

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
HEARING ON THE ROLE OF ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN U.S. MILITARY STRATEGY AND
OPERATIONS

BY

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Thornberry, and distinguished members of this Committee for the invitation to appear before you. It is a great honor to testify before this body on a topic of the highest importance to our nation – the importance and role of allies and partners in U.S. strategy.¹

U.S. Allies and Partners in U.S. National Defense Strategy

Allies and partners are absolutely essential for the United States in a world increasingly defined by great power competition, above all with China. Indeed, they lie at the very heart of the right U.S. strategy for this era, which I believe the Department of Defense's 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) lays out.²

The importance to the United States of allies and partners is not a platitude. To the contrary. While in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union some might have dreamed about the United States handling its defense challenges basically alone, that time is now past.

The fundamental reality is that the United States is no longer as powerful relative to other countries as it once was. For the first time since the 19th century, the United States is not far and away the world's largest economy; today the United States comprises roughly one-fifth of global GDP. More than anything else, this is due to the rise of China. Indeed, China's economy is already larger than America's according to purchasing power parity metrics and may exceed it in market exchange terms in the coming decades.³ Moreover, as has become very evident, Beijing is increasingly using its growing power for coercive purposes. At the same time, the United States faces a range of other potential threats, including primarily from Russia against NATO as well as from transnational terrorists, Iran, and North Korea.

The United States therefore cannot do everything it needs to do in the international arena on its own. Accordingly, the United States must focus on what really matters. It must have a coherent strategy and make the hard choices to implement it effectively.⁴

This first and foremost requires we have a clear sense of what our national interests are. This, as the 2017 National Security Strategy and NDS set out, means ensuring favorable regional balances of power in the world's key regions.⁵ As these Strategies reaffirm, it is a paramount and enduring interest of the United States to deny any other state hegemony over Asia, Europe, or, to a lesser degree, the Persian Gulf. A state that could gain predominance over one or more of these regions could exclude the United States from fair trade with these enormous markets, severely weakening our economy, and use the ensuing power advantage it would gain over us to coerce us over our domestic affairs – or worse.

This is not a theoretical problem. China is now becoming a superpower, and Asia is the world's largest market (indeed the region boasts a growing share of global GDP).⁶ According to the U.S. Government, China is pursuing regional hegemony over Asia – and ultimately more.⁷ Indeed, the evidence is before us: Beijing has shown its willingness to exert coercive influence not only against the United States but also Australia, Canada, India, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea,

Taiwan, Vietnam, and other states. Consequently, because of China's unique power and Asia's status as the world's largest market, the threat of China establishing hegemony over Asia is the primary geopolitical challenge for the United States.

The solution to this challenge proffered by the NDS is coalitions – allies and partners.⁸ What *are* those favorable balances of power, after all? They are *coalitions* of states that share our interest in denying another state like China hegemony over a region – in other words, alliances and partnerships. If those coalitions are strong enough and stand together, then our basic goal of open access to and trade with the region is served. If they do not, and an aspiring hegemon like China can assemble a strong pro-hegemonial coalition of its own, we will not be powerful enough on our own to stop them. Fortunately, there is growing evidence that such a coalition is forming to check China's aspirations, centered around the United States, Japan, India, and Australia but also including other Asian and some extra-regional states. At the same time, although the danger of a state achieving regional hegemony over Europe is considerably less acute, NATO plays a highly valuable role in preventing such an outcome.

The primary threat to this strategy is that an aspiring hegemon like China or, to a lesser but still significant degree, a dangerous revanchist power like Russia in Europe will try to pry apart, short-circuit, or fracture such a coalition. Thus in essence the NDS goal of defense planning for the United States is about *alliance defense*: to protect and sustain those states commonly dedicated to this anti-hegemonial purpose, above all formal allies and quasi-allies like Taiwan, given that they implicate U.S. credibility in a particularly important way.⁹

Given China's power and the proximity of vulnerable allies and Taiwan to China, achieving this goal in Asia will be a demanding – even consuming – requirement. Fortunately, the Department of Defense has made a firm turn to focus on addressing this with the 2018 NDS. With this shift, the Department made clear that the Joint Force must first focus on China as its pacing, peer competitor, and in this light must concentrate on Asia as the priority region, with Russia against NATO as a second priority.¹⁰ The Department also recognized that it must refocus on warfighting over shaping activities, and give priority to first winning a major war, particularly with China, before allocating resources and effort to preparing for a second, simultaneous conflict.¹¹ And, while concentrating primarily on Asia, the Department also took steps to rectify deterrence and defense shortfalls on NATO's Eastern Flank against a dangerous Russia.

While progress on these fronts has been uneven, I believe it has been significant and meaningful, as evidenced most recently by the laudable forward movement on the part of the Marines and Air Force.¹² Congress has played a critical role in encouraging and enabling this progress, not only in creating the conditions for a meaningful National Defense Strategy in the first place but through providing the resources to fund the Strategy as well as through efforts like the Pacific Deterrence Initiative.¹³

The Role of Allies and Partners in the Strategy

This strategy's success, however, is not only a matter of how the Department of Defense is doing. Rather, it is premised on active participation by U.S. allies and partners. Precisely because of this, the NDS identifies a new approach to U.S. allies and partners as its critical second line of effort.¹⁴

I must say that I am not convinced that this new approach is widely understood. This new approach is not simply a restatement that allies and partners are important and valued, as appropriate as that may be. Rather, it is a call for a new logic for dealing with them.

Most fundamentally, it calls for *truly* integrating allies and partners, not as totems to show flags but rather as active and more equal participants who share a much greater part of the burden. In other words, there exist multiple challenges to U.S. national security but, given the rise of China and the continuing threat to NATO from Russia, America can no longer expect to do things alone. Accordingly, we must address this widening shortfall between the threats we face and the resources we have to deal with them by a much greater role for allies and partners. This is not only about a change in their behavior, though – it also requires changes in our own ways of dealing with them such that we promote and enable this greater role.

This new approach proceeds from the NDS' revised strategic perspective. As discussed previously, the prime challenge to U.S. interests is China in Asia – but it is not the only one. There are also Russia against NATO, transnational terrorists, Iran, and North Korea. But because of China's power and wealth, the United States simply must play a leading role in blocking Beijing's pursuit of hegemony in Asia; without U.S. leadership, no anti-hegemonial coalition in the region is likely to succeed. This means that the U.S. defense establishment must prioritize dealing with China in Asia, and particularly on defending vulnerable allies and partners such as Taiwan and the Philippines. Given the high demands of this requirement, it will have to consume an increasing portion of U.S. defense effort and attention.

To put it bluntly, we will need help to accomplish this, and this focus will also leave exposed flanks. While the United States must retain a strong nuclear deterrent and a substantial counterterrorism enterprise, the simple fact is that America will not be able to handle all of the other contingencies that could arise to threaten its allies – or U.S. interests, for that matter. In particular, we will not be able to dedicate the level of resources and effort to the Middle East and Europe that we have in the past. *We will therefore need allies and partners to do their part – not just to help defend our interests and enable a concentration on Asia, but to defend themselves.*

But how? I will address this issue in three parts:

- First, how we should think about adding new allies and partners to increase the cumulative power of our overall coalition.
- Second, what we should encourage allies and partners to do, with the goal of increasing their level of effort.

- Third, what the United States can do to make our collective efforts more effective and efficient.

How We Should Think About Adding Allies and Partners

As noted, there is a mismatch between the full range of threats we face and what we alone can do. Moreover, there is a *particular* mismatch between where these dangers present themselves and the threat perceptions of most of our established allies. The contemporary threats to U.S. interests stem from China across Asia, transnational terrorists largely in the Middle East, Russia in Eastern Europe, Iran in the Persian Gulf area, and North Korea in Asia. Yet the United States' traditional closest and most significant allies are largely clustered in Western Europe (the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, et al) and Northeast Asia (Japan and South Korea). Many of these countries, especially in Europe, feel quite secure, and are little motivated to contribute to more distant threats, for instance in Asia or the Middle East. This leaves wide areas, such as Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, for which longstanding U.S. alliances are of minimal help.

The natural way to rectify this is for the United States to add partners and, where necessary, alliances to help address these gaps. Fortunately, there is plenty of opportunity to do so, because many countries that are not our traditional close allies share our interest in checking China's bid for hegemony in Asia, resisting Russian and Iranian aggression, or combating transnational terrorism. Bound by some degree of overlapping threat perception, we can collaborate more closely with countries like India and Sri Lanka in South Asia, Vietnam and Indonesia in Southeast Asia, and the Gulf States in the Middle East to pursue our shared goals. Facing these threats more acutely than our long-established allies, these countries are highly motivated to do something about the problem – as evidenced by the level of effort they allocate to defense and their willingness to put “skin in the game.” India, for instance, is directly confronting the Chinese military along the Line of Actual Control and Vietnam is contesting Beijing's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

It is important to emphasize two points in this effort to expand our roster of allies and partners.

First, we should very carefully distinguish between expanding our formal alliances or quasi-alliances from expanding our partnerships. The former should be approached very conservatively, while the latter can be approached more liberally. When we extend an alliance commitment or something tantamount to it (as in the case of Taiwan), we tie our credibility to that nation's fate. We should therefore be chary about doing so. When we add a partner, however, we may have deep engagement with that state and indeed even come to its defense, but our credibility is not tied to it.

In light of this, we should seek to expand our partnerships wherever possible. In particular, we should focus on increasing them in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands, where China otherwise might have an open field to suborn states and add them to its pro-hegemonial

coalition. We should therefore seek to partner with countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh – ideally to align efforts to check China’s bid for regional predominance, or at minimum to prevent them from aligning with Beijing.

It may make sense, though, to add additional states as allies. We should add new states as allies if they are defensible – that is, we and our other allies and partners could defend them at a cost and risk we are willing to tolerate, consistent with our other obligations – and if they might otherwise bandwagon with an aspiring regional hegemon. In practice, because bandwagoning pressures are quite limited in Europe and the Middle East, the only region where we might really want to add new allies is Asia. In this region, the more important a state is to our anti-hegemonial efforts against China, the more we should be willing to suffer and risk to defend them.

While I do not see a near-term need to add any allies to the U.S. roster, I do think we will increasingly need to consider this as the shadow of Chinese power darkens over the region. The state I could see most readily adding is Indonesia, which is very large and also relatively defensible, given U.S. advantages in aerospace and maritime power. Vietnam will be a critical partner but, given its own traditions of autonomy and our interests in avoiding alliances on the Asian mainland, we should not presently pursue an alliance with Hanoi. Rather, we should seek to build up Vietnam’s strength as much as possible such that Hanoi has the power and confidence to continue resisting Beijing without an alliance guarantee from the United States.

Second, our effort to expand our network of allies and partners should primarily be focused on states with shared threat perceptions. It has become something of a commonplace that shared values form the bedrock of our alliances. It is true that such values help bind allies, but the most useful alliances generally proceed from shared fears. Alliances, after all, are networks of states committed to each other’s defense. The best motivator to fight is self-defense; thus states that have a shared interest in preventing Chinese or Russian or Iranian hegemony over them have a natural alignment with our own interests. This is true whether or not they are democracies.

Thus key allies or partners in blunting China’s pursuit of hegemony could include not only model democracies like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, but also semi-democracies like Malaysia and Singapore and even authoritarian governments like Vietnam. And our natural partners in blocking Iranian ambitions in the Persian Gulf include the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other monarchical states. Meantime, while the United Kingdom and France contribute to our shared goals, other European states are not doing so much.

The upshot is that, in expanding our network of allies and partners, we should focus on adding states that share our perception of the threat and are willing to do something about it – whether or not they are democracies. In light of this, we should especially concentrate on expanding and deepening our partnerships in Southeast and South Asia in order to strengthen an anti-hegemonial coalition against China or, at minimum, to inhibit states in the region from bandwagoning with China. In other theaters, we should seek to expand and deepen partnerships wherever possible to help offload burdens, particularly in the Middle East.

What We Should Encourage Allies and Partners to Do

Expanding our network, though, is not enough. Rather, given the scale of challenges we face, the United States should encourage allies and partners to assume a greater role in handling shared security challenges.

This is, of course, the burden-sharing problem. And it is a difficult one. Indeed, based on my review of the literature and my time in the Pentagon, I think this is one of the areas where our strategic thinking is farthest behind what the nation needs. On vital issues like nuclear strategy, decisionmakers have a highly developed and sophisticated body of thinking. In trying to get allies and partners to shoulder more of the burden, there is far less to draw on.

That said, I do not think there is a neat solution to this quandary. The fact is that most countries will only do so much if they do not feel directly threatened by an adversary. My view is that we should work with this reality rather than vainly try to alter it. Accordingly, we should evolve our network based on where our allies and partners' feel enough of a common threat to do something meaningful. We should therefore *focus on urging countries to increase their efforts where they will be able to generate sufficient political will to make an effective contribution to shared interests*. At some level, this is obvious – but actually this isn't what we have been doing in recent decades. For years, for instance, we urged NATO allies and some in Asia like Australia to contribute troops to Afghanistan and Iraq; even more recently, we have pressed Canberra to contribute to missions in the Persian Gulf.¹⁵

We should approach things differently. In Asia, given the scale of the threat posed by Beijing, we should concentrate most of our allies on readying to defend themselves alongside U.S. armed forces and providing access to U.S. military forces during a contingency. Taiwan, the Philippines, and South Korea should focus on defending themselves alongside the United States; this will be hard enough in light of a rising, enormously powerful China. Meanwhile, we should assist partners like Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia with whatever means available to enable their defense against an ever more powerful China, while concurrently seeking greater access and logistics support for U.S. and other allied forces. The United States can build these partners' capacity while generating good will through increased foreign military sales (FMS) and appropriately-scoped combined exercises to build interoperability with U.S. and allied forces.

Given its vulnerability to China, Japan should primarily focus on defending itself alongside the United States. Fortunately, it is already moving in this direction; its commendable 2018 National Defense Program Guidelines are closely aligned with the 2018 NDS.¹⁶ Tokyo should also prepare to play an important role in any defense of Taiwan, which is critical to Japan's own defense. While Tokyo's strategic *focus* is commendable, though, Japan simply must do and spend more. Its defense spending remains far too low given the darkening threat posed by China, which Japan's government and strategists keenly appreciate.¹⁷ Washington should therefore not be shy about emphasizing this point. Japan can and should do more, and time is short.

The United States should urge India to concentrate on its own defense against China as well as countering Chinese regional power projection and influence in South Asia and adjacent Southeast Asia, such as Myanmar. This would be different than some past practice, which has urged India to project power out of its core region, for instance into the South China Sea or beyond. This is not the best use of India's resources and resolve for a number of reasons. For one thing, while South Asia is a secondary theater for the United States, it is the primary one for India, which means that New Delhi's pursuit of local objectives will command greater domestic political support. Moreover, India's military has largely been developed for its immediate area; it is thus better suited for exerting influence and fighting in its own theater. Finally, given China's strength, wealth, and connections with states like Pakistan, New Delhi will likely have its hands full achieving more local aims. The United States should therefore aid India – through FMS, information sharing, and appropriately-scoped combined bilateral and multilateral military exercises – in focusing on the Indian Ocean Region, and in helping New Delhi support the autonomy of vulnerable proximate states like Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. This will allow the United States to focus more on the Western Pacific, where its efforts are most needed.

Australia is the prime exception to this overall approach in Asia. Because Australia is currently secure but rightly recognizes that its best defense is a forward one, we should encourage Canberra to focus on assisting the defense of more exposed allies like Taiwan and Japan, while also cooperating with U.S. efforts to build military capacity and interoperability with countries across South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. Fortunately, Australia is already moving toward such a collective defense approach with its Defence Strategy Update of this past summer.¹⁸ Canberra deserves plaudits for this visionary and important move.

In the Middle East, the United States should urge Israel and Washington's Arab partners to take a greater role in containing Iran and combating transnational terrorism. Fortunately, recent moves by the UAE, Bahrain, and hopefully other Arab states to forge links with Israel indicate that a more cohesive regional coalition may be forming that can do just this. The United States should encourage this kind of dynamic in order to reduce its own role in the region.

In Europe, the overall U.S. goal should be, while preserving the fundamental U.S. commitment and readiness to contribute to NATO's defense, to have Europeans shoulder more of the burden of defending the Alliance from Russian assault. The reality is that, given the stakes and consequences, the United States must prioritize Asia. The United States must therefore economize in its second theater, Europe. Since the United States will not have a military large enough to mount two major simultaneous wars with China and Russia, this means that European allies and partners will need to be prepared, in the event of conflict, to do more with limited American contributions, particularly until such time as the United States could prudently reallocate attention from Asia. Indeed, even if a war broke out only in Europe, the United States

could not take too much risk in Asia and thereby open the way for Chinese opportunistic aggression there.

This means Washington should particularly press the states of Northern and Eastern Europe to ensure their adequate defense in such an eventuality. Fortunately, these states already perceive the threat from Moscow, largely recognize the U.S. shift to Asia, and are already beginning to address the challenge. I would particularly commend Poland, Finland, and Sweden for doing more to prepare to address a Russian assault.¹⁹

The United States should urge other states in this part of Europe to focus on preparing to do the same. This includes the United Kingdom, which is currently undertaking its Integrated Review of security and defense strategy. London would be best off focusing its efforts primarily on defense of NATO Europe, as well as helping the United States and other partners in the Middle East and South Asia. At the same time, though, the United Kingdom, France, and others can take more indirect steps to help address the China problem. They can, for instance, cooperate on defense-related research and development, participate in shared acquisition of weapons systems that defray the costs for Asian states, and prepare to deal with any Chinese military forces projecting power into the European theater, which is likely to become an increasing problem.

In the case of Southern Europe, where there is less of a direct military threat from Russia, Washington should urge countries to bolster their own resilience to Russian or Chinese pressure, help keep a lid on regional instability in the Mediterranean, and contribute to counterterrorism missions in North Africa.

The main challenge to this model in Europe is Germany. The simple fact is that, given its size and wealth, Germany's role is critical – and it can and should do much more for NATO European defense. Germany has an interest in doing so; a Russian assault into Eastern NATO and its consequent effect on stability in Europe would directly undermine Germany's interests. Germany is also fully capable of contributing more; its defense spending, while slowly improving, remains an anemic 1.38% of GDP, well below the NATO target of 2% agreed to by all member-states at the Wales Summit.²⁰ By comparison, in 1988 West Germany, which was two-thirds the size of today's Germany, fielded twelve divisions along the inner-German border, with three in ready reserve – a much larger and more formidable force than today's Bundeswehr but well within contemporary Germany's capabilities.²¹ Moreover, a greater effort by Germany would seem more consistent with Berlin's proclaimed foreign policy of standing up for multilateralism and honoring its pledges and duties. What better evidence of Germany's commitment to these goals would there be than doing its part to defend its allies in Eastern Europe, just as West Germany received the benefit of a NATO defense during the Cold War? In other words, while I earlier cast doubt on the role of moral obligation in nation's defense efforts, the state that would seem the most likely to be susceptible to such arguments is contemporary Germany. Let us take Germany at its word and call upon it to meet its historical and NATO obligations.

What We Should Do To Enable our Allies and Partners to Contribute More

Finally, the United States should act to make this invigorated network of allies and partners more effective. It – and Congress in particular – has the power to do so in ways that will make a difference.

This too requires a break from the past. For many years, the U.S. defense establishment has adhered to a unilateral approach to planning, force development, and posture. Allies, in this context, were “nice to haves,” but plans usually adopted very conservative assumptions and basically focused on U.S. contributions. At the same time, the United States used arms sales and technology transfers as leverage for domestic political reform and other goals unrelated to strengthening states’ ability to resist coercion or aggression, especially from China.

Both of these need to change. On the first point, the United States can no longer afford wholly unilateral planning. Given China’s power, as well as the other threats facing the United States, we need to make sure our efforts are as efficient and complementary with those of our allies and partners as possible. Of course we need to be realistic about what allies and partners will actually do in the event of war. And deliberate redundancy for military resilience is necessary. But we should not be building a set of capabilities that are genuinely duplicative of what reliable allies are developing.

Accordingly, we should integrate our force development, posture, and war planning processes as much as possible with allies relevant to key scenarios. In particular, we should seek as much as possible to align our efforts with those of Australia and Japan in the Pacific and with the United Kingdom in Europe. We should also be able to integrate our efforts more – albeit probably to a lesser degree – with other allies such as South Korea, Canada, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, and France. The goal here should be to make sure that our collective efforts are as efficient as possible. Given how powerful China will be, we cannot afford to waste money and effort with duplication.

At the same time, we should seek wherever possible to strengthen important partners in their ability to resist Chinese coercion or aggression, or otherwise contribute to shared goals. Congress has advanced this effort through the use of security cooperation authorities, including the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative, as well as through support for multilateral training and exercises and regional deterrence initiatives in the Indo-Pacific and Europe. We should intensify the use of arms sales, technology transfers, and related military and intelligence tools to build up our allies and partners.

In this vein, though, we must fundamentally move away from using these tools as leverage over key partners for domestic political reform or secondary geopolitical objectives. The United States should always stand proudly for free government that treats its people with dignity. We must keep our eye on the prize, though. China is the primary challenge to our interests in the world – *including* our interest in free government both at home and abroad. Our top priority must

therefore be to block its gaining predominance in Asia. This means strengthening states in the region against Chinese power, whether they are model democracies or not.

This is especially important in Southeast and South Asia, which will be key theaters of competition with Beijing, but where there are no model democracies. We cannot afford to alienate or weaken these states. Rather, we should seek to build their capacity against China however possible. In this context, Congress should remove penalties and barriers associated with legislation like CAATSA that inhibit our ability to work with and aid key countries like India, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

It is worth emphasizing in this context that, while our interests in preventing Chinese hegemony are primarily geopolitical and economic in nature, the reality is that such an outcome would also have major ideological consequences. If China is ascendant in the world, there seems little doubt that authoritarian government will follow in its wake. Preventing that requires, as I laid out earlier, strong and resolute allies and partners – *even* if we have (often justified) objections to their form of government or if their policies do not fully align with ours on other matters. By contrast, the most likely route to enduring liberalization is through succeeding in great power competition – it was no accident that many countries democratized as the Cold War ended and in its wake.²² Therefore, even if one is more concerned about ideological and governance factors, Washington should still be willing to work with non- and semi-democratic states.

Conclusion

In closing, the NDS was designed to initiate a fundamental shift in our nation’s defense efforts. Critical to this whole model is a new approach to allies and partners – one in which they would be far more integrated into our common efforts than in the unipolar era that has now past. This will involve uncomfortable changes, hard decisions and compromises, as well as some friction with our allies and partners. Indeed, friction with allies may be necessary and even good if it means we are facing up to new realities in a way that helps us get to our goal.

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis’ characterization of the spirit of all this is highly illuminating. He always emphasized that he had never fought in a U.S.-only formation, with all the advantages and challenges of that cheek-by-jowl integration with foreign partners, and wanted the whole Department of Defense to strive to adopt the mindset he had gained from such experience.²³ I took this admonition to mean that this model for dealing with allies and partners would not be easy or comfortable, but the benefits would be worth the aggravation and costs. The truth is that we are much stronger with allies and partners, and our power is magnified when we effectively align our efforts. Done right, the end result will be a more powerful, equitable, and sustainable coalition of states together standing up for the kind of world Americans want and need to be secure, free, and prosperous.

¹ I am testifying solely in a personal capacity and am not representing the views of any organization, including The Marathon Initiative.

² U.S. Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sustaining the American Military's Competitive Edge* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2018), <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>. For my further analysis and assessment on the National Defense Strategy, please see *Hearing to Receive Testimony on China and Russia, before the Armed Services Committee, United States Senate*, 116th Cong. (2019) (statement of Elbridge A. Colby), https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Colby_01-29-19.pdf.

³ Both metrics have merits and defects. Given China's ability to produce military equipment from its own economy, however, purchasing power parity measures should not be discounted.

⁴ For my more developed views on what this strategy should look like, please see *Great Power: The Future of U.S. Defense Strategy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, forthcoming).

⁵ White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), 25.

⁶ Oliver Tonby et al., *Asia's Future is Now* (New York: McKinsey Global Institute, July 2019), 3, [https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured Insights/Asia Pacific/Asias future is now/Asias-future-is-now-final.pdf](https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Asia%20Pacific/Asias%20future%20is%20now/Asias-future-is-now-final.pdf).

⁷ As the U.S. Department of Defense assessed in June 2019: "As China continues its economic and military ascendance, it seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and ultimately global preeminence in the long-term." U.S. Department of Defense, *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, Promoting a Networked Region* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, June 1, 2019), 8.

⁸ I use the term "allies" to refer to states with which the United States has a formal defense commitment; this includes states such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and the NATO member states. I use the term "partners" to refer to states with which the United States has a strategically collaborative relationship but not a formal defense commitment; this includes states such as India and Vietnam. Of note, a third category of "quasi-allies" includes those like Taiwan, the UAE, and Kuwait. While the United States does not have a treaty-based defense commitment to these, Washington's credibility is widely regarded as tied to them due to a variety of other formal statements of commitment as well as Washington's patterns of behavior. In the case of Taiwan, for instance, there are the Taiwan Relations Act, the Six Assurances, and Washington's resistance to Chinese attempts to coerce Taiwan. In the case of Kuwait, there are a history of political commitments and of course the U.S.-led effort to eject Iraq from conquering Kuwait in 1990-1991.

⁹ Robert Komer, *Maritime Strategy or Coalition Defense?* (Cambridge, MA: Abt Books, 1984).

¹⁰ Mark T. Esper, "Defense Secretary Addresses Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, HI, August 26, 2020), <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2328124/defense-secretary-addresses-free-and-open-indo-pacific-at-apcss-courtesy-transc/source/GovDelivery/>.

¹¹ Jim Mitre, "A Eulogy for the Two-War Construct," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 41, no. 4 (Winter 2019): 7-30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2018.1557479>.

¹² See, e.g., David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030* (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, March 2020), <https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/CMC38%20Force%20Design%202030%20Report%20Phase%20I%20and%20II.pdf?ver=2020-03-26-121328-460>; and Charles Q. Brown, Jr. *Accelerate Change or Lose* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Air Force, August 2020), https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/csaf/CSAF_22/CSAF_22_Strategic_Approach_Accelerate_Change_or_Lose_31_Aug_2020.pdf.

¹³ There is also a vigorous burgeoning literature on how to make this strategic shift a reality. For important contributions, please see, for instance, David Ochmanek, *Restoring U.S. Power Projection Capabilities: Responding to the 2018 National Defense Strategy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, July 2018), 8, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE260.html>; Mike Gallagher, "State of (Deterrence by)

Denial,” *Washington Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2019): 31-45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2019.1626687>; Christian Brose, *The Kill Chain: Defending America in the Future of High-Tech Warfare* (New York: Hachette, 2020); and Michèle A. Flournoy, “How to Prevent a War in Asia: The Erosion of American Deterrence Raises the Risk of Chinese Miscalculation,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 18, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/usa/2020-06-18/how-prevent-war-asia>.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Mark T. Esper, “Implementing the National Defense Strategy: A Year of Successes,” U.S. Department of Defense, July 2020, 5-6, <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jul/17/2002459291/-1/-1/1/NDS-FIRST-YEAR-ACCOMPLISHMENTS-FINAL.PDF>.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Primrose Riordan, “Australia to Join US-led Naval Coalition in the Gulf,” *Financial Times*, August 20, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/5ba72c32-c3b8-11e9-a8e9-296ca66511c9>.

¹⁶ Japanese Ministry of Defense, *National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2019 and beyond* (Tokyo: Japanese Ministry of Defense, December 18, 2018), https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/2019/pdf/20181218_e.pdf.

¹⁷ Though Japan’s defense spending has increased for several consecutive years, it was merely .94% of its gross domestic product in 2019. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance* 120 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2020), 531.

¹⁸ Australian Department of Defence, *2020 Defence Strategic Update* (Canberra: Australian Government, July 2020), <https://www.defence.gov.au/strategicupdate-2020/>. For a lucid vision of this overall collective defense approach, see Ashley Townshend, Brendan Thomas-Noone, with Matilda Steward, *Averting Crisis: American Strategy, Military Spending and Collective Defence in the Indo-Pacific* (Sydney, AU: The United States Studies Centre, August 2019), <https://www.usssc.edu.au/analysis/averting-crisis-american-strategy-military-spending-and-collective-defence-in-the-indo-pacific>.

¹⁹ Please see, e.g., Polish Ministry of National Defence, *The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland* (Warsaw: Polish Ministry of National Defence, May 2017), <https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/defenceconcept-publication>; Connie Lee, “Finland Upgrading Military Capabilities,” *National Defense*, May 20, 2020, <https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2020/5/20/finland-upgrading-military-capabilities>; and Swedish Defence Commission Secretariat, “White Book on Sweden’s Security Policy and the Development of Military Defence 2021-2025,” unofficial summary (Stockholm: Government Offices of Sweden, May 2019), <https://www.government.se/4ada4f/globalassets/government/dokument/forsvarsdepartementet/forsvarsberedningen/defence-commissions-white-book-english-summary.pdf>.

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²¹ Congressional Budget Office, *U.S. Ground Forces and the Conventional Balance in Europe* (Washington, DC: Congress of the United States, June 1988), 93, <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/100th-congress-1987-1988/reports/doc01b-entire.pdf>; and Michael Shurkin, *The Abilities of the British, French, and German Armies to Generate and Sustain Armored Brigades in the Baltics* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), 10, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1629.html.

²² See, e.g., Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1991; 1993).

²³ Jim Mattis and Bing West, *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead* (New York, Random House, 2019), 243.