Fostering Military Diplomacy among America’s Bilateral Allies: The Philippine Policy of Linking Spokes Together.”¹

By

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This paper examines the Philippines’ efforts to foster closer military-to-military ties with the U.S., and its other bilateral security partners--Japan, South Korea, and Australia. These efforts are aimed at strengthening the country’s strategic relations with the U.S. and its allies in the face of the China challenge in the South China Sea. The goal is to harness these security ties to help strength the AFP’s territorial defense capabilities. This, in turn, enables the Philippines to confront a pressing and persistent maritime security issue in Southeast Asia—China’s maritime expansion in the South China Sea—and to address the Armed Forces of the Philippines’ (AFP) lack of capabilities in conducting Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Reduction (HADR) operations.

¹ This paper is an updated, revised, and detailed version of the author’s article “Linking Spokes Together: The Philippines’ Gambit of Harnessing the U.S. Alliances in its External Balancing Policy against an Emergent China” Pacific Focus (April 2014) Vol. XXIX No. 1. pp. 140-166. FOR CONFERENCE USE ONLY. STRICTLY NOT FOR CITATION NOR QUOTATION.
In October 2013, a category-5 typhoon ravaged the central part of the Philippines with maximum winds of 150 miles per hour. Typhoon Haiyan killed more than 6,000 people and left more than three million Filipinos without homes in five major islands—Leyte, Samar, Panay, Cebu, and Palawan. The typhoon destroyed nearly 550,000 residential houses and devastated several farmlands and fishponds in these islands, which accounts for about 12% of the country’s gross domestic product. Consequently, government economic planners observed that the destruction and damages brought by the typhoon to farmlands, residential areas and infrastructures could adversely affect the country’s economic growth.

The aftermath of the typhoon raised questions regarding the Aquino Administration’s preparedness and capability to deal with major natural calamities. In the most affected islands of Samar and Leyte, the first humanitarian and relief efforts were conducted by international relief agencies and foreign government such as the U.S., Australia, Israel, and Japan, and not by the Philippine government. The destruction of an entire Philippine city (Tacloban) and the extensive damages brought by this category-5 typhoon to the five major islands in the central Philippines tested the Armed Forces of the Philippines’ (AFP’s) limited capacity for airlift and

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sea transport in an archipelagic environment. It was reported that a few days after the typhoon hit the country, the AFP in particular and the Philippine government in general lacked resilient all-weather communication facilities such as satellite phones and weather-safe radios. The New York Times reported that the Philippine Air Forces was not able to deploy its aging fleet of C-130s heavy transport planes during the relief operations as the number of cargo planes had dwindled down to three aircraft because of lack of spare parts and technical maintenance. With only three C-130 transports and 44 helicopters (only 28 operational), Typhoon Haiyan exposed the Philippine government’s and its military’s limited capacity for Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Risk Reduction (HADR) operations. The typhoon’s destructive fury laid bare not only the Philippine government’s HADR capabilities but also the AFP—an overstretched, poorly funded military that has been criticized for its late arrival to the disaster zone.4

Within 48 hours after Haiyan devastated the Visayan Island group, the Philippine government requested assistance for humanitarian assistance and relief operations. Immediately, a massive international humanitarian and relief operations led by the U.S. military launched Operation Damayan (assistance)—a massive international humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operation for the victims of Typhoon Haiyan. American forces were also supported by several military contingents from other U.S. allies in the Asia-Pacific region. In the first week after the Typhoon Haiyan devastated the central Philippines, Japan, Australia, and South Korea deployed aircraft, ships and personnel as part of the massive humanitarian effort. This massive humanitarian assistance and relief operation by the American forces and U.S. bilateral allies showed not only the affirmation of U.S. commitment to its ally but also the relevance of hub-

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and-spokes system not only in addressing the new geo-strategic challenge of the 21st century but also in terms of HADR. This also showed the effectivity of the Philippine government’s diplomatic strategy of linking the United States’ hub-and-spokes system of bilateral alliances together.

Given the gaps in the AFP’s military capabilities, the Philippine defense department relies on cooperation and relationship with its allies and other security partners to assist its pursuit of its mandated missions and objectives. Thus, the Philippine military leverages on its security engagements with foreign militaries to augment and/or enhance its sorry-state capabilities to effectively address and respond to security challenges. This policy can be traced back in 2011 when the Philippine government adopted a delicate balancing policy in the face of an emergent and assertive China in the South China Sea. As part of this policy, the Aquino Administration acknowledged the need for U.S. diplomatic support and military assistance relative to its territorial row with China. Furthermore, the country found it necessary to establish defense linkages with the United States’ three allies in the region—Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Without any credible military capabilities, the Philippines finds it imperative “to leverage” on the United States’ and its other bilateral alliance partners to enhance its security and develop the AFP’s capabilities for territorial defense.

This paper examines the Philippines’ efforts to connect the separate U.S. bilateral alliances in the Asia-Pacific region as it establishes security ties with Japan, South Korea, and Australia. It explores this main question: how does the Philippines forge defense arrangements

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with Japan, South Korea, and Australia? What is the Philippines’ game plan in co-opting these three American allies? What is the implication of this move on the U.S. allies in East Asia? And how can the Philippines and the U.S. maximize this move to link the spokes of the San Francisco system of bilateral alliances?

**Harnessing and Linking the Spokes Together**

The Philippines’ need for U.S.’ diplomatic and military support in the face of China’s expansionist actions in the South China Sea proves the continuing strategic relevance of Philippine-U.S. security partnership in particular and of America’s bilateral alliance network in East Asia in general. The U.S-Philippine defense ties are part of a network of bilateral alliances—often called the “hub-and-spokes system”---that has sustained U.S. strategic leadership in East Asia since the Korean War in the early 1950s. During the Cold War, the U.S. developed a system of separate but related bilateral alliances with Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, and a trilateral security arrangement with Australia and New Zealand. The Korean War in 1950 triggered the creation of this alliance system, which led the United States to sponsor a series of defense commitments to these countries that could ensure American participation in Asian security affairs. These security arrangements were formalized after the signing of the Japanese Peace Treaty in September 1951, and promoting a number of collective defense treaties with these Asian-Pacific countries. During the Eisenhower Administration, they

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were part of an overall U.S. design to surround the Eurasian landmass with American and Allied military power.\textsuperscript{8}

The U.S. signed separate defense agreements with Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, New Zealand, and Australia. These alliances, however, constituted a system in a number of ways. Firstly, they extended the American strategic deterrence from Western Europe to East Asia providing a Western military buttress to the imminent process of regional decolonization and against the Soviet Union and China in the 1950s.\textsuperscript{9} Secondly, these treaties allowed the United States to maintain a credible military presence through the basing structures for American forward deployment in East Asia. Thirdly, they enabled the United States to act as Asia’s primary security guarantor and common contact for the region’s non-communist armed forces. Fourthly, these so-called as “America’s alliances” made the U.S. dominate their conditions and their dynamics. A significant feature of these alliances is that when they were formed, the U.S. bore the burden of sustaining them, while the allies were initially “free-riders.” The partnership reflected power asymmetry in which Washington became the hub of the East Asian security wheel, with its spokes pointing to the individual allies in the region. The U.S. was able to control the separate agendas of each relationship without too much debate and sans

\textsuperscript{8}These alliances were considered part of the United States response to the June 1950 North Korean invasion of South Korea and to a certain degree, were also spurred by the San Francisco Peace Treaty between the United States and Japan. As a result of its peace treaty with its former enemy, Washington signed a bilateral security pact with Tokyo that came into force on 28 April 1952. The treaty allowed American forces to remain in Japan to protect the country against both external and internal threats. Then on 27 August 1952, the United States signed another defense pact with the Philippines in an effort to win this country’s support for Washington’s peace settlement with Tokyo. In addition to these two treaties, Washington also signed a defense treaty with Seoul as an American concession to President Syngman Rhee’s promise to support the armistice to end the Korean War and to moderate his efforts to “go north.” The US-South Korea Security Alliance was signed in October 1953 and provides for consultation to act in case of an external in accordance with [the signatories] constitutional process. Fred Greene, \textit{U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia} (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), pp. 71-78.

the danger of being "ganged-up" on by its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Consequently, to some degree, the Asian allies resented American domination of these alliances. Lastly, these alliances had an enduring effect on the U.S. and its allies’ foreign policies. They created an inertia or stasis born out of shared interests and bonds of anti-communism, which caused these security relationships to outlive the Cold War.

The Philippines’ security ties with the U.S. were revitalized in the late 20th century and became cohesive and relevant in the 21st century. History, however, shows a pattern of alliance disintegration as allies’ interests and purposes change in the face of emerging threats or new global conditions. Interestingly, this trend does not apply to the Philippine-U.S. alliance, as well as to U.S. security relations with Japan, and South Korea. These durable alliances have evolved from mere expedient and mechanical aggregations of national capabilities directed at a specific threat to something qualitatively different. Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the U.S. and its three Asian allies have institutionalized their efforts to minimize their competitive and divergent interests. They have developed a series of interactions to preserve their bilateral relations, and/or form new patterns of security ties among them. Individually and collectively, they have devised diplomatic/strategic processes and built structures that create islands of stability amidst a sea of changes in the 21st century regional security environment. In other words, they have designed new approach as to security/political management to counter the centrifugal forces weakening their raison d’etre, maximize their mutual benefits and minimize alliance cost, and promote their unity and cohesion. These innovations enable the alliances to adjust to a changing politico-security milieu.10 Currently, the Philippines actively establishes security linkages with the U.S.’s bilateral defense partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

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The Goal: Balancing an Emergent China

On 2 March 2011, two Chinese patrol boats harassed a survey ship commissioned by the Philippines’ Department of Energy (DOE) to conduct oil exploration in the Reed Bank (now called Recto Bank), 150 kilometers east of the Spratly Islands and 250 kilometers west of the Philippine island of Palawan. The Aquino administration was stunned by the Chinese action since this maritime encounter happened east of the Spratlys and within the country’s adjacent waters. Two days after the incident, the Philippine government filed a protest before the Chinese embassy in Manila. In early June 2011, the Philippines sought clarification on the sightings of China Marine Surveillance (CMS) and PLAN ships near the Kalayaan group of islands. The Aquino Administration expressed serious concerns over Chinese encroachments into the country’s EEZ to stake China’s territorial claim and to possibly construct an oil rig on the uninhabited Iroquois Bank. According to the Philippine foreign affairs and defense departments, these Chinese actions “are clear violations of the China-ASEAN 2001 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties on the South China Sea.”

In response, the Chinese foreign ministry sternly told the Philippines to stop “harming China’s sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, which leads to unilateral actions that can expand and complicate the South China Sea dispute.” It was Beijing’s reaction to the Philippines’ diplomatic protest against China’s plan to construct an oil rig deep within the Philippines’ EZZ. Consequently, President Aquino realized that the

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Philippines is potentially on a direct collision course with China regarding the South China Sea issue.

The 2 March 2011 incident at the Reed Bank and China’s arrogant response to the Philippines diplomatic queries prompted the Aquino Administration to hasten the development of the AFP’s territorial defense capabilities. In June 2011, the executive branch of the Philippine government and the AFP agreed on a multi-year, multi-billion peso defense upgrade spending and military build-up. The Department of Budget Management (DBM) released a Multi-Year Obligation Authority (MOA) to the DND, allowing the AFP to enter into multi-year contracts with other governments or private arms and military hardware manufacturers. The DBM also committed Php 40 billion (estimated US$800 million) in the next five years (2012-2016) to develop the AFP’s capabilities for greater domain awareness of the Philippine territorial waters and EZZ.

In the proposed “rolling” program, the executive branch would allocate through the Philippine Congress Php 8 billion (an estimated US$160 million) annually for the procurement of air-surveillance radar, surface attack aircraft, close air-support aircraft, combat utility helicopters and long-range patrol aircraft. Also covered are current upgrade programs such as the installation of a radar and communication network along the coast of Palawan and East Mindanao under the Coast Watch South Project and the acquisition of three refurbished U.S. Coast Guard Hamilton class cutters for the PN. These undertakings, according to former AFP Chief-of-Staff General Eduardo Oban Jr. prioritize territorial defense over domestic security.

In October 2011, DND Secretary Voltaire Gazmin released the Defense Planning Guidance (2013-2018) restructuring the AFP to a “lean but fully capable” armed forces to confront the challenges to the country’s territorial integrity and maritime security. It envisions the development of an effective force projection capability to monitor the Philippines’ territorial waters and EZZ. It contains the following measures:\(^{14}\)

a) Reduction of infantry and marine battalions and the redirection of limited financial resources to key priorities such as theater mobility, close air-support, air-surveillance, and air-defense.

b) Acquisition of naval assets for off-shore patrol, strategic sea-lift, and accompanying base support system and platform to sustain the deployed maritime assets;

c) Development of the AFP’s long-range maritime air patrol and surveillance through the acquisition of necessary assets and accompanying base support system; and

d) Reactivation of the Philippine’ Air Defense System (PADS) through the acquisition of air surveillance radar and a squadron of air defense/surface attack aircraft to provide air defense coverage over areas of high concern.

The Philippines’ territorial defense goal is to establish a modest but “comprehensive border protection program.” This program is anchored on the surveillance, deterrence, and border patrol capabilities of the PAF, the PN, and the Philippine Coast Guard (PSG) that extend from the country’s territorial waters to its contiguous and EEZ.\(^{15}\) This objective requires prioritizing the AFP’s material and personnel requirements for territorial defense. The long-term goal, according to the 2011 *AFP’s Strategic Intent*, is to develop the force structure and capabilities enabling the Philippine military to maintain a “credible deterrent posture against

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foreign intrusion or external aggression, and other illegal activities while allowing free navigation to prosper.”\textsuperscript{16}

Despite its determination to shift the AFP’s focus from internal security to territorial defense, the Aquino Administration is constrained by limited financial resources even with its modest defense acquisition goals. Since 2011, the Philippine government could only acquire two former U.S. Coast Guard Cutters. It could not immediately purchase such war materiel such as blue-water missile-armed ships, search-and-rescue vessels, naval helicopters, strategic sea lift ships, and top-of-the-line interceptors that can be used to protect its oil exploration projects and territorial claims in the South China Sea. To acquire necessary equipment for territorial defense, the AFP had to wait for the Philippine Congress to legislate the extension of the AFP modernization law (Republic Act 7898) after it expired in February 2010. In December 2012, the Philippine Congress passed and President Aquino signed Republic Act No. 10349 authorizing the extension of the original AFP modernization law. The law, however, allots only Php75 billion (US1.5 billion) for the next five years. This amount is miniscule for the acquisition of modern fighter planes, missile-armed frigates, sea-and-land based missile systems, patrol vessels, and long-range reconnaissance planes along with support facilities such as radar sites, forward operating bases, hangar, communication, maintenance, and command and control facilities.

In 2012, the Center for New American Security (CNAS) came out with a study on Philippine defense requirements in the face of China’s growing assertiveness in the South China Sea. The study argues that for the Philippines, to have a credible defense capability, the AFP

\textsuperscript{16} Office of the Deputy Chief-of-Staff, \textit{Armed Forces of the Philippines: Strategic Intent} (Quezon City: Camp Aguinaldo, 2011). p. 27.
should acquire 48 upgraded F-16 fighter planes, several corvette or frigate type surface combatants, and four to six midget submarines. However, acquiring this capability would be beyond what the AFP is planning for and how much the government is willing to finance with its limited defense budget. Moreover, the AFP’s current build-up for territorial defense capabilities is a very expensive undertaking because, in many cases, the military has to start from scratch. For example, Philippine air defense capability is practically zero because the PAF is practically a helicopter air force without any fighter planes and possessing only one operational radar with a very limited coverage area. The PAF needs to develop facilities that should be acquired like radars, hangars, forward operating facilities, maintenance and command and control facilities. The PN is planning to acquire two state-of-the-art frigates and at the same time, it will also have to acquire communications and weapons systems for these platforms as well as mission essential equipment such as day/night electronic navigational systems, communication suites, safety-of-life-at sea, propulsion system and seamanship and ship-handling gears, and its corresponding logistic support packages.

**Leveraging on the Hub**

A significant factor behind the Aquino Administration’s efforts to confront China in the South China Sea dispute, despite its military inadequacies, is the country’s alliance with the United States. The Aquino Administration is aware that no amount of financial resources will enable the Philippines to confront an assertive China in the South China Sea. The AFP’s maritime border patrol system is designed for limited deterrence and asymmetric combat but not

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for naval warfare. Particularly, the PN and PAF’s’ capabilities for early warning, surveillance, and command, control and communication are directed towards maritime defense and interdiction operations. This build-up merely complements the deterrence provided by U.S. forward deployment and bilateral alliances in East Asia. In the final analysis, the Philippines’ territorial defense stance is predicated upon the U.S.’s assertion of its position as the dominant naval power in the Pacific.

Prior to 1992, Philippine-U.S. security relations were kept intact by several bilateral defense arrangements. The two countries became formal allies in 1951 upon signing the R.P.-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT). They also became members of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1956. However, the most important of these bilateral defense arrangements is the 1947 R.P.-U.S. Military Bases Agreement, which facilitated the hosting of major American naval and air facilities in Philippine territory. These U.S. military bases in the Philippines extended vital logistical support to American forward-deployed forces operating in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and even in the Persian Gulf during the Cold War. Furthermore, these air and naval assets acted as de facto armed forces against external threats since the Philippine military was primarily involved in internal security operations.19 With the withdrawal of these American military facilities in the country in 1992, the alliance assumed a form different from the previous alliance configuration.

The U.S. global war on terror in 2001, and the tension in U.S.-China after 2008 augured well for the Philippines’ security agenda vis-à-vis an expansionist China. The revitalized Philippine-U.S. alliance achieved two strategic objectives. One, the Philippine government received U.S. support for its counter-terrorism/counter-insurgency campaigns. Two, the U.S.

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deepened its alliance with the Philippines not only to neutralize terrorist groups, but also to counter Beijing’s political and economic influence in the country. Consequently, the U.S. regularly provides technical and military assistance to the AFP to firm up their security partnership against China’s naval might and assertiveness.

The Philippines maintains strong security ties with the U.S. through the 60-year old Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT). The Philippines regards the American military presence in the Asia-Pacific as a stabilizing force, given the growing complexity of security challenges confronting the region. In 2010, China’s bullying behavior in the South China Sea caught the attention of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Board (MDB), the liaison and consultative body that oversees the Philippine-U.S. defense posture against external threats. The MDB annual meeting on August 18, 2010 discussed the security challenges that the allies face such as terrorism, domestic insurgency, and potential flashpoints specifically the maritime dispute in the South China Sea. Both countries decided to complement each other’s military capabilities, enhance inter-operability between their armed services, and strengthen the AFP’s territorial defense capabilities with tangible U.S. security assistance, and joint training exercises. These joint exercises are:

A) Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHILBEX)—an annual, bilateral training exercise conducted by U.S. Marine and Naval Forces with the AFP in order to strengthen interoperability and working relationships in a wide range of military operations from disaster relief to complex expeditionary operations. An estimated 3,500 U.S. marines and sailors from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (3rd MEB) and approximately 1,200 AFP counter-parts conduct joint training activities in several parts of the Philippines.


21 Interview with an anonymous U.S. Defense Attaché, United States Embassy in Manila, September 2014.
B) **Exercise Balikatan (Shoulder-to Shoulder)**—is an annual Philippines-U.S. military bilateral training exercise and humanitarian assistance agreement. The annual Balikatan exercise focuses on the training of both armed forces for HADR and other humanitarian crises that endanger public health and safety. It also helps a high-level of inter-operability between the U.S. military and the AFP, and enhances military-to-military relations and combined combat capabilities. Philippine and U.S. service members perform humanitarian and civic assistance projects in various parts of the Philippines. and

C) **Cooperation Afloat Readiness And Training (CARAT)**—is a series of bilateral military exercises between the U.S. Navy and the armed forces of several South and Southeast Asian armed forces including the AFP. Each phase of the CARAT Exercises is based the shared goal of the host country. However, the U.S. Navy makes sure that all CARAT exercises have the common theme of developing maritime security capabilities, and increasing inter-operability among the participants. Skill areas exercised during CARAT include Maritime Interception Operations; riverine, amphibious, and underwater warfare operations; diving and salvage operations, naval gunnery and maneuvering events along with HADR operations.

The Philippines and the U.S. have also agreed to conduct an annual bilateral strategic dialogue. The dialogue provides an opportunity for the foreign and defense departments of the two countries “to affirm the strength of the Philippine-U.S. alliance and the dynamic [security] partnership for peace, security, and stability.” In late January 2011, the first bilateral strategic dialogue discussed current security challenges and identified new areas for cooperation. The allies also agreed to upgrade their mutual capabilities in maritime security through the following: a) U.S. funding support to the AFP’s Capability Upgrade Program (CUP), especially in the acquisition of equipment, and refurbishing and maintenance of existing AFP materiel; and b) the provision of additional funding of (US$40 million) for the Coast

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Watch South project to boost the Philippine military’s surveillance, communication, and interdiction capabilities in the South China Sea.

In November 2011, the allies signed a joint communiqué on the 60-year old MDT, declaring their mutual interest in maintaining the freedom of navigation, unimpeded lawful commerce, and the transit of people across the seas. Both countries expressed their adherence to a rules-based approach that can resolve competing maritime claims through peaceful, collaborative, multilateral, and diplomatic processes within the framework of international law. The communiqué also stated that the 60-year old alliance has never been stronger and will continue to expand in the 21st century to enhance the Philippine military’s defense, interdiction, and apprehension capabilities in the country’s maritime domain.

The two allies held the second bilateral strategic dialogue in Washington, D.C. in January 2012. The aim was to “shift the [security] partnership into a higher gear at a time when the two countries’ ties have become broad-based, modern, mature and resilient.” During the talks, Philippine foreign affairs and defense officials asked their counterparts for increased in U.S. military presence in the country. They also agreed to streamline the diplomatic clearance process for U.S. personnel and ships entering the country for combined training and interoperability. Currently, the two countries are negotiating on the “Framework Agreement on Increased Rotational Presence and Enhanced Agreement (IRP).” The IRP will facilitate the

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deployment of American troops and equipment on a rotational basis, and thus, circumventing the sensitive issue of re-establishing U.S. bases in the country. Interestingly, the negotiation was conducted amidst escalating tension between the Philippines and China over the South China Sea dispute. With its small and obsolete naval force and an almost non-existent air force, the Philippines relies on U.S. assistance to modernize the AFP’s defense capabilities through short-term regular visits by U.S. forces that conduct military training as well as humanitarian and disaster response operations. More importantly, the Philippines banks on the deterrent effect of the temporary deployment of U.S. forces and equipment in its territory.

On 28 April 2014, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) a few hours before President Obama arrived to Manila for his first state visit. Actually, EDCA is not a new agreement since it merely updates and enhances the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. This executive agreement provides the framework by which the Philippines and the U.S. can develop their individual and collective (defense) capabilities. Such task can be accomplished through the rotational deployment of American forces in Philippine bases. The EDCA allows American forces to utilize AFP owned and controlled facilities but the Philippine base commander has unhampered access to those locations. Likewise, the U.S. military can build or improve the infrastructure inside these installations: nevertheless, the AFP can jointly use them.


Furthermore, any construction and other activities within in the Philippine bases require the consent of the host country through the MDB and Security Engagement Board (SEB).

Through the EDCA, U.S. forces can implement innovative forms of access arrangement in the Philippines, namely: 29 a) forward operating sites--expandable warm military facilities with limited U.S. military support presence; and b) cooperative security locations--facilities with little or no permanent American presence and are maintained by the host-nation. These are less expensive, less visible, and less vulnerable access arrangements offer greater strategic and operational flexibility. They are less likely to create local political problems and are expected to promote long-term security cooperation between the U.S. and the Philippines. More significantly, these operationally flexible facilities located all over a sprawling archipelagic country located near China, can complicate the PLA’s anti-access/area/denial strategy. Moreover, the use of air and naval infrastructures all over the country will facilitate the rapid and massive deployment of American forces in case of an armed confrontation in the South China Sea, and possibly even in the East China Sea. Though the maritime row in the South China Sea will be a long-term security challenge and will never be solved solely through force, the potential for an armed conflict requires the presence of an effective U.S. deterrent force in the region. The EDCA is aimed to produce this deterrence posture.

**Leveraging on the Spokes**

A dynamic partnership with the U.S. enables the Philippines to strategize its territorial/maritime defense through domain awareness. Therefore, the Philippines must develop military interoperability with the U.S. and execute naval diplomacy, targeted engagement, and

29 For details regarding this new forms access arrangements see Robert Harkavy, “Thinking about Basing,” *Naval War College Review* 58. 3 (Summer 2005). pp. 12-42.
security assistance arrangements to enhance the country’s maritime security.  

Enhanced strategic engagements with the U.S. also require the Philippines to link with Washington’s other alliance partners in East Asia such as Japan, South Korea, and Australia. The Philippines’ 2011 National Security Policy mentioned the need to maintain security ties and to reaffirm its alliance with the U.S. since American military presence is a major stabilizing factor in the region. It also proposed that the Philippines must pursue its cooperation arrangements with ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, India, and Australia, among others. Meanwhile, the AFP’s 2011 Strategic Intent stated that while the Philippines has only one formal defense treaty (the 1951 MDT with the U.S.), it will be beneficial for it to engage and strengthen its relationship with 17 countries that have signed security cooperation agreements with the AFP. Australia, Japan, India, and South Korea are among those countries.

The Philippines’ efforts to forge security ties with Japan, South Korea, and Australia are hedged on its strategic bets in the light of its limited military capabilities. It likewise complements the country’s alliance with the U.S. that serves as a principal deterrence against external threats. The 2010 Strategic Direction of AFP International Military Affairs stated that the Philippine military shall maximize gains from the alliance with the U.S., while seeking and developing relationship with other potential allies such as Australia, South Korea, and Japan which are key players in the Asia-Pacific region. The document also confirmed that the

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32 Office of the Deputy Chief-of-Staff, op. cit. p. 34.

Philippines intends to develop relations with them to enhance the country’s security and develop its military (specifically territorial defense) capabilities.34

The Philippines’ plan to link the spokes of the bilateral alliances together jibes with Washington’s agenda of revitalizing America’s well-established alliances in Northeast Asia and deepening America’s security relationship in South and Southeast Asia.35 This is Washington’s strategic respond to the geo-strategic significance of the littoral states of East and Southeast Asia (from the Sea of Japan to the Bay of Bengal) which is rapidly emerging as the most politically, economically and strategically important area. With the U.S. strategic pivot to Asia, linking the bilateral alliances is one way of reassuring allies (especially those that are confronted by increased Chinese assertiveness on maritime disputes over the Senkaku Islands in East Asia and the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea) that the U.S. has the ability and will to fulfil its security commitments in the Asia-Pacific region for decades to come.36

Engaging Japan in Fostering Maritime Security

Historically, the Philippines and Japan have maintained vigorous economic and transnational relations. Both countries adhere to democratic governance, civil and political liberties, free trade, freedom of navigation, and respect for human rights. Furthermore, they are U.S. allies whose maritime security is threatened by China’s renewed aggressiveness in its

34 Ibid. p.2.


maritime domain. Since 2005, the two countries have conducted the annual Political-Military Dialogue as part of Japan’s overall security relations with ASEAN to foster confidence-building measures and explore areas of security cooperation. In these annual dialogues, the Philippines and Japan have tackled several security issues of common interests such as the situation in the Korean Peninsula, China’s arms-build up, the South China Sea dispute, nuclear proliferation in Asia, and maritime security.

However, Japan’s ability to forge closer security relations with the Philippines is restrained by its pacifist 1947 constitutions. Despite this restriction, both countries share common security concerns, and thus cooperate bilaterally by: a) enhancing maritime security through joint activities by their respective Coast Guards; b) conducting joint counter-terrorism and UN peace-keeping trainings; c) countering nuclear-arms proliferation; and d) facilitating the rotational deployment of forward deployed U.S. forces in East Asia. Since 2011, Japan finds it necessary to confront China’s assertiveness over a territorial dispute in the South China Sea in which initially, it has no direct interest.

In July 2011, then Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and President Aquino agreed to bolster security relations between Japan and the Philippines. After President Aquino’s third visit to Japan, Tokyo and Manila announced the holding of an elevated dialogue on maritime and oceanic affairs, exchanges between Filipino and Japanese defense and maritime officials, as well as Japan’s capacity-building training of the 3,500-strong Philippine Coast Guard. In September 2011, then Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan and President Aquino issued a joint


statement in Tokyo, affirming that the South China Sea is vital as it connects the world and the Asia-Pacific, and that peace and stability therein is of common interest to the international community.” 

Prime Minister Kan also instructed the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) to train the Philippine Coast Guard, hold consultations with Filipino naval officers, and increase joint coast guard exercises.

The Obama Administration’s Strategic Rebalancing to Asia provides further impetus for Japan to balance China in the South China Sea. This rebalancing occurred at the time that China is moving beyond from its initial strategic focus on Taiwan, and to developing the naval capabilities that generates regional tension by challenging the claims of smaller littoral states over parts of the South China Sea. In November 2011, President Obama announced in front of the Australian Parliament that with the American involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan is coming to close, and the U.S. is refocusing on the fast-growing but pervasively Chinese influenced Asia-Pacific region. President Obama’s announcement of the pivot strategy implies a substantial reorientation of U.S. global strategy from the post-9/11 focus on the war of terror to a rebalancing of American attention, efforts, and resources to meet the challenges and to seize opportunities in East Asia. The Obama Administration is sending a clear message that the U.S. is prepared to ensure stability in Asia, protect its allies, and strategically balance, and not confront, an assertive China.

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41 Nicholas, Peter; Parson, Christi, “In Asia, Keeps Focus off Terrorism,” Tribune News Service (19 November 2011). p. 1 http://search.proquest.com/docview/9049986405/137DFCA20DB399...
The strategy involves strengthening U.S. strategic presence in Japan and South Korea, which will remain the strategy’s cornerstone, even as Washington also builds up its security relationship with other states in the region, especially those in and around Southeast Asia.\(^{42}\) Specific to the South China Sea issue, the Obama Administration has accentuated its vital interest on ensuring the freedom of navigation on the sea lanes in the South China Sea that can only be guaranteed if its remains a global common, that is, it belongs to all states and is not subject to a sovereign control by a single powerful regional state. In line with this policy, the Obama Administration has supported the formation of a maritime coalition in the South China Sea to balance China. To complement U.S. growing security ties with the two *de facto* members of the coalition, Japan is currently forming strategic partnerships with the Philippines and Vietnam with the goal of expanding its defense cooperation and naval exchanges with these two ASEAN member-states.\(^{43}\)

In April 2012, at the start of the two-month stand-off between Philippine and Chinese civilian ships at Scarborough Shoal, Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Toshio Urabe mentioned the “close-knit triangular relationship among Japan, the Philippines, and their closest (mutual) ally—the U.S.”\(^{44}\) Then in May 2012, three MSDF surface combatants arrived in Manila for a four-day port call.\(^{45}\) The visit came after Tokyo announced its plans to provide the Philippines with 10 new patrol vessels to bolster the latter’s maritime patrol capability. The


newspaper *Yomuri Shimbun*’s linked the ship visit to the on-going Scarborough Shoal stand-off and editorialized that Japan could not just stand by and wait for China and the Philippines to clash openly.\(^{46}\) It also stressed that it is in “Japan’s national interest to ensure that its sea-lanes remain safe.”\(^{47}\) Interestingly, the MSDF’s ship visit to the Philippines happened just a few days after the U.S. Navy’s Virginia class attack submarine, the *U.S.S. North Carolina* made a supposedly port-call in Subic Bay in Luzon. Actually, these ship visits were routine port-calls. However, they were made during the Scarborough stand off and were extensively publicized. In a sense, Washington and Tokyo were conveying a tacit message to Beijing that the two allies would not hesitate to act collectively if the Philippines is threatened by any form of Chinese armed aggression.\(^{48}\)

In July 2012, then Japanese Defense Minister Satoshi Morimoto and his Filipino counterpart, Voltaire Gazmin, inked a bilateral agreement that emphasizes maritime security.\(^{49}\) This agreement features high-level dialogues between defense officials and reciprocal visits by the MSDF chief-of-staff and the PN flag commander. The agreement also paved way for the two countries’ security cooperation in various security related activities such as Multinational Cooperation Program in the Asia-Pacific (MCAP), Multilateral Logistic Staff Talks (MLST), Training Exchanges and Subject Matter Exchanges on HADR and Logistics, and Exchange visits and Student Exchanges in Staff colleges. A few days later, Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary


Albert del Rosario announced that Tokyo was likely to provide the Philippine Coast Guard with ten 40-meter boats as part of Japan’s ODA to the Philippines by the end of the year.\(^{50}\) Newspapers also reported that two additional bigger vessels are also being considered for transfer to the Philippine government under a grant.

In January 2013, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida announced Japan’s technical assistance to the PCG’s through the provision of essential communication system equipment for maritime safety.\(^{51}\) On 27 June 2013, Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera and his Philippine counterpart, Voltaire Gazmin, confirmed the continuous “exchanges of information aimed at strengthening Philippine-Japan defense relations and on working together to make U.S. strategic rebalancing a reality in Asia.”\(^{52}\) The two strategic partners conduct the following activities to foster their defense cooperation:\(^{53}\) Reciprocal visits between the Chief of Staff of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF) and the Flag Officer if the Philippine Navy (PN); the holding of the Japan-Philippines Maritime Chief of Staff Meeting; Port calls in the Philippines by JMSDF vessels; and both countries’ participation in the Pacific Partnership 2012. The two defense ministers also agreed to extend the two countries’ security cooperation to the field of aviation which was highlighted by the visit to the Philippines by the Chief-of-Staff of the Japanese Air Defense Force (JASDF). During the same meeting, Secretary Gazmin also raised


the possibility of allowing the Japanese SDF access to the former American military bases in the Philippines if Tokyo is interested in negotiating and signing an access agreement with Manila.\textsuperscript{54}

In December 2013, President Aquino met Prime Minister Abe in Tokyo to discuss how the two countries’ would respond to China’s establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea.\textsuperscript{55} President Aquino expressed his country’s concern that China might extend the zone into the South China Sea and this will adversely affect Philippine security. For his part, Prime Minister Abe assured President Aquino that Japan cannot tolerate China’s attempt to change the status quo in the region by force, and expressed his country’s intention to cooperate with the Philippines to ensure that the freedom of flight and navigation will not be infringed.\textsuperscript{56} He also promised President Aquino that Japan will continue to help the Philippines enhance the capabilities of the PCG. Following their one-on-one meeting, the two countries held a signing ceremony for the yen-based soft loans to finance the 10 patrol boast that will be provided by Japan to the Philippine Coast Guard.

In June 2014, President Aquino saw Prime Minister Abe again in Tokyo to discuss ways of strengthening Philippine-Japan security relations in the face of China’s ambition to become a major naval power in East Asia.\textsuperscript{57} During their meeting, both sides discussed areas of possible cooperation to enhance the recently forged Philippines-Japan Strategic Partnership.\textsuperscript{58}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} \textit{Ibid.} p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.} p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.} p. 1.
\end{itemize}
Aquino followed up the PCG’s request for 10 brand new 40-meter long multi-role patrol boats that are financed through a US$184 million soft loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency. Prime Minister Abe, on his part, promised President Aquino that three of the vessels would be delivered in 2015; while the other seven will be made available for the PCG in 2016. The PCG stated that these 10 new patrol boats will be used to patrol the waters around the seven islands claimed and occupied by Philippine forces in the Spratlys. They will also be deployed to monitor foreign naval presence in the several reefs and shoal within the country’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that are currently occupied by the Chinese forces. Prime Minister Abe also committed the provision of VSAR and Inmarsat communication systems to the Philippine Coast Guard for its use in its maritime domain operations.

_Engaging South Korea as a Long-time Security Partner_

The Philippines and South Korea have a long history that had been forged in blood. Philippine-South Korea diplomatic relations were established in 1949. The strength of this relationship was tested during the Korean War when the Philippines deployed the Philippine Expeditionary Forces as part of the U.S.-led UN forces that defended the Republic of Korea against the aggression of the communist North Korea. The Philippines was only Southeast Asian state that sent a sizeable force to fight in the Korean War. Both countries are also U.S. allies that share common interests in maintaining security and stability in Northeast Asia, and in ensuring that North Korea behave responsibly in the interest of regional peace.

In May 1994, the Philippines and South Korea signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Logistics Cooperation and Defense Cooperation which was amended in July 2007. It

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specifically provides for both countries to identify specific firms in their respective defense industry that will participate in a cooperative defense project. The two countries’ militaries conduct various defense related activities such as exchange of defense-related experience and information; mutual exchange of visit by military personnel and experts; military education and training; and in humanitarian assistance and international peacekeeping activities. The two countries’ armed forces also hold regular annual meetings such as the:  

60 a) The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)-Republic of South Korea Armed Forces (ROKAF) Intelligence Exchange Conference; a) The Army-to-Army Intelligence Exchange Conference; and c) the Joint Committee Meeting on Logistic and Defense Industry Cooperation between the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of South Korea. In 2008, the DND acquired various types of ammunition for its light artillery units from two South Korean arms manufacturer—Poongsan and Hanwa Corporations.

In November 2011, President Aquino announced the PAF’s planned purchase of two squadrons of second-hand F-16C/D through the U.S. Excess Defense Articles (EDA).  

61 This acquisition, however, might cause tremendous financial strain to the AFP which is still actively engaged in internal security operations. In fact, relative to the AFP’s Oplan Bayanihan, the PAF continues to carry out these counter-insurgency/counter-terrorism functions: a) intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance (ISR); b) precision-attack to minimize collateral damages in its ground support operations; and c) education and information dissemination campaign to win the people’s hearts and minds. In the same month, however, President Lee Myung Bak and

60 Interview with the Defense Attaché of the Republic of Korea, (25, September 2014).

President Aquino discussed recent developments in the Korean Peninsula and in the South China Sea. The two Asian heads of states expressed hope that their security cooperation could produce peaceful solutions to these two separate conflicts according to international rule, norms, and standards. President Aquino also revealed that the Philippines need to acquire specific defense materiel such as surface combatants, and training aircraft.

In May 2012, President Aquino hinted that the PAF might acquire brand-new lead-in jet trainers that could be converted into fighter planes by modifying their air-frame.62 In an interview, President Aquino admitted that the government found it too expensive to buy, much more maintain, second-hand fourth-generation jet fighters which only have five serviceable years. A sound alternative, he said, is to buy cheaper new fighter aircraft from the United Kingdom, France, or Italy, or South Korea.

In 2012, the Philippine government started a negotiation for a government-to-government procurement agreement with South Korea for the purchase of 12 Korean Aerospace Industries (KAI) F/A-50 Golden Eagles. The F/A-50’s design was largely patterned after the U.S. designed Lockheed Martin F-16 “Fighting Falcons.” Both fighter planes have similar features: single engine, speed, size, cost, and the range of weapons system. These 12 F/A 50 interceptors can secure the Philippines’ air-space and simultaneously serve as trainer planes to develop the PAF pilots’ “air command maneuvering (ACM)” skills.63 Negotiations are ongoing on the F/A-50’s price, weapons, and navigation systems, and technical and logistic support. During his two-day state visit in South Korea on 17-18 October 2013, President Aquino announced that both


governments are finalizing the deal worth Php18.9 billion (estimated US$450 million). While there is no definite delivery date yet for the said procurement, President Aquino and President Park Geun-Hye vows to expedite the process. Once delivered to the Philippines, these jet fighters will serve as the PAF’s interim interceptors until the defense budget can afford to purchase and maintain fourth-generation fighter planes.

Eventually, after nearly two years of hard and tedious negotiations, the Philippines finally signed a contract with Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) for the acquisition of 12 F/A-50 fighter planes for the Philippine Air Force in March 2014. Under a government—to—government contact guaranteed by the state-owned Korea-Trade Promotion Agency (KOTRA), the KAI will deliver the fighter planes to the PAF in the next 38 months. During the negotiations, the KAI was able to persuade the PAF that the F/A-50 fighter jets is best suited for its requirement for a fighter jet plane capable of air-to-air mid-distance attack and night fighting capabilities. The 12 F/A-50s “Fighting Eagles” will act as the PAF’s interim jet fighters while waiting for the proper funding and training which will allow it to procure fourth generation multi-role combat interceptors.

This was the PAF’s first major aircraft acquisition after the Philippine bought 25 F-8 Crusader fighter-bombers from the U.S. in 1979 to supplement its squadrons of pre-Vietnam War F-5 fighter planes. However, due to wear, tear, and lack of spare parts, the PAF F-8s and F-5s were decommissioned in the 1988, and 2005, respectively. This long-awaited acquisition, thus, marks an important step for the Philippines, which had no operational fighter planes since

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the retirement of its two aging squadrons of North F-5s in 2005. This is also the AFP’s first major ticket item acquisition since it planned for its force modernization in the early 1990s.

Jump-starting Philippine-Australia Security Relations

The 1995 Philippine-Australia Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperative Activities provides the legal basis for Philippine-Australian security relations. On the basis of the 1995 MOU, the Australian Defense Force and the AFP have undertaken several defense related activities such in the holding of mutually beneficial cooperative defense activities such as the MTA LUMBAS (2001), the First Philippines-Australia Maritime Surveillance Exercise (MARSUVEX), and the Australian hosted multilateral Fleet Concentration Period Exercise KAKADU.65 Aside from these military exercises, there have been regular exchange visits by the two countries’ respective defense and ranking military officials that contributed to confidence building and regular intelligence exchanges on various security issues of mutual interests. Consequently, in a 2006 bilateral review, the Australian government described its security relations with the Philippines as “very strong” and based on friendly ties, as well as common strategic interests in a secure, stable and prosperous region.”66

The two countries are formal U.S. treaty allies that are also engaged in bilateral security relations. The two countries’ navies hold an annual joint naval exercise labelled Philippine Navy-Royal Navy Exercise LUMBAS to enhance their interoperability and readiness. The Philippine


Army and the Royal Australian Army conducted Land Activity Dawn Caracha which focuses on the training of Special Forces units. The Philippines also received Australian military assistance, such as training courses for senior AFP officers in Australian military schools, and the provision of 28 flat-bottomed airboats used for both combat and disaster relief operations. Both countries also cooperate in counter-terrorism training under the Philippine-Australia Capacity Building Project, which began in July 2001 during then Australian Prime Minister John Howard. The project involves the provision of financial and technical assistance to the Philippines for law-enforcement, immigration, and port and transport security. Since 2005, Australia has provided financial and technical support to the Coast Watch South project.

In 2007, the Philippines and Australia signed the Philippines-Australia Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA). The agreement follows the format of the U.S.-Philippine Visiting Forces (VFA) signed in 1997. The SOFA provides legal guarantees to Australian forces conducting joint-counter terrorism exercises in the Philippines. It also extends technical assistance to the AFP’s logistics, and acquisition policy. The SOFA, however, does not oblige either party to assist the other in case of an armed attack by a third party. Merely, it covers issues of jurisdiction over Australian troops training in the Philippines and vice-versa as the two countries undertake joint military exercises. In October 2011, then Australian Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd visited the Philippines to discuss with Foreign Affairs Secretary Del Rosario key regional and bilateral matters. The two sides tackled improved cooperation on disaster response, consolidation of defense-counter-terrorism measures, and mutual concerns on maritime security, such as the South China Sea dispute. Although Australia is not a claimant state in the South
China Sea dispute, it shares with the Philippines the strategic interests of “unimpeded access to the region’s maritime commons.”

In July 2012, after five years of intense debates and deliberations, the Philippine Senate finally ratified the agreement. The SOFA contains the detailed legal framework for Philippine-Australian military activities such as the Coast Watch South project and the Joint Maritime Training Activity *Lumbas*. After the Philippine Senate ratification of the SOFA, the DND announced that Australia looks forward to joining the annual Philippine-U.S. *Balikatan* (Shoulder-to-Shoulder) joint military exercise. In October 2013, the two countries’ defense ministers created the Joint Defense Cooperation Working Group (JDCC) and the Defense Cooperation Working Group (DCWG) to enhance their countries’ defense relations through the annual conduct of Army-to-Army exercise Dawn *Caracha*, Dusk *Caracha*, and the Navy-to-Navy Maritime Training Activity *Lumbas* and *Kakadu* and the Air Force Training Pitch Black. In the light of the Philippine Senate’ concurrence to the SOFA, the Australian Defense Force sent 68 participants to the Philippine-U.S. *Balikatan* Exercise 2014.

With improving Philippine-Australian security relations, President Aquino offered Australia a strategic partnership similar to what the country has forged with the U.S. and Japan. He commented that the Philippines and Australia both countries have been usually on the same

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side of issues that have confronted their respective nations during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. He also added that both countries share the same values, and forms of government, as well as face the same regional and global challenges.

The Hub-and-Spokes System in Action: the Case of Operation Damayan (Sharing)

In mid-November 2013, with a sustained wind speed of 170 miles per hour, Typhoon Haiyan cut through the middle of the Philippine archipelago and ravaged a land area containing 10 percent of the country’s population. Bringing in rain, strong wind, and tsunami like storm surge, typhoon Haiyan destroyed the central Philippine city of Tacloban and adversely affected an estimated 9.5 million people and displacing 600,000 from their homes. The storm also left 5,670 fatalities, 1,761 missing and 23,233 injured. In the immediate aftermath of the storm, the presidential spokesperson admitted that the typhoon did not only devastated roads, ports, and communication infrastructure but also turned many of the people designated to respond to natural disasters, the Philippine National Police and the AFP, into victims.

Given the Philippines’ geographic exposure to natural calamities such as typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes, the AFP has been the government’s critical instrument for humanitarian assistance and disaster response. From the Philippine military’s perspective, the geographic deployment of military personnel and equipment across the archipelago allows the AFP to be the first responders in the aftermath of a natural disaster. However, the widespread destruction of lives and properties in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan exposed the AFP’s

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71 Ibid. p.2.
72 Jacobs, op. cit. p. 2.
weakness in terms of HADR operations. The government immediately ordered the deployment of troops to the typhoon devastated areas in central Philippines. Unfortunately, the AFP’s HADR operations were hampered by the shortage of large troop carriers, the lack of provision including food, heavy equipment, reliable communication technology, helicopters, and strategic sea and airlift capabilities. Consequently, 48 hours after Typhoon Haiyan made a land-fall in the central part of the country, the Philippine government requested for American assistance.

On the basis of this request, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel directed the Pacific Command to support the U.S. government’s humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan. The morning after Typhoon Haiyan ravaged the islands of Leyte and Samar, the Joint Special Operations Task Force—Philippines (JSTOF-P) conducted aerial reconnaissance missions over the disaster-ravaged areas. As the full extent of the devastation became apparent, the JSTOF-P was ordered to assist the Philippine government in HADR operations. In subsequent days, lead elements of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade from Okinawa began arriving in the Philippines as part of an incremental response for HADR operations. With the arrival of the U.S. Marines, U.S. HADR operations shifted to surface maritime search and rescue (SAR), airborne maritime SAR, medium-heavy helicopter lift support, fixed-wing lift support and logistic enablers. The U.S. Marines also brought 22 MV-22 Ospreys to deliver relief assistance, ferry passenger, and survey damages and devastations in areas inaccessible by other means of transportation. On 15


November, the U.S.S. George Washington and its escorts arrived in the Philippines upon the order of Secretary Chuck Hagel. On board the *U.S.S. Washington* is Carrier Wing 5, which was designated for HADR. Days after the typhoon ravaged central Philippines, the U.S. Pacific Command deployed 2,150 Marines and sailors ashore, some 50 ships and aircraft to help distribute food, water and other supplies and speed up the delivery of relief supplies and facilitate the movement of AFP/PNP units by reopening roads, ports, and airports.\(^{78}\)

Other U.S. allies joined in the HADR operation in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan. The Australia Defense Force (ADF) deployed a C-17A Globemaster and a C-130 that airlifted doctors, paramedics, and logistic support staff to the disaster areas. After delivering the ADF’s HADR contingent to Leyte, the two aircraft were used for delivering relief supplies and flying more than 5,800 passengers including 3,500 internally displaced persons. Australia also sent the *HMAS Tobruk* to deliver 110 tons of humanitarian assistance and Australian engineers from the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment to Leyte.\(^{79}\) Japan sent three Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyers carrying nearly 1,000 Ground Self Defense Force to deliver emergency supplies to remote areas of Samar and Leyte that were ravaged by the typhoon.\(^{80}\) Japan also dispatched three CH-46 transport helicopters, three UH-1 utility helicopters, transport vessel *Osumi*, two KC-767 air tankers, seven C-130 transport aircraft, and U-4 utility support aircraft as the SDF’s contribution assistance to the multilateral forces involved in the massive international


HADR operation in the Central Philippines. Finally, the Republic of Korea deployed two C-130s and sent a 529-military contingent consisting of engineers, doctors and technical specialist to take part in the relief and recovery operations in the Central Philippines in the aftermath of the typhoon. Members of the ROK contingent were deployed in several towns in Leyte and Samar where they remained in these two central Philippine provinces for six months.

The allies’ combined efforts to conduct a massive HADR operation in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan became a showcase of how the spoke-and-hubs system of bilateral alliance can operate in peace and possibly, even in a wartime situation. For the Philippines, the involvement of the U.S. and its allies is an affirmation of American commitment to its security partners and the reliability its bilateral system of alliances. From a strategic perspective, the massive HADR operation labelled Damayan in the Philippines offered tangible benefits—the ability to operate in far-flung places, build military-to-military relations, and get realistic training on inter-operability—all can be applied in the alliances’ primary mission--fighting and winning wars.

The out-pouring of the U.S.’ and its bilateral allies’ humanitarian efforts and assistance to the thousands of Filipinos left homeless and hungry by Typhoon Haiyan was a monumental show of support to the Philippines, and a not-subtle expression of the hub-and-spokes system’s cohesion

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and ability to respond to crisis that is directed against the region’s new emergent power—
China.84

Conclusion

Confronted by China’s assertive expansionism in the South China Sea, the Philippines
considers it crucial and urgent to engage the U.S. strategically. This partnership enables the
Philippines to address its pressing security concern of territorial/maritime defense through
domain awareness. Noteworthy, too, is its desire to develop the AFP’s interoperability with the
U.S. Armed Forces, and to enhance its territorial defense capability. Significantly, this revitalize
security relation involves the Philippines’ efforts to link with Washington’s other alliance
partners in East Asia such as Japan, South Korea, and Australia.

The Philippines engages Japan in fostering maritime security as it taps the JCG in
providing technical and material assistance to the Philippine Coast Guard. As part of security
relations with Japan, Tokyo will provide 12 patrol boats for the PCG. A well-developed PCG is
extremely important in deterring Chinese intrusion into the country’s EEZ. The Philippines
plans as well to purchase 12 F/A Golden Eagles fighter planes from South Korea. These
interceptors are the next best alternative to the more expensive F-16 jet fighters from the U.S.
Moreover, the government’s priorities and limited defense budget only allow for the purchase of
these interim interceptors until the PAF can afford the fourth-generation fighter planes. The
Philippines has also signed and ratified a SOFA with Australia to enhance security cooperation
with the Australian Defense Force that includes the Coast Watch South project and the joint

9 http://search.proquest.com/docview/1458463490?accountid=28547
Maritime Training Activity *Lumbas*. All these efforts are aimed to strengthen the Philippines’ territorial defense posture. By establishing informal security ties with these countries, the Philippines harnesses the U.S. are other bilateral alliances against a pressing strategic concern in maritime Southeast Asia—China’s expansionist moves in the South China Sea. This also enables the Philippines to tap these bilateral alliances to address another pressing security concern—the AFP’s lack of capabilities in conducting HADR operations.