware forum.

The Maze ransomware attack against Allied Universal was the first reported use of the double-extortion tactic. Before this incident, victims had not considered ransomware attacks as data breaches. Shortly after that, Clop, Nemty and DoppelPaymer hackers began adopting similar tactics.

IMPLICATIONS OF SHIFTING TACTICS

Organizations with cyber insurance policies can be easier targets for hackers to extort because insurers persuade them to pay the ransom, according to a September 17, 2019, report by ZDNet, a business technology news website. Cyber insurance companies want to limit ransomware claims costs and will recommend ransom payment even if victim organizations can recover from backups because that tends to cost more than paying a ransom. Therefore, insurance companies played a role in escalating ransomware attacks by authorizing ransomware payments by clients, according to an August 27, 2019, report by ProPublica, an independent, nonprofit news organization. Hackers profited from ransomware payments authorized by insurance companies, fueling a cycle of ransomware crime.

To break this cycle, 225 mayors in the United States signed a July 2019 resolution to stop paying ransoms to hackers. In October 2019, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation issued a ransomware public service announcement urging victims, including private sector organizations and local governments, to stop paying ransoms. By November 2019, hackers began to use the double-extortion tactic, which included sensitive data exfiltration.

Adding data exfiltration to ransomware was a game-changer. In the past, victim companies did not treat ransomware attacks as data breaches because the attacks only restricted access to their networks by encryption. Now, with double-extortion, hackers exfiltrate sensitive data, so victim companies must follow applicable regulatory reporting requirements and consider third-party liability exposure.

Third-party liability includes injury to others, such



Threat actors target companies, utilities, government entities and other organizations that can make large ransom payments.

REUTERS

Some victim companies capitulate to the hackers' demands and pay the ransom. On December 31, 2019, hackers used Sodinokibi/REvil ransomware to attack Travelex, a foreign exchange company. Prior to attempting to extort U.S. \$6 million, the hackers accessed Travelex's server for several months and exfiltrated 5 gigabytes of sensitive data, according to a January 7, 2020, report by the BBC. In the end, Travelex paid a ransom of about U.S. \$2.3 million, according to an April 9, 2020, report by *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper.

Other victim companies resist paying, only to face the data breach consequences. In 2019, hackers used



Ransomware INFORMATION RESOURCES

- **The Carnegie Mellon University Software Engineering Institute** recommends:
https://insights.sei.cmu.edu/sei_blog/2017/05/ransomware-best-practices-for-prevention-and-response.html
- **The National Institute of Standards and Technology** released a draft version guide for ransomware and other destructive events in January 2020:
<https://www.nccoe.nist.gov/sites/default/files/library/sp1800/di-detect-respond-nist-sp1800-26-draft.pdf>
- **The Center for Internet Security** provides a primer for ransomware:
<https://www.cisecurity.org/white-papers/security-primer-ransomware/>
- **Emsisoft** identifies strategies for the detection and mitigation of data exfiltration:
<https://blog.emsisoft.com/en/35235/ransomware-data-exfiltration-detection-and-mitigation-strategies/>
- **The Center for Internet Security** provides configuration guidelines to safeguard systems:
<https://www.cisecurity.org/cis-benchmarks/>
- For security and privacy controls guidance on government systems, see the **National Institute of Standards and Technology** Special Publication 800-53 Revision 4:
<https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-53r4.pdf>

as customers or vendors, and can cover claims for breach of contract or payment card industry penalties. For example, Sodinokibi/REvil hackers claimed to have attacked a New York entertainment law firm, Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks. They posted screenshots of entertainers' legal contracts, including those of Madonna and Christina Aguilera, on the dark web and threatened the release of data in nine phases, according to a May 8, 2020, report by Cointelegraph, a website covering the crypto industry.

The attack on Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks highlights how a law firm can incur third-party liability costs from exfiltrated client data. Hackers can use the stolen data, such as email, phone numbers and relationship information, to launch attacks against the law firm's supply chain, including clients, other law firms and media companies, or to sell the information on the dark web. These actions increase a victim organization's third-party liability exposure, which then escalates insurance claims.

Cyber insurance providers are incurring higher costs because of the recent shifts in ransomware tactics. As a result, U.S. cyber insurance rates are increasing as much as 25% because of the rising costs of ransomware, according to a January 22, 2020, Reuters report.

Data exfiltration requires high-level skills to break into networks and remove sensitive data. Therefore, some ransomware hackers began teaming with highly skilled hackers to launch a new type of attack not only against a victim's network but also against its supply

chain, according to a November 21, 2019, report by AdvIntel, a fraud prevention company. The skilled hackers use advanced persistent threat tactics to remain in a network undetected for an extended period. Their main objective is to steal sensitive data, but they may also destroy network backups and exploit the victim's supply chain through credential stealing and infection of software updates. Ransomware hackers then unleash ransomware to encrypt a victim company's network and secure a high payout. Meanwhile, the skilled hackers collected information to exploit the victim's customers and vendors, placing them at risk of a third-party attack.

Even unskilled individuals can monetize ransomware by renting or purchasing distribution kits from ransomware hackers. Specifically, hackers use a business model called ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) to monetize ransomware through unskilled individuals, called affiliates. In return for access to the ransomware (for example, infrastructure, software updates and support), the affiliates share the ransom proceeds with the hackers. RaaS affiliates tend to attack smaller organizations for smaller ransoms (mostly less than U.S. \$5,000), according to a January 23, 2020, report by blockchain analysis company Chainalysis. While the ransom amounts may be lower, the attacks are more widespread, making it profitable for RaaS hackers. To evade law enforcement, RaaS is sold on dark web forums using cryptocurrencies.

To purchase RaaS or pay ransoms, ransomware hackers only accept cryptocurrencies to keep the

transactions untraceable. Some cryptocurrencies are traceable, according to an October 15, 2019, report by CipherTrace. Bitcoin and Ethereum use public transaction ledgers containing the sender and receiver wallet addresses, allowing law enforcement to track payments. Unlike Bitcoin and Ethereum, Monero is a high-anonymity cryptocurrency with encrypted transaction information. In March 2020, the Sodinokibi/REvil hackers began using only Monero, according to an April 11, 2020, report by BleepingComputer. Other high-anonymity cryptocurrencies used by ransomware hackers include Dash and Zcash.

RANSOMWARE DURING COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, hackers from different ransomware groups stated they would not attack health care and medical organizations, according to a March 18, 2020, report by BleepingComputer. This proved to be false. In March 2020, Maze hackers attacked a British COVID-19 test center, Hammersmith Medicines Research, and Sodinokibi hackers attacked a U.S. biotechnology company researching COVID-19 called 10x Genomics.

By April 2020, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) issued an alert because ransomware attacks against critical health care institutions were increasing. To keep medical facilities operational during the pandemic, security companies such as Emsisoft and Coveware offered free ransomware recovery assistance.

RECOVERING FROM RANSOMWARE

Companies that pay a ransom receive a key to decrypt their data, but the decryption key does not always work. Some ransomware had recovery rates as low as 40%, while other ransomware variants came close to 100%, according to an April 29, 2020, report by Coveware. Because victims do not know whether the decryption key will work, they must have backups to recover from a ransomware attack.

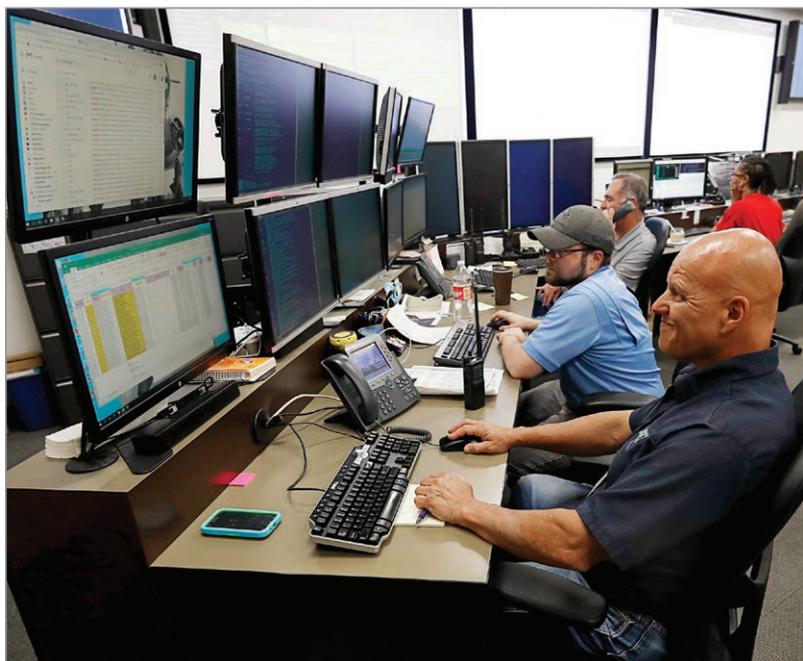
Victims with a 3-2-1 backup strategy are in the best position to recover from a ransomware attack. With this strategy, an organization creates three backup copies of its data on two platforms, generally hard drives and in the cloud, keeping one backup copy offsite. Even with backup copies, victims will experience operational downtime.

Recovery downtime averages 15 days, according to Coveware's April report. Victims can minimize downtime and negative impacts by planning for attacks. They should create plans — incident response, business continuity and disaster recovery — and test them.

Every public, private and nonprofit organization is at risk of a ransomware attack, but they can reduce their risk through cyber defense and cyber hygiene

actions. With ransomware hackers shifting to weaponized ransomware, organizations may want to consider the following steps:

- Treat all ransomware attacks as a data breach.
- Understand and prepare for advanced persistent threat tactics.
- Identify, map and protect the organization's sensitive data.
- Identify, map and protect the organization's supply chain (customers, vendors, partners, software applications, etc.).
- Prepare for attacks originating from the organization's supply chain (phishing, software updates, etc.).



Monitors check their screens at the Denver-based Colorado Governor's Office of Technology, tasked with protecting the state from cyber attacks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Online resources are available to learn more about ransomware. The U.S. Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency provides ransomware security tips (ST19-001) through its website (www.us-cert.gov). The No More Ransom website (www.nomoreransom.org) is an initiative by the Netherlands' Police National High Tech Crime Unit, Europol's European Cybercrime Centre, and cyber security firms Kaspersky and McAfee. The website provides ransomware information and assists victims with retrieving their data for some ransomware variants. The MalwareHunterTeam website (<https://malwarehunterteam.com>) offers information about more than 600 ransomware variants and assists with ransomware identification. □



UNDERWATER AWARENESS



NUANCED APPROACH NEEDED TO BUILD ACOUSTIC CAPABILITY

CMDR. (RET.) DR. ARNAB DAS/INDIAN NAVY

The rise of India and the People's Republic of China (PRC) as economic and political powers places more strategic significance on the tropical littoral waters of the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. These waters have a unique bearing on naval deployments and, more importantly, on underwater system deployments. As threats from beneath the waves continue to rise, security partners in the Indo-Pacific need to take a fresh look at how they achieve underwater domain awareness (UDA). Militaries that compete with nonmilitary stakeholders for funds must bring diverse communities together to achieve common goals.

The maritime domain awareness (MDA) concept achieved substantial prominence after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The global community got together to build infrastructure and capabilities to address MDA limitations, and security forces teamed up with the research community to enhance their MDA capabilities. In the Indian Ocean region, following a series of terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008, India's government started working to ensure respectable levels of MDA. The Indian Navy embarked on an ambitious plan to develop infrastructure and capabilities.

MDA in its present form needs to be understood before we attempt to connect UDA to it or to define UDA from a new perspective. The MDA framework declared by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in October 2005 in its "National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness for the National

Strategy for Maritime Security" doesn't mention the underwater threat or a mitigation strategy. The U.S. did not consider the underwater threat to be substantial at the time. After 9/11, the U.S. recognized the possibility of other avenues that terrorists might use to harm U.S. interests, but the underwater threat did not explicitly figure into strategic formulations.

U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Steven C. Boraz in a 2009 report brought out the myths and realities of the era and recognized the limitations of a Navy-driven MDA. As late as February 2015, the academic literature recognized the limitations of U.S. capabilities in dealing with underwater threats. The U.S. Coast Guard, which is the primary agency responsible for MDA through the ports, waterways and coastal security mission, has made significant investments in surface and air assets as well as in increased command-and-control capabilities. Little has been done, however, to expand the mission to the underwater domain.

The underwater threat from nation-states, terrorists and criminal organizations is on the rise, and multiple outfits are acquiring capabilities that can outwit risk mitigation strategies of security establishments. Nations such as North Korea, the PRC and Russia have submersible capabilities that can be deployed to inflict large-scale damage on maritime assets. Nonstate actors such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have deployed submersibles to attack their adversaries.

SENSOR CHALLENGES

The underwater wireless sensor networks that may be deployed for multiple underwater surveillance applications face unique challenges in harsh underwater-channel environments with low bandwidth, high propagation delays and higher bit error rates. The variable speed of sound and the significant node mobility due to water currents pose another set of unique challenges. These underwater-channel distortions and site-specific challenges require focused mitigation strategies that limit their deployment for broader UDA applications.



Trade and connectivity to the world help ensure energy and food security. The oceans are a vast reserve of resources that can contribute to the economic well-being of a nation.

Underwater technology development, and more specifically acoustic technology development, matured during the Cold War when the U.S. and then-Soviet Union invested heavily in the deep waters and achieved significant success in stabilizing sonar performance. Massive field experiments at sea validated the algorithms and minimized medium uncertainties. When the naval focus shifted to the littoral waters after the Cold War, the principles that stabilized sonar performance in the deep waters did not apply, resulting in suboptimal performance. Shallow-water acoustics have their own challenges, and the experimental work required is far beyond the means of developing countries, making it an exclusive club.

The Cold War saw unquestioned military investments and technology development for national security. When the Cold War ended, however, the national security apparatus did not receive the same level of support, resulting in multiple projects getting stalled. The sound surveillance system was a large underwater sensor network project driven by the U.S. Navy beginning in 1949 to monitor Soviet vessels in the GIUK gap. The GIUK gap, an area in the North Atlantic Ocean that forms a naval chokepoint, is an acronym

for Greenland, Iceland and the United Kingdom. Toward the end of the Cold War, shore stations for the surveillance system had to be opened for academic research to support their operational and maintenance cost. The project significantly boosted the underwater acoustic field research that stabilized sonar performance in the deep waters for multiple nonmilitary applications.

The Point Sur naval experimental facility in California opened in 1958 and had to be shut down in 1984 for lack of funds. A ship shock-test facility and the Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low Frequency Active project, known as SURTASS-LFA, had to be relocated and scaled down due to opposition from the nonprofit Natural Resources Defense Council on environmental grounds. The council compelled the Navy to file an environmental impact statement for the first time in the early 1990s. In 1996, 13 Cuvier's beaked whales, a deep-diving breed that rarely strand, were found stranded off the coast of Greece. Dr. Alexandros Frantzis, a biologist at the University of Athens, linked the stranding to the use of sonar in the immediate area. NATO was involved in a joint international experiment using a high-powered, low-frequency sonar at the time of the stranding. The event became a massive rallying point for environmental activists, and they demanded a ban on such trials. The U.S. Navy was forced to fund research on the impact of such trials on marine animals. These incidents reflected a geopolitical shift in which socioeconomic issues had to be balanced with national security demands.

MDA has remained an event-driven construct. The 9/11 attacks in the U.S. triggered massive efforts toward MDA, and the Indian government took major steps toward MDA after the Mumbai attacks. Both initiatives have remained security-driven and have not received much support from other stakeholders. Security officials, citing classified data that could harm national security, have kept information firmly in their grip. A key challenge in a developing nation such as India and many other nations in the Indo-Pacific is that allocating massive funds for security requirements is politically unviable, given other priorities. Thus, MDA has remained limited due to lack of resources and an absence of a whole-of-nation approach. UDA as a security-driven construct,

therefore, will be extremely hard to fund because of its resource-intensive nature, which makes it politically harder to support.

A more nuanced approach is required, given the challenges of increasing underwater threats and the underwater risk mitigation strategy becoming an exclusive club of countries with high-tech capabilities. UDA should take on a far different structure rather than being treated as a mere extension of the MDA and an exclusive security construct.

ACOUSTIC CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY BUILDING

The post-Cold War period saw two major UDA developments. The first is the shift in underwater security activities toward littoral waters. The second is effective acoustic capacity and capability building. The early 21st century is seeing a significant revival of acoustic capacity and capability building to overcome the tropical littoral challenges. Three major components deserve attention:

1. **To See** – networks of sensors provide awareness.
2. **To Understand** – acoustic analysis and interpretation.
3. **To Share** – a network transmits actionable information in real time.

Traditionally, a small group of nations have made sensors and controlled their availability. While indigenous production of underwater sensors is desirable, Indo-Pacific nations can still manage with imported sensors.

Significant progress has been made in the development of networking technologies. However, the acoustic analysis in the littorals of the Indian Ocean region requires customized efforts to overcome site-specific medium distortions. This would involve massive shallow-water acoustic measurement (SWAM) experiments to collect acoustic data followed by signal-processing efforts to model the underwater channel and ambient noise.

SWAM experiments require two main inputs — platforms to access the nooks and crannies in the undersea domain and signal-processing abilities to derive meaningful inputs. The conventional shipborne deployment of sensors has not yielded desired results and is expensive to cover the massive area that needs to be studied. Underwater gliders have proven to be the best-suited platform for undertaking underwater acoustic surveys. The buoyancy engine-driven gliders are slow, cheaper and have long endurance and are less noisy. They can be deployed in large



The U.S. Navy now funds research on the effects of sonar testing on marine life after NATO sonar tests were believed to have contributed to the stranding of Cuvier's beaked whales in 1996.

OURBREATHINGPLANET.COM

numbers to cover huge areas and then stitched together for data analysis. They are among the recent advancements in autonomous underwater vehicles, but since they are not propeller-driven, they can be used for acoustic data collection because they produce little noise and have long endurance.

Acoustic analysis capabilities have remained limited to a small group of countries, including Australia, France, Japan, the U.S. and members of the Nordic Acoustic Association. Littoral anti-submarine warfare has been a recent phenomenon, and some Indo-Pacific countries have invested in these capabilities. The U.S. began to be concerned about Chinese belligerence in the maritime domain, particularly in the South China Sea, toward the end of the 20th century. The Asian Seas International Acoustics Experiment (ASIAEX) was a massive SWAM project that started at the beginning of this century. Initially, six U.S. universities led by the University of Washington planned the first phase of the project. In phase two, 20 universities from China, Taiwan and others were included.

The construct had far-reaching geopolitical overtones. The U.S. needed data to overcome the tropical littoral challenges in the South China Sea, so the entire experiment was funded by the Office of Naval Research but led by academia. ASIAEX was only the beginning, and the U.S. government routinely undertook acoustic data collection by streaming acoustic arrays and deploying underwater drones in the South China Sea. The Chinese realized and accepted their limitation of undertaking such large-scale SWAM experiments, so they participated with the U.S. to learn. They followed it up with a massive drive culminating in the Underwater Great Wall project. In December 2016, the PRC seized

a U.S. underwater drone deployed from the USNS Bowditch. The incident was an official declaration by the Chinese that they were interested in moving forward with their own acoustic development program.

When Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 disappeared during a flight from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to Beijing, China, in March 2014, the PRC was keen to lead the search operation. More than 90% of the passengers were from China. Indo-Pacific partners assigned the role to Australia, restricting PRC involvement in the massive development of acoustic capacity and capability that occurred during the three-year search.

Acoustic capacity and capability development in the tropical littorals can only happen with massive SWAM experiments. These are extremely resource-intensive and need to be funded at a different scale and supported with cutting-edge technology. Indo-Pacific partners need to pool resources and coordinate efforts to make this a success.

The UDA framework is a proposal that will bring transparency. Typically, there are four broad stakeholders of UDA that have attempted to generate understanding of the undersea domain to further their interests.

National Security Apparatus: The inaccessibility and opaqueness of the underwater domain present a complex problem for surveillance and identification

of disruptive elements. The involvement of nonstate actors further complicates matters. This keenness for undersea awareness from the security perspective means defending sea lines of communication, coastal waters and varied maritime assets against the proliferation of submarines and mine capabilities intended to limit the access to the seas and littoral waters.

Blue Economic Entities: Trade and connectivity to the world help ensure energy and food security. The oceans are a vast reserve of resources that can contribute to the economic well-being of a nation. Massive opportunities in sectors including pharmaceuticals, oil and gas, undersea mining, logistics and shipping are waiting to be seized.

Environmental Regulators and Disaster Management Authorities: The oceans are also a place where multiple natural disasters originate. It may not be possible to prevent a natural disaster, but early warning can minimize the loss of life and property. Human activities in the maritime domain are causing environmental degradation and are a threat to sustainable growth. Regulatory authorities and management entities need to gear up to meet the challenges of the future.

Science and Technology Providers: There is always a requirement for safe, secure and sustainable growth in the underwater domain. Science and technology will always be the main driver for such endeavors. Understanding the undersea ecosystem, the interaction among the multiple components of the ecosystem and the impact of human interventions on the ecosystem will require more research.

The conventional approach of stakeholders pursuing their own UDA efforts has serious limitations, given the competition for resources to fund them over a long period of time. This has limited UDA efforts to an exclusive club of nations. It is now time to build a universal system that can minimize conflict and bring peace and harmony internationally.

Figure 1 presents a comprehensive perspective of the UDA framework. The underlying requirement for all stakeholders is to know the developments in the undersea domain, make sense out of these developments and then respond effectively and efficiently.

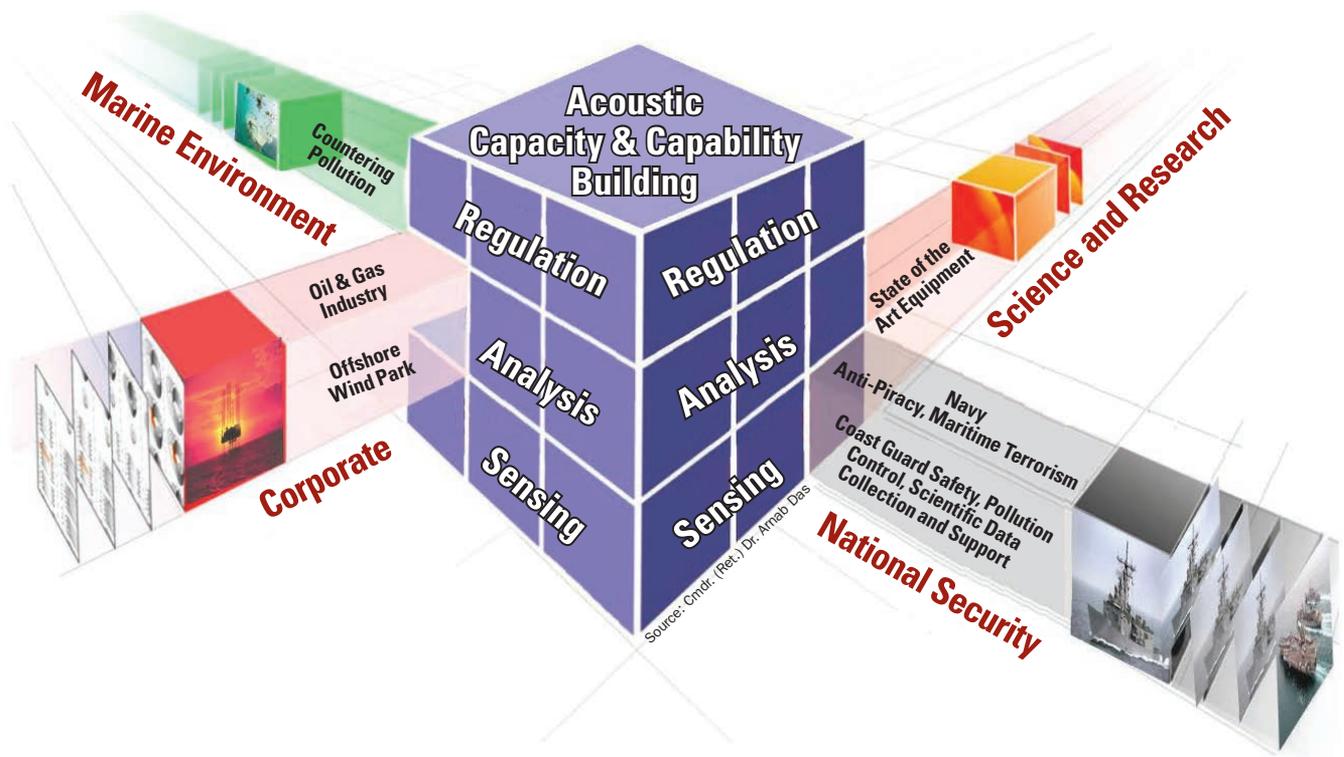
UDA on a comprehensive scale needs to be understood in its horizontal and vertical

An autonomous underwater vehicle is used to search for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Figure 1: Underwater Domain Awareness



constructs. The horizontal construct would be the resource availability in terms of technology, infrastructure, capability and capacity. The stakeholders represented by the four faces of the cube will have specific requirements, although the core will remain acoustic capacity and capability building. The vertical construct is the hierarchy of establishing a comprehensive UDA. The first level would be the sensing of the undersea domain for threats, resources and activities. The second level would be making sense of the data generated to plan security strategies, conservation plans and resource utilization plans. The next level would be to formulate regulatory framework and the monitoring mechanism at the local, national and global levels.

The figure gives a comprehensive way forward for the stakeholders to engage and interact. The individual cubes represent specific aspects that need to be addressed. The user-academia-industry partnership can be seamlessly formulated based on the user requirement, academic inputs and the industry interface represented by the specific cube. It will enable a more focused approach and well-defined interactive framework. Given the appropriate impetus, the UDA framework can

address multiple challenges faced by developing nations. The proposed UDA framework encourages pooling resources and coordinating efforts by all stakeholders to promote safe, secure and sustainable growth for all.

In the Indian Ocean region, UDA has a major role to play to prevent maritime confrontation. The addition of nonstate actors further complicates matters with the asymmetric advantage always with the subversive elements. The site-specific physical challenges demand special efforts to overcome them. Acoustic capacity and capability building deserve immediate and massive attention. Economic and political constraints in the region prohibit massive military investments. Thus, pooling resources and synergizing efforts is the only way forward.

Developing nations have their own challenges — resource limitations, technology challenges, governance issues and more. A systematic and comprehensive strategic approach will go a long way. The UDA framework as proposed is not a mere underwater extension of the MDA concept, but comprehensively addresses the safe, secure and sustainable growth model critically required in the Indo-Pacific strategic space. □

Pacific Perspectives

FROM NEW ZEALAND FORUM STAFF



New Zealand Army Warrant Officer Class One Clive Douglas sat down with FORUM on the sidelines of the Land Forces of the Pacific (LANPAC) Symposium and Exposition in May 2019 to share perspectives from New Zealand. He talked about the New Zealand chief of Army's vision beyond 2025, contributions to Pacific Pathways and how the New Zealand Army's values — courage, commitment, comradeship and integrity — shape Soldier training programs and partnerships throughout the Pacific and elsewhere.

FORUM: As a warrant officer and having served as sergeant major, describe your duties within the New Zealand Army.

DOUGLAS: I'm part of the chief of Army's executive team as the senior Soldier and give senior enlisted advice to him, but also the key part is representing the views of Soldiers, their families. But it's not just that group. It's also officers and civilian contractors. I'm part of the Army leadership board and provide our Soldiers' perspective on strategic decisions that the board makes going into the future. I've been on the job just over two years and have about another year to go. I always had a plan when I became SMA [sergeant major of the Army], and it was part of the reason why I was selected. Part of that plan was to focus on education for our Soldiers and career and learning pathways that enhance the nontraditional pathways that can grow a future SMA across all of that. And I've been successful in getting an education policy signed off for our Soldiers and our officers and also in drafting a policy set around our career and learning pathway.

FORUM: You enlisted in 1985. Describe how you've seen the New Zealand Army evolve over the past 30-plus years.

DOUGLAS: When I joined, we were an Army of two battalions, and we still are now, but one was in Singapore, and that's been there since 1957 during the Malaysian emergency. The things I've seen, if you look at equipment, the transitions or transformation of our infantry Soldier, just from carrying a compass, your rifle, to now integrated systems of coms [communications]. We had analog, and now one of the key transformational programs is digitalizing our Army, our C2 systems — our mission command-and-control systems. You look at how we've communicated before, and now we've got Soldiers right down at the lowest levels with screens, and all the technology with that has been a real big change.

FORUM: What are some unique characteristics of the way Soldiers train in New Zealand compared with what you've seen from Army components in other countries?



DOUGLAS: I think the training is very similar, but what we concentrate on is individual skill sets. Move, shoot, communicate, mitigate and Soldier first — similar to the U.S. But with every MOS [military occupational specialty], we do coursing that's common. Because we're small, we can do that. They all go and do an all-arms course. That's where they get their Soldier first skills, because everyone is taught the same curriculum. In your MOS, you do your trade coursing, which is done solely on your trade. And then you combine that with doing exercises overseas with your partners to doing deployments, and when you build that whole continuum, you get a well-rounded Soldier.

FORUM: Please talk about Pacific Pathways and the role the New Zealand Army has played in the past and what you anticipate its role will be as Pacific Pathways 2.0 rolls out.

DOUGLAS: Australia and New Zealand know the Pacific, so for other partners that want to play in that particular area, it's leveraging off what we're doing. And that's certainly the way the

Members of the New Zealand Army perform a haka — the war dance of New Zealand's Maori people — as part of the opening ceremony for Exercise Tafakula at Talia Military Camp, Tonga, in August 2019. CPL. TAMARA CUMMINGS/U.S. ARMY RESERVE

U.S. wants to go. It's looking for opportunities where you can send a couple of Aussies, a couple of Kiwis and couple of U.S. (Soldiers) and then go and do a mobile training team to bring our key partners into the Pacific and integrate. The other part is, we've got technical warrant officers, sergeant majors, who are posted on Fiji and Tonga and Vanuatu as well. Australia has as well. What that brings for us is that knowledge of that nation and that close relationship. If we wanted to play somewhere else with another country where the U.S. has a strong relationship, we would do the same and leverage off what the U.S. is doing. I see 2.0 as enhancing what we've got and looking for further opportunities. I would also say the key thing for all nations is you have to ask the nation you're going to help what they want. Not imposing what we think they want is key.

One of the strengths of our Army is our culture and bringing our native culture of Maori and integrating it into all other ethnic groups that we have in our force.

– Warrant Officer Class One Clive Douglas



FORUM: New Zealanders refer to Micronesia and Polynesia as their backyard. What other partnerships and trainings does the New Zealand Army have with its Pacific island nation neighbors?

DOUGLAS: From an NCO [noncommissioned officer] perspective, it's the officers and the NCOs coming to do our coursing, so you get that shared experience. It's sending mobile training teams into those countries on what they want to be trained on. [That is] the people-to-people stuff. At the strategic level, at my level, it's having close relationships within the region. It's coming together talking and visiting each other's countries. It's setting our sights on future flight and leveraging off what we do at LANPAC and what we do in PACC/PAMS [Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference and Pacific Armies Management Seminar]. You can do the talk first, but the key thing is how do we turn it into action.

FORUM: As a smaller Army in the region, what are some ways New Zealand leverages its partners and allies to maximize what Kiwi forces have to contribute?

DOUGLAS: One of the strengths of our Army is our culture and bringing our native culture of Maori and integrating it into all other ethnic groups that we have in our force. We understand those who are Polynesian and Micronesian, and it's utilizing our culture, and it's a soft power, to gain access and influence to understand their needs. The other part of it is the leadership framework. Papua New Guinea has taken our framework and turned it into their own as an example. We showed them our framework, and they came to New Zealand and did a couple of our programs and have gone back to their own country and turned it into their own. Fiji is very interested as well; so is Tonga. When we're doing stuff, we don't have the money that Australia has, but what we do have is that human dimension that we leverage as a strength for our Army.

FORUM: Terrorist attacks continue to happen in new and unexpected places, including Christchurch in March 2019. How has that incident shaped some of the counterterrorism efforts in New Zealand, and has it had an impact on the Army's counterterrorism efforts as well?

New Zealand Army Lt. Matthew Wall participates in combat marksmanship training at Camp Taji, Iraq, in July 2019.

CPL. TAMARA CUMMINGS/U.S. ARMY RESERVE



DOUGLAS: It's not my area of expertise, because it was police-driven. But what I will say is the military supported a civil agency, that being the police. In terms of: Has it changed New Zealand? I would say that we never thought that we'd have something like that happen in New Zealand, and for it to happen in the way it did has brought our country closer, and in particular, in supporting our Muslim community. There's been a big outreach of the New Zealand public to that community. And our prime minister showed the world how a leader can bring a nation through a tragic event like that. We're always ready in terms of our ability to respond to security issues or a threat.

FORUM: Finally, you've participated on panels during LANPAC discussing modernization and the need to ensure fundamentals remain a priority for Soldier training. Talk a little to that point and share your vision of what tomorrow's Army looks like.

DOUGLAS: Good question. Our chief of Army's vision for his tenure is around being an agile, highly adaptive, light combat, modern force. For the Army, going beyond 2025 is building what we call a smart Soldier. [The Army's Smart Soldier efforts include offering professional military

New Zealand Chief of Army Maj. Gen. John Boswell inspects new Soldiers from Recruit Regular Force 395 at Waiouru Military Camp. NEW ZEALAND ARMY

education for service members; formalizing the application process for study funding; developing numeracy and literacy pathways; and leveraging Soldiers' talents.] By 2025, we'll be fully networked in terms of digitization. I see our force growing in manpower and being interoperable with our key partners. And it's about New Zealand being able to provide niche capabilities that will enhance our government's national security priorities and international rules-based order.

FORUM: Lastly, anything you'd like to share with partner nations about what the New Zealand Army is doing?

DOUGLAS: I think going forward, with your last question and this one, it's about strong relationships and partnerships that will enable us to work together in this complex world we're in. It's through these activities [like LANPAC] and exercises, even while we're deployed, that will help relationships grow and people understand each other's capabilities that is going to help us going forward. □

Shinto Festival

Carries on Centuries-Old Tradition in Japan

As fireworks light up the winter night, scores of men, women and teenagers crying *washoi*, *washoi* (meaning wonderful) haul the last of six towering, lantern-covered floats up a small hill and into the town center, the culminating moment of a Shinto festival that has evolved from a harvest thanksgiving into a once-a-year meeting between two local gods.

The Chichibu Night Festival, which has roots stretching more than 1,000 years, is one of three famous Japanese festivals to feature huge floats, which can top 7 meters and weigh up to 15 tons. They are pulled through the streets on large wooden wheels by hundreds of residents in traditional festival garb — headbands, black leggings and thick cotton jackets emblazoned with Japanese characters — to drums, whistles and exuberant chants.



Participants clad in traditional happi coats prepare for a selfie before the Chichibu Night Festival in Chichibu, Japan.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shinto is Japan's indigenous religion that goes back centuries. It is an animism that believes there are thousands of *kami*, or spirits, inhabiting nature, such as forests, rivers and mountains. People are encouraged to live in harmony with the spirits and can ask for their help. Ancestors also become *kami* and can also help the living.

This two-day festival is rooted in an older tradition of villagers giving thanks to the nearby mountain god for helping them during the planting and harvesting season, said Minoru Sonoda, the chief priest of the Chichibu Shrine and a former Kyoto

University professor of religious studies. In 2016, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization designated the festival an intangible cultural heritage. "It's a time to celebrate the bounty of nature," Sonoda said.

During medieval times, the festival evolved into a celebration of an annual rendezvous between the nearby mountain god and the goddess of the town. The latter is carried in an ornate ark-like box by a group of white-clad men through streets to the central park, where it rests while the six floats slowly converge on the crowded square, each one's arrival celebrated with a burst of fireworks.

These days many Japanese who flock to the festival, which draws about 200,000 people every December, don't know either of those stories and say the event holds no religious meaning for them — but they do want to maintain the tradition. They visit the town, about 90 minutes by train northwest of Tokyo, simply for a fun, cultural experience.

"I like the fireworks and the food. Purely to enjoy. I don't really think about the religious aspects," said Mitsuo Yamashita, a 69-year-old retiree who has come to the festival for the past 15 years. "Japanese aren't very religious, and in other ways we're all over the place religiously."

Many Japanese freely mix religions depending on the occasion, visiting a Shinto shrine at New Year's, holding a Buddhist funeral or getting married in a Christian wedding, a popular option even though only 1% of the population is Christian. "I don't know if that means we're flexible or if we don't have convictions," Yamashita said.

RELIGION SEEN DIFFERENTLY

Roaming the streets in the afternoon, a group of high school girls decked out in festival garb who later joined in pulling the floats said the festival wasn't religious for them. Yet they emphatically said they believed the story about the two gods meeting that evening. The girls also said they would celebrate Christmas with a decorated tree and gift-giving and didn't see any problem mixing religions.

"No problem! That's normal. Most Japanese do that," said Rio Nishimiya, 18.

"Japanese are flexible," said her friend, Meiri Shimada, also 18. "That's a good thing!"



Fireworks light up the sky during the Chichibu Night Festival in Chichibu, Japan. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Such views are shared by many Japanese. Attitudes toward religion are ambiguous. Many would say they aren't religious — and yet every year millions of Japanese visit Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples across Japan and have little shrines in their homes where they pray.

Religion is viewed differently in Japan, and in some other parts of Asia, than in the West or the Islamic world, where there is an emphasis on individual faith and a set of beliefs, or a creed, based on a sacred text such as the Bible or Koran.

In Japan, religion is more of a cultural, communal and ritualistic thing than a personal faith.

Shinto has no sacred text or clearly defined theology, and many Japanese would be hard-pressed to summarize it. "It's a religion of life," said Sonoda, the chief priest. "It's something inherited from ancestors that provides a spirituality passed on from parent to child. And this isn't just for humans, but we are also linked to animals and all living things. It's because of them that we're alive."

"Worldview may be a better way to describe it," he said.

There are no definitive numbers on Shinto believers in Japan simply because there's nothing definite to count. "We don't use the phrase 'believers,'" Sonoda said. There are no weekly services and no missionaries to spread Shinto.

COEXISTENCE

There are more than 80,000 Shinto shrines across Japan, and nearly as many Buddhist temples. The two have generally coexisted peacefully after Buddhism's

introduction to Japan in the sixth century, along with Confucian thought from China.

That long history of coexistence is one key reason behind Japanese attitudes toward religion. "Each religion had a different role, and these three — Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism — shaped Japanese culture," said Susumu Shimazono, a professor of religion at Tokyo's Sophia University, a Jesuit school. "There was some dogma, but none of these religions stressed exclusiveness. This sort of combination of ideas and philosophies is typical of East Asia."

Interest in Shinto among ordinary Japanese is holding steady or even increasing, experts say. Visits to the Ise Grand Shrine, Japan's most important shrine, have grown in recent years, running to 8.9 million through November 2019, up from 7.8 million during the same period in 2018 and 8.5 million for all of 2017.

Shinto is also entwined with the Japanese imperial family, holding that the emperor is a descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami.

During World War II, Shinto was elevated to the state religion, and the war effort was fought in the name of the emperor, who was considered divine. After the war, the emperor was stripped of his divine stature, and the U.S.-drafted Constitution ensures freedom of religion and the separation of religion and state.

The Associated Press

TRIAD AND TRUE

*Strategic nuclear
deterrence capability
endures to protect the
U.S. and its allies*

FORUM STAFF



The United States developed the strategic construct of its nuclear triad during the Cold War. The three-pronged military force structure combined the missile and bomber systems of U.S. Strategic Air Command with the U.S. Navy's ballistic missile submarine fleet. When U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) was commissioned in June 1992, its primary mission became the daily management and readiness for mission execution of those capabilities.

Developed in the past century, this strategic concept continues to serve our nation and allies as an active deterrent against nuclear attack. A series of coordinated events February 3-14, 2020, validated the vitality of the U.S. nuclear triad and demonstrated responsible testing methods.

These events included a bomber task force flight of B-52H Stratofortress bombers and test launches of an unarmed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and two submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM). The weapon systems used in the demonstration have roots in the Cold War era, entering service between the 1960s and 1980s.

On a visit to the USSTRATCOM Command and Control Facility, U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper stressed the importance of the USSTRATCOM mission. "Our top priority is making sure we have a safe, secure, effective and credible strategic deterrent," Esper said. "That means all legs of the triad, nuclear command, control and communications, and a very effective command under the leadership of a very effective commander."

The U.S. nuclear deterrent's continued viability requires many pieces working in unison to meet national security objectives. Foremost in this mission are the all-volunteer professionals who maintain and employ these capabilities daily.

A 1588 naval battle between Spain and England illustrates the value of highly trained and prepared personnel. The better trained English fleet defeated the much larger Spanish armada. A key factor in the victory was that England kept its fleet in a state of training and readiness while ships were continuously at sea. The English Sailors were razor sharp, ready for what the sea would bring as well as anything the enemy could muster.

USSTRATCOM upholds this timeless principle of continuous training and readiness through weapon systems testing, regular exercises and operational deployments of the nuclear triad.

Keeping weapon systems hardware and software ready to perform as required is the second piece of maintaining a deterrence posture. A dedicated maintenance personnel force ensures aircraft, missiles, submarines, associated munitions and supporting command-and-control capabilities are at peak performance should the call to action come. This starts with field units and is supported by depot-level maintenance that performs deep-level cleanup and refurbishment on multiyear cycles. The B-52 strategic bomber, the dean of nuclear deterrence weapon systems, is an exemplar of this disciplined maintenance and refurbishment. The B-52H has been kept up to date through multiple system upgrades and structural

improvements as part of the Service Life Enhancement Program (SLEP), which will keep the 1960s-vintage aircraft operationally capable into the 2050s.

The manned bomber prong of the nuclear triad, in service since World War II, has two delivery options: the B-52H

An unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile launches during a successful developmental test February 5, 2020, at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California.

SENIOR AIRMAN CLAYTON WEAR/U.S. AIR FORCE

INSET: Artist's rendering of the B-21 Raider next-generation bomber
U.S. AIR FORCE



Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper receives a briefing at U.S. Strategic Command during an orientation of the command's battle deck at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

STAFF SGT. IAN HOACHLANDER/U.S. AIR FORCE

Stratofortress and the B-2 Spirit, which entered service in the early 1990s. Northrop Grumman Corp. is developing the B-21 Raider next-generation bomber. Using the B-2 design and operational experience, as well as emerging technologies, the B-21 is slated to enter service in 2025.

ICBMs are the second prong of the nuclear triad. The ICBM force is composed of LGM-30G Minuteman III missiles that entered operational service in 1970 and, like the B-52H, have been maintained through a series of SLEPs to ensure effectiveness into the mid-21st century. A replacement for the Minuteman III is being developed by Northrop Grumman aerospace systems under the ground-based strategic deterrent (GBSD) program and is scheduled to enter service in 2029. This GBSD development and acquisition effort represents a significant recapitalization of the complete ICBM capability.

The third prong of the nuclear triad is the fleet of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). The Ohio-class SSBNs, which entered service in 1981, fire Trident II D-5 SLBMs. An SSBN replacement is under development by Electric Boat and Newport News Shipbuilding. The Columbia class is planned to enter service in 2031 and will fire the Trident II D-5 life extension program SLBM to reduce replacement program risk.

Each prong of the nuclear triad, and the supporting nuclear command, control and communications (NC3) nervous system have been refreshed or is scheduled for next-generation refresh. One component of the NC3 refresh is next-generation Milstar, a significant upgrade to the command's ability to communicate with fielded nuclear forces. In December 2019, USSTRATCOM transferred daily management of U.S. nuclear forces to a state-of-the-art command and control facility that was built using many lessons learned from its legacy Global Operations Center, which opened under the auspices of Strategic Air Command.

While born of the Cold War, the U.S. nuclear triad remains a necessary deterrent to prevent catastrophic actions by our adversaries in the 21st century. The U.S. maintains and trains its nuclear triad force and continues technological and programmatic development to keep this critical capability poised, ready and relevant to secure national security objectives into the future.

U.S. SEEKS TO WIDEN NUCLEAR ARMS DEAL



RUSSIA

The United States wants to broaden its main nuclear arms control agreement with Russia to include all their atomic weapons, a U.S. envoy said in June 2020 after talks with Moscow on a new accord.

U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control Marshall Billingslea also said Washington would keep pressing the People's Republic of China (PRC) to join the talks on replacing the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which expires in February 2021.

The two former Cold War rivals agreed to set up technical working groups and hold further talks, Billingslea said.

Washington wants Beijing involved because it says the PRC is racing to increase the size and reach of its nuclear arsenal, but Moscow favors a multilateral accord, possibly including France and Britain, Billingslea said.

"We, the United States, intend and believe ... that the next arms control agreement must cover all nuclear weapons, not just so-called strategic nuclear weapons," he told a news conference in Vienna, Austria, that followed the talks there. (Pictured: Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov arrives for a meeting with U.S. special envoy Marshall Billingslea in Vienna, Austria, on June 22, 2020.)

New START caps the countries' deployed strategic nuclear weapons warheads at 1,550 each, far fewer than the thousands of atomic weapons they possess.

In 2019, Washington withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, with senior officials saying Moscow had deployed "multiple battalions" of a cruise missile throughout Russia in violation of the pact and that some had "the ability to strike critical European targets."

Russia denied that, saying the missile's range puts it outside the treaty. A more comprehensive agreement would be intended to overcome such disputes and avoid further erosion of the global arms control architecture.

The PRC, with a nuclear arsenal a fraction the size of those of the U.S. or Russia, has rejected U.S. attempts to involve it in the negotiations.

Billingslea posted a picture of Chinese flags at empty seats around the negotiating table before talks began, a move Beijing dismissed as an act of "performance art."

Russia said the PRC joining was unrealistic. Reuters

Common GROUND

India and Brazil have signed 15 accords aimed at forging closer ties between the two emerging market giants across a range of sectors, especially defense, the countries' leaders tweeted in early 2020.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro took to social media to hail the closer cooperation and agreements struck during Bolsonaro's official visit to India.

"Several agreements signed in infrastructure, justice, science and technology, agriculture, oil exploration, mining, health, culture and tourism," Bolsonaro tweeted, adding: "The world's confidence in Brazil is back!"

For his part, Modi tweeted: "India and Brazil are focusing on expanding cooperation in the defense sector," adding that the two countries share "immense synergies" on several key issues such as the environment and fighting terrorism.

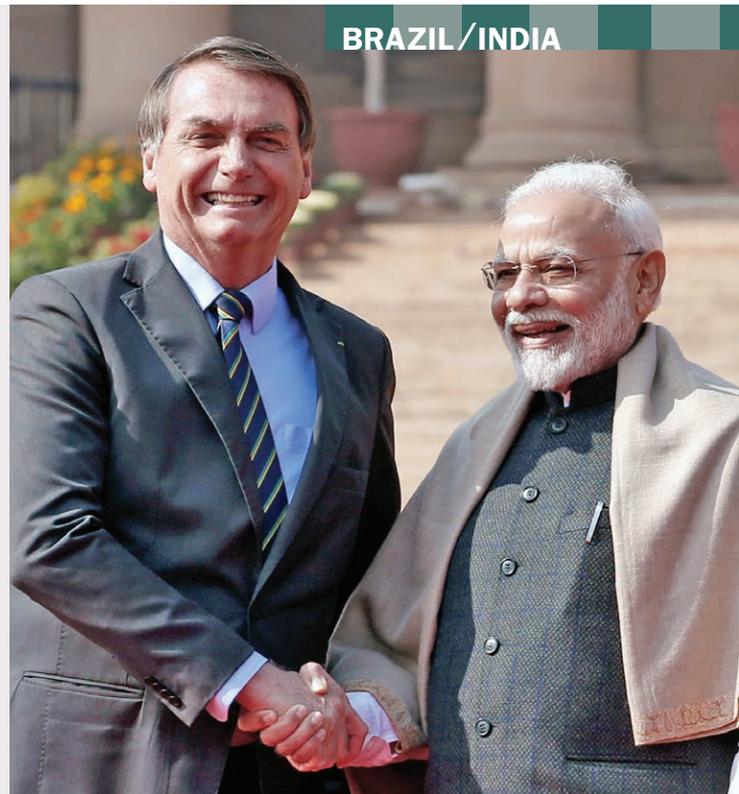
(Pictured: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, left, shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Presidential Palace in New Delhi, India, on January 25, 2020.)

Separately, Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araujo tweeted that the 15 accords represent a move "against the structures of globalist thought."

"Brazil is rising to be a great among the greats," he tweeted.

Reuters

BRAZIL/INDIA





SPECIAL SIMULATION

Members of the Taiwan military's amphibious search team participate in a special operations drill during a military exercise in Kaohsiung, southern Taiwan, on January 16, 2020. The Taiwan military held the two-day joint forces exercise to show it is prepared to defend itself from the threat of the People's Republic of China.

Photo By: **Chiang Ying-Ying** | The Associated Press

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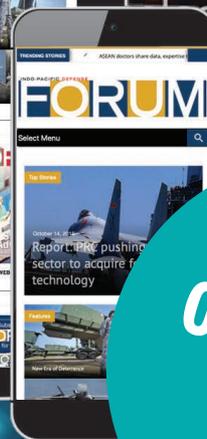
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