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Assessing the Asia-Pacific Rebalance

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1 | Introduction

Three years have passed since President Barack Obama laid the groundwork for the U.S. rebalance to the Asia Pacific region. Support for the rebalance strategy is substantial, but questions remain about its implementation. As China's power grows and its assertiveness in regional disputes increases, U.S. allies and partners continue to rely on the United States to help reinforce regional security. In this increasingly tense Asia-Pacific security environment, it is critical that regional allies, partners, and competitors recognize and acknowledge that the United States is a Pacific power with the ability to carry out its rebalance strategy.

This report evaluates both public statements and visible implementation of the U.S. rebalance strategy, as viewed not only from Washington but from regional capitals as well. This report builds on a congressionally mandated study, *U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment*, which reviewed U.S. force posture in the Asia-Pacific region. That report, released by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in September 2012, was directed by David Berseau and Michael Green. This report, carried out with support from the Department of Defense, builds on the 2012 report's force posture assessment by clarifying the stated objectives of the U.S. rebalance strategy and reviewing regional responses.

This report is not intended to provide a broad assessment of the entire Asia-Pacific rebalance strategy but rather concentrates on the security-focused elements of the rebalance. A central finding of this report is the consistent support among rebalance proponents for the importance of modernizing U.S. relationships, presence, and capabilities in the Asia Pacific. Not only are these elements being prioritized in Washington; they are also being watched by foreign leaders, especially those in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), who are looking for indications of U.S. intent and capability to carry out its rebalance strategy. The following pages assess the status of the rebalance, which is critical to reinforcing regional stability by strengthening U.S. relationships, presence, and capabilities.

This report is composed of two main sections. The first section outlines U.S. rebalance objectives, relying on statements from administration officials. Importantly, this section finds that the language used to describe the rebalance has changed over time, particularly since the initial formulation of the rebalance. The second section outlines regional

perspectives of the Asia-Pacific rebalance, aiming to describe the level of regional support for the rebalance strategy as well as perceptions of its implementation. This section focuses on official government statements, when available, and expert opinions and private commentaries, when necessary or appropriate.

2 | U.S. Objectives for the Rebalance

In October 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton set forth a vision of “America’s Pacific Century,” outlining a “strategic turn” to the Asia-Pacific region.¹ One month later, President Barack Obama spoke before the Australian Parliament and described U.S. “efforts to advance security, prosperity, and human dignity across the Asia Pacific.”² Over the next year, other administration officials—including Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Deputy Secretary of Defense Ash Carter—put forward more detailed explanations of the “rebalance to the Asia Pacific.”

Three years have passed since these initial statements, providing an opportunity to review the evolution of stated objectives of the rebalance and the progress made in accomplishing them. This section revisits the major U.S. statements of the rebalance as a means to identify the core objectives and sub-objectives of the strategy they set forth. The first subsection focuses on early descriptions of the rebalance by U.S. senior officials and government agencies, concentrating on statements discussing security-related elements of the rebalance. The second subsection addresses more recent statements on the rebalance, primarily those made during the first two years of the administration’s second term. The final subsection synthesizes these statements, assembling them into a specific set of strategic objectives and sub-objectives for achieving the rebalance to Asia.

Initial Rebalance Statements

President Obama made the formal announcement of the renewed U.S. focus on the Asia Pacific in November 2011. Speaking before the Australian Parliament, he affirmed, “The United States is turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia Pacific region.”³ The speech highlighted three critical components of this strategy: “efforts to advance security, prosperity, and human dignity.”⁴ Although senior administration officials have maintained

1. Hillary Clinton, “America’s Pacific Century,” *Foreign Policy*, October 11, 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century.

2. Barack Obama, “Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament” (speech delivered to the Australian Parliament, Canberra, Australia, November 17, 2011), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/11/17/president-obama-speaks-australian-parliament#transcript>.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

that all three of these priorities are equally important to U.S. regional strategy, this report focuses primarily on the security-related aspects of the rebalance.⁵

Before President Obama's speech announced the rebalance to the international community, then-secretary of state Hillary Clinton outlined the strategic approach in her *Foreign Policy* article "America's Pacific Century."⁶ In that article, Secretary Clinton stated, "America stands at a pivot point," and she went on to describe "a strategic turn to the [Asia-Pacific] region" which "requires smart execution of a coherent regional strategy."⁷ Secretary Clinton described six lines of activity fundamental to this strategy: (1) strengthening bilateral security alliances; (2) deepening our working relationships with emerging powers, including with China; (3) engaging with regional multilateral institutions; (4) expanding trade and investment; (5) forging a broad-based military presence; and (6) advancing democracy and human rights. These six lines of activity provide specificity to President Obama's broad goals of advancing security, prosperity, and human dignity. In that sense, Secretary Clinton's article amounted to an initial description of the vital components of the strategic approach to the Asia Pacific.

Although neither President Obama's speech nor Secretary Clinton's article provided detail on the specific objectives of the strategy, they both provided a structure for thinking about the security elements of the rebalance. Secretary Clinton wrote that U.S. alliances require political consensus, nimble and adaptive alliances, and the capability to deter provocation.⁸ On U.S. defense posture in Asia, President Obama noted that the U.S. presence would be more broadly distributed, more flexible, and more sustainable.⁹ Secretary Clinton also put forward similar priorities for U.S. force posture: geographic distribution, operational resilience, and political sustainability.¹⁰

With the White House and the State Department having explained the initial formulation of the rebalance, responsibility for describing the strategy's specific security-related objectives fell to the Department of Defense. Three Pentagon announcements collectively outlined the details of the administration's plan for the military portion of the rebalance.

5. Chuck Hagel, "Remarks by Secretary Hagel at the International Institute for Strategic Studies Asia Security Summit, Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore" (speech delivered at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, June 1, 2013), <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5251>. For example, Secretary Hagel noted in his speech that the rebalance "is primarily a diplomatic, economic and cultural strategy."

6. Clinton, "America's Pacific Century."

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament." President Obama's exact language was, "Indeed, we are already modernizing America's defense posture across the Asia Pacific. It will be more broadly distributed—maintaining our strong presence in Japan and the Korean Peninsula, while enhancing our presence in Southeast Asia. Our posture will be more flexible—with new capabilities to ensure that our forces can operate freely. And our posture will be more sustainable, by helping allies and partners build their capacity, with more training and exercises."

10. The phrase "geographically distributed, operationally resilient and politically sustainable" was first used by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in June 2010. Robert M. Gates, "Strengthening Security Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific" (speech delivered at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, June 5, 2010), <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1483>. See also Robert M. Gates, "Secretary of Defense Speech" (speech delivered at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, June 4, 2011), <http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1578>.

The first of these announcements was the Defense Strategic Guidance, which stated, “We will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia Pacific region.”¹¹ The Defense Strategic Guidance was the first public statement to use the term “rebalance,” and it did so in the context of a major defense-resourcing shift. This document emphasized two aspects of the rebalance: (1) relationships with Asian allies and key partners, and (2) an underlying balance of military capability and presence.¹²

The second announcement, delivered by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta at the Shangri-La Security Dialogue in June 2012, expanded on the security-related aspects of the rebalance. In his speech, Secretary Panetta described a set of four shared principles: (1) promoting international rules and order, (2) deepening and broadening bilateral and multilateral partnerships, (3) enhancing and adapting U.S. presence, and (4) making new investments in capabilities needed to project power and operate in the Asia-Pacific region.¹³ In addition, the announcement presented several major changes in U.S. posture and capabilities that would strengthen the U.S. position in the Asia-Pacific region. For example, Secretary Panetta noted, “the Navy will reposition its forces from today’s roughly 50/50 percent split between the Pacific and the Atlantic to about a 60/40 split between those oceans.”¹⁴ These announcements, as well as new U.S. investments in aerial-refueling tankers, bombers, maritime patrol aircraft, and anti-submarine warfare aircraft, provided substantive illustrations of the tangible effects of the rebalance.

The third major defense-related statement on the rebalance came two months later when Deputy Secretary of Defense Ash Carter spoke before the Asia Society in August 2012. In his speech, Deputy Secretary Carter explained, “[T]he rebalance is reflected in force structure decisions . . . new investments . . . innovative operational plans . . . posture and presence.”¹⁵ Much like Secretary Panetta’s statement, this speech articulated new force structure and posture changes associated with the rebalance, including “a net increase of one aircraft carrier, four destroyers, three Zumwalt destroyers, ten Littoral Combat Ships, and two submarines in the Pacific.”¹⁶

These five statements—by President Obama and Secretary Clinton in 2011 and by the Defense Department’s Strategic Guidance, Secretary Panetta, and Deputy Secretary Carter

11. U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, January 2012), 2, http://www.defense.gov/news/defense_strategic_guidance.pdf.

12. The Defense Strategic Guidance also put forward ten missions for U.S. forces and proffered a way to prioritize missions common to the Asia-Pacific region, such as projecting power against anti-access/area denial challenges. These 10 mission areas included “counter terrorism and irregular warfare; deter and defeat aggression; project power despite anti-access/area denial challenges; counter weapons of mass destruction; operate effectively in space and cyberspace; maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent; defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities; provide a stabilizing presence; conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations; and conduct humanitarian, disaster relief, and other operations.” Ibid.

13. Leon Panetta, “Shangri-La Security Dialogue” (speech delivered to the Shangri-La Security Summit, Singapore, June 2, 2012), <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1681>.

14. Ibid.

15. Ashton Carter, “The U.S. Strategic Rebalance to Asia: A Defense Perspective” (speech delivered to the Asia Society, New York, NY, August 1, 2012), <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1715>.

16. Ibid.

Figure 1. Timeline of Major Rebalance Statements and Events

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Initial Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinton Foreign Policy Article (Oct 2011) • Obama Australia Speech (Nov 2011) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defense Strategic Guidance issued (Jan 2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panetta Shangri-La Speech (Jun 2012) • Carter Asia Society Speech (Aug 2012) 			
Intervening Events		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan purchases majority of Senkaku Islands from private owners (Sep 2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obama reelected (Nov 2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abe inaugurated as Japan's prime minister (Dec 2012) • Kerry confirmed as secretary of state (Jan 2013) • Hagel confirmed as secretary of defense (Feb 2013) • Park inaugurated as ROK president (Feb 2013) • Xi appointed as PRC president (Mar 2013) • Sequestration takes effect (Mar 2013) 		
Subsequent Statements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locklear HASC Testimony (Mar 2013) • Donilon Asia Society Speech (Mar 2013) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White House Fact Sheet (Apr 2013) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hagel Shangri-La Speech (Jun 2013) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice Georgetown Speech (Nov 2013) • China ADIZ (Nov 2013) • State Department Fact Sheet (Dec 2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hagel Shangri-La (Jun 2014) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obama Australia (Nov 2014) 	

Rebalance Statements (bold) and Events (italics)

in 2012—may be said to constitute the initial formulation of the U.S. government’s rebalance approach. As shown in Figure 1, these statements were followed by a period with few public statements regarding the rebalance. Beginning in late 2012, the debate over the Budget Control Act’s sequestration clause combined with leadership changes in Japan, Korea, and China (as well as new cabinet-level officials in the United States) altered the discourse on security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. By March 2013, a new set of U.S. officials began to adapt descriptions and explanations of the rebalance.

Recent Rebalance Statements

The 2012 U.S. presidential election and the administration’s second-term cabinet-level changes in early 2013 resulted in a rearticulation of U.S. strategy toward the Asia Pacific. In January 2013, then-senator John Kerry noted in his confirmation hearing for secretary of state: “I’m not convinced that increased military ramp-up is critical yet. I’m not convinced of that. That’s something I’d want to look at very carefully when and if you folks confirm me and I can get in there and sort of dig into this a little deeper. But we have a lot more bases out there than any other nation in the world, including China today. We have a lot more forces out there than any other nation in the world, including China today.”¹⁷ Secretary Kerry’s statement, and his renewed focus on the Middle East, caused some to ask whether the rebalance to the Asia Pacific was still an administration priority.¹⁸

In a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in November 2012, immediately after Election Day, National Security Advisor Thomas Donilon noted what he referred to as five “distinct lines of effort,” beyond what he referred to as the “shifting of military resources.”¹⁹ These included strengthening security alliances, forging deeper partnerships with emerging powers, engaging in global and regional institutions, pursuing a stable and constructive relationship with China, and advancing the region’s economic architecture.

In March 2013, Donilon spoke again before the Asia Society about the need to sustain a stable security environment in Asia.²⁰ He outlined essentially the same five areas, calling

17. John Kerry, “Statement of Senator John F. Kerry, Nominee for Secretary of State, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations” (testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, January 24, 2013), <http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/John%20F%20Kerry%20Testimony.pdf>; Howard LaFranchi, “US ‘pivot to Asia’: Is John Kerry retooling it?,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 20, 2013, <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Foreign-Policy/2013/0220/US-pivot-to-Asia-Is-John-Kerry-retooling-it>; “How will John Kerry deal with China?,” *People’s Daily Online*, February 4, 2013, <http://english.people.com.cn/90883/8119685.html>; Gideon Rachman, “The year the US pivoted back to the Middle East,” *Financial Times*, December 23, 2013, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/cad2fc6e-671e-11e3-a5f9-00144feabdc0.html#axzz38mZSmgct>.

18. Robert Kaplan, “Kerry’s Middle East Obsession,” *Forbes*, September 25, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stratfor/2013/09/25/kerrys-middle-east-obsession/>.

19. Tom Donilon, “President Obama’s Asia Policy & Upcoming Trip to Asia” (speech delivered at CSIS, Washington, DC, November 15, 2012), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/11/15/remarks-national-security-advisor-tom-donilon-prepared-delivery>.

20. Tom Donilon, “Remarks by Tom Donilon, National Security Advisor to the President: ‘The United States and the Asia-Pacific in 2013’” (speech delivered at the Asia Society, New York, NY, March 11, 2013),

them “pillars” of what he referred to as “a comprehensive, multidimensional strategy: strengthening alliances; deepening partnerships with emerging powers; building a stable, productive, and constructive relationship with China; empowering regional institutions; and helping to build a regional economic architecture that can sustain shared prosperity.”

Donilon’s five elements in these two speeches, although similar to Secretary Clinton’s six lines of activity, contained three major differences. First, he downplayed the role of military presence when compared to Secretary Clinton’s list of priorities. Second, Donilon separated China from other emerging powers, increasing the importance placed on improving the U.S. relationship with China and calling for “a new model of relations” between the United States and China.²¹ This created two lines of effort from a single one of Clinton’s priorities. In addition to reducing the emphasis on what Clinton called a “broad-based military presence,” Donilon also made little mention of Secretary Clinton’s sixth priority, advancing human rights and democracy. These changes in emphasis in Donilon’s two speeches appeared to leave security and prosperity as the two primary pillars of the rebalance.

In April 2013, the White House released a fact sheet that restated the “President’s rebalance objectives” as “shaping regional institutions and architecture, advancing economic integration across the region, strengthening and modernizing U.S. alliances, forging deeper partnerships with emerging powers, pursuing a stable and constructive relationship with China, and promoting universal and democratic values.”²² These six areas, although similar to those referenced by Secretary Clinton in 2011 and National Security Advisor Donilon in 2012 and 2013, differed in several respects. First, the fact sheet listed the economic objectives of the rebalance before the security objectives, which represented a subtle but potentially important shift from earlier formulations by the administration. Consistent with Donilon’s speeches, Secretary Clinton’s fifth priority (“forging a broad-based military presence”) was not in the new list; in its place was an added emphasis on “pursuing a stable and constructive relationship with China.”²³ Also consistent with the first of the two Donilon speeches, the White House fact sheet retained reference to the promotion of “universal and democratic values” (although this formulation is somewhat narrower than President Obama’s earlier focus on human dignity and Secretary Clinton’s mention of democracy and human rights).

Two additional statements of administration priorities for the Asia-Pacific rebalance were issued in late 2013. The first statement came from Donilon’s replacement as national security advisor, Susan Rice. Speaking at Georgetown University in November 2013, Rice described the administration’s Asia-Pacific vision as seeking “lasting progress in four key areas—enhancing security, expanding prosperity, fostering democratic values,

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/03/11/remarks-tom-donilon-national-security-advisory-president-united-states-a>.

21. Ibid.

22. White House, “Fact Sheet: The Fiscal Year 2014 Federal Budget and the Asia Pacific,” April 12, 2013, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/asia_pacific_rebalance_factsheet_20130412.pdf.

23. Ibid.

and advancing human dignity.”²⁴ This formulation constituted a significant change from Donilon’s five pillars. In addition, in explaining the actions that underpin the objective of “enhancing security,” Rice placed emphasis both on U.S. alliances and on military posture, noting, “We are making the Asia Pacific more secure with American alliances—and an American force posture—that are being modernized to meet the challenges of our time.” Finally, Rice stated, “When it comes to China, we seek to operationalize a new model of major power relations.” This comment built on her predecessor’s call for a “new model of relations” with China, but it also caused concern in foreign capitals that the United States was allowing China to redefine the relationship and might be seeking a condominium with China.²⁵

The second additional statement of administration priorities came in December 2013, when the U.S. State Department released its own fact sheet with seven U.S. objectives for the rebalance: “(1) modernize and strengthen U.S. alliances; (2) develop and strengthen ties with emerging partners; (3) support effective regional institutions . . . ; (4) increase trade and investment and expand broad-based economic growth; (5) ensure our military presence in the region effectively supports the full range of our engagement; (6) promote democratic development, good governance, and human rights; and (7) expand people-to-people ties.”²⁶ This longer list of objectives may serve as the State Department’s attempt to connect Secretary Clinton’s initial six lines of activity with the shorter lists included in subsequent administration statements. The first six priorities in the December 2013 fact sheet bear a close resemblance to the six from Secretary Clinton’s article, with the only addition being the last objective of expanding “people-to-people ties.” However, the language on U.S. military posture (“ensure our military presence in the region effectively supports the full range of our engagement”) could be interpreted as either expanding or reframing the basis for and roles of U.S. military force posture in the Asia-Pacific region.

Figure 2 depicts the objectives that have been included in six major statements and tracks changes in those stated objectives over time. The six documents include the following:

24. Susan Rice, “Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice” (speech delivered at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, November 20, 2013), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/21/remarks-prepared-delivery-national-security-advisor-susan-e-rice>.

25. CSIS researchers found almost universal criticism in Japan and considerable confusion elsewhere in the region about U.S. intentions with respect to the “new model of great power relations.” Many Korean scholars and government officials began referring to the new “Sino-US G-2” as the framework for Asia. No U.S. administration had previously embraced the PRC’s characterization of the bilateral relationship. See Yoichi Kato and Nanae Kurashige, “New Superpower Relations: U.S., China in ‘new model’ of military rivalry,” *Asahi Shimbun*, April 11, 2014, <http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/china/AJ201404110085>; “Getting U.S.-China relations right,” *The Japan Times*, June 15, 2013, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/06/15/editorials/getting-u-s-china-relations-right/#.U9aB2rGoo94>; Amy King, “Where Does Japan Fit in China’s ‘New Type of Great Power Relations?’,” *Asan Special Forum*, March 20, 2014, <http://www.theasanforum.org/where-does-japan-fit-in-chinas-new-type-of-great-power-relations/>. Also see Dennis C. Wilder, “The Danger of a U.S.-China ‘G-2’ Strategic Alliance,” *Washington Post*, April 2, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/01/AR2009040103039.html>.

26. U.S. Department of State, “The East Asia-Pacific Rebalance: Expanding U.S. Engagement,” fact sheet, December 16, 2013, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/pl/2013/218776.htm>.

Figure 2. Stated Objectives of the Asia-Pacific Rebalance

		October 2011	March 2013	April 2013	November 2013	December 2013
		Hillary Clinton <i>Secretary of State</i> Op-Ed, Foreign Policy “Lines of activity”	Thomas Donilon <i>National Security Advisor</i> Speech, Asia Society “Pillars of strategy”	White House Fact Sheet “Rebalance objectives”	Susan Rice <i>National Security Advisor</i> Speech, Georgetown University “Key areas”	State Department Fact Sheet “U.S. objectives”
President Obama’s Three Rebalance Priorities (November 2011)	Security	1) Strengthen bilateral security alliances 2) Deepen our working relationships with emerging powers, including with China 3) Forge a broad-based military presence	1) Strengthen alliances 2) Deepen partnerships with emerging powers 3) Build stable, productive, and constructive relationship with China	3) Strengthen and modernize U.S. alliances 4) Forge deeper partnerships with emerging powers 5) Pursue a stable and constructive relationship with China	1) Enhance security alliances • Modernize American alliances • Update and diversify our security relationships • Operationalize a new model of major power relations • Modernize American force posture	1) Modernize and strengthen U.S. alliances 2) Develop and strengthen ties with emerging partners 5) Ensure our military presence in the region effectively supports the full range of our engagement
	Prosperity	4) Engage with regional multilateral institutions 5) Expand trade and investment	4) Empower regional institutions 5) Help to build a regional economic architecture	1) Shape regional institutions/architecture 2) Advance economic integration across the region	2) Expand prosperity	3) Support effective regional institutions 4) Increase trade and investment and expand broad-based economic growth
	Human Dignity	6) Advance democracy and human rights		6) Promote universal and democratic values	3) Foster democratic values 4) Advance human dignity	6) Promote democratic development, good governance, and human rights 7) Expand people-to-people ties

- November 2011: Statement by President Barack Obama (shown on the left, as the overall framework for the other five statements)
- October 2011: Foreign Policy article by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
- March 2013: Asia Society speech by National Security Advisor Thomas Donilon
- April 2013: White House Fact Sheet
- November 2013: Georgetown speech by National Security Advisor Susan Rice
- December 2013: State Department Fact Sheet

Each of these documents has been tracked closely by government officials and media across the Asia-Pacific region, and changes from statement to statement are carefully scrutinized for meaning. This report examines those regional perceptions in the second section.

A careful comparison of the elements in the statements contained in Figure 2 shows that there have been significant shifts in the way the overall objectives of the rebalance have been expressed since 2011. With that overall context, this section now examines the degree to which the security-focused elements have also changed. Even though there were notable defense leadership changes in 2013, including Chuck Hagel replacing Leon Panetta as secretary of defense, the Department of Defense’s public explanations of rebalance objectives have remained largely consistent. Aside from the early statements by then-secretary of defense Panetta and then-deputy secretary of defense Carter, the most specific expressions of these objectives since the 2012 election have come from Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and from the commander of the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), Admiral Samuel Locklear.

Although not a statement of administration policy, Admiral Locklear has provided perhaps the most concrete explanations of the defense aspects of the rebalance in his congressional testimony on U.S. regional posture. In 2013, his written statements were nearly identical for the House and Senate, so this report examines his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee. In his written statement, Admiral Locklear noted, “USPACOM manages the rebalance along four lines of operations that form the bedrock of our strategy. Those four lines of operations are; (1) strengthening alliances and partnerships, (2) improving posture and presence, (3) developing capabilities and concepts, and (4) planning for operations and contingencies.”²⁷ These four areas expanded on Secretary Clinton’s description of the military aspects of the rebalance, which included alliances, posture, and capabilities. By adding to these three elements the fourth line of planning, Admiral Locklear seemed to be providing room among rebalance objectives for concepts

27. Samuel Locklear, “Statement of Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, U.S. Navy, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, Before the House Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture” (testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, March 5, 2013), <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20130305/100393/HHRG-113-AS00-Wstate-LocklearUSNA-20130305.pdf>.

such as Air-Sea Battle and Joint Operational Access (or JOAC).²⁸ Moreover, Admiral Locklear also detailed numerous initiatives intended to accomplish these four objectives, including the following:

- Counter-radicalization programs implemented by Civil Military Support Elements and Military Information Support Teams in support of U.S. embassies
- Advising and assisting security forces
- The Cooperative Health Engagement program
- Improved sharing of information with allies and partners

In addition to Admiral Locklear's testimony, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel has made a number of important speeches, most notably those at the Shangri-La conference in Singapore in June 2013 and June 2014. In the 2013 speech, Secretary Hagel emphasized the nonmilitary aspects of the rebalance when he noted, "America is implementing a rebalance—which is primarily a diplomatic, economic and cultural strategy."²⁹ Nevertheless, Secretary Hagel did affirm that "the Department of Defense plays an important role in securing the president's vision of rebalance. Our approach was outlined in the president's 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance."³⁰ Although Secretary Hagel did not set forth a separate list of specific objectives, he did comment on the importance of alliances, capabilities, posture, and principles.

In 2014, Secretary Hagel's speech at Shangri-La highlighted the important role of security in the rebalance. Secretary Hagel noted, "Diplomatic, economic, and development initiatives are central to the rebalance. . . . But prosperity is inseparable from security."³¹ He noted the recent conclusion of an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement with the Philippines, a renewed emphasis on cooperation with India, and increased spending on foreign military education and financing. Secretary Hagel went on to reinforce the importance of four broad priorities:

- Peaceful dispute resolution
- Cooperative regional architecture
- Ally and partner capabilities
- U.S. regional defense capabilities

Secretary Hagel's and Admiral Locklear's statements provide a high degree of continuity with the earlier Defense Department speeches by Secretary Panetta and Deputy Secretary Carter as well as Secretary Gates in 2010 and 2011. All five speakers emphasized the

28. Air-Sea Battle Office, *Air-Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenges* (Arlington, VA: Air-Sea Battle Office, May 2013), <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/ASB-ConceptImplementation-Summary-May-2013.pdf>.

29. Hagel, "Remarks by Secretary Hagel at the IISS Asia Security Summit," 2013.

30. Ibid.

31. Chuck Hagel, "Secretary of Defense Speech: IISS Shangri-La Dialogue" (speech delivered at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, May 31, 2014), <http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1857>.

importance of alliances, posture, and capabilities. Some also focused on principles guiding interactions in the Asia Pacific, although specific objectives in these areas are difficult to extract from these documents. The primary exception to this string of well-received statements by U.S. defense officials was Admiral Locklear's repeated comment that the greatest challenge in the Asia Pacific is climate change.³²

Other administration officials also made speeches on the rebalance, but none of these speeches substantially altered the guidance and framework described above (a selected list of major U.S. statements on the rebalance can be found in the Appendix). Figure 3 shows the relative continuity of statements on the defense-related objectives of the rebalance, grouped according to the most frequent recurring categories of defense objectives.

Characterizing U.S. Rebalance Objectives

As reflected in the statements listed above and in additional statements, the United States has a wide variety of interests in the Asia-Pacific region. For the purposes of tracking progress, however, it is necessary to identify a set of specific and measurable U.S. objectives in the rebalance to the Asia Pacific. This section offers one way to begin that work by proposing an ordered list of objectives derived from analysis of senior leader statements.

All major U.S. statements about the rebalance derive from the initial formulation of the rebalance by President Obama, which addressed three broad objectives: security, prosperity, and human dignity. Security and prosperity have consistently been cited as two primary pillars of the rebalance, but officials have shifted the third pillar of the rebalance from the term "human dignity" to "values" or "democratic values." This shift suggests a broadening of the third pillar to include not only human rights but democracy and good governance as well. Thus, this report evaluates the rebalance's progress in terms of security, prosperity, and values.

This report refers to security, prosperity, and values as "Tier 1" rebalance objectives, with implicit sub-objectives as Tier 2 and Tier 3. This report focuses on the Tier 1 *security* objective, adding the more specific Tier 2 and Tier 3 sub-objectives described below. Analysis of the listed policy statements reveals three Tier 2 sub-elements: people, places, and things. Thus, this report identifies Tier 2 security sub-objectives as strengthening relationships (people), enhancing military posture (places), and fielding advanced capabilities (things).³³

32. Admiral Locklear reiterated these comments throughout 2013 and 2014. See comments made at the Atlantic Council: Samuel J. Locklear, "Admiral Locklear Discusses the Future of Asian Security" (speech delivered at the Atlantic Council, March 6, 2014), <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/events/past-events/admiral-locklear-discusses-the-future-of-asian-security>.

33. Tier 2 *prosperity* objectives have also been largely consistent across public statements by senior leaders, including empowering regional institutions and expanding economic ties. Tier 2 *values* objectives have varied more over time, but a focus on democracy and human rights has been consistent across the administration.

Figure 3. Security-Focused Objectives of the Asia-Pacific Rebalance

	October 2011 Hillary Clinton Secretary of State Op-Ed, Foreign Policy	November 2011 Barack Obama President Speech, Australia	June 2012 Leon Panetta Secretary of Defense Speech, Shangri-La	August 2012 Ashton Carter Deputy Secretary of Defense Speech, Asia Society	March 2013/2014 Samuel Locklear PACOM Commander Testimony, HASC	June 2013 (and 2014) Chuck Hagel Secretary of Defense Speech, Shangri-La
Relationships	<p>Strengthen bilateral security alliances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain political consensus Ensure our alliances are nimble and adaptive Guarantee the capability to deter provocation Deepen relationships with emerging powers 	<p>Strengthen alliances and partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen alliances Enhance presence across Southeast Asia Build a cooperative relationship with China 	<p>Deepen and broaden partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernize and strengthen alliances and partnerships Develop/build stronger relations with China 	<p>Build partnerships that leverage strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build partner capacity Improve interoperability Cooperate on capabilities Develop military-to-military ties with China 	<p>Strengthen alliances and partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew, modernize, and strengthen alliances Ensure alliances are adaptive Expand cooperation in innovative ways Expand areas of practical cooperation with China 	<p>Strengthen existing alliances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define a new, forward-looking agenda Increase the ability to work together seamlessly Enhance partner capacity Build constructive relationship with China
Presence	<p>Forge a broad-based military presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More geographically distributed Operationally resilient Politically sustainable 	<p>Maintain our strong military presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More broadly distributed More flexible More sustainable 	<p>Enhance and adapt enduring presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen alliances in Northeast Asia Enhance Southeast Asia/Indian Ocean presence 	<p>Rebalance posture and presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agile, lean, ready, technologically advanced, full spectrum Enhance access 	<p>Improve posture and presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographically distributed Operationally resilient Politically sustainable 	<p>Prioritize posture in the Asia Pacific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift assets to the Pacific Use assets in new ways Emphasize deployable, self-sustaining forces
Capability/Capacity	<p>Strengthen our capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No defense spending reductions from Asia Preserve ability to project power and deter 	<p>Invest in capabilities to project power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicate more forces to the Asia Pacific Invest in new power projection capabilities Develop new concepts of operations 	<p>Prioritize relevant capability investments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift capacity to the Asia-Pacific region New investments in technology and systems Innovative operational plans and tactics 	<p>Develop capabilities, concepts, and plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place finest forces forward Invest in hardware, systems, and innovation Develop concepts to augment capabilities 	<p>Reorient capabilities and capacities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement rotational deployments Invest in promising technologies/capabilities Develop new concepts, doctrine, and plans 	
Other	<p>Promote rules/order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open/free commerce, just order, rule of law Open access to domains Resolve disputes without coercion or use of force 	<p>Enduring principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free and open commerce A just international order Open access to domains Resolve conflict without use of force 	<p>Plan for contingencies</p>			

Figure 4. Characterizing U.S. Rebalance Objectives

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Security		
	Strengthen relationships	<i>Modernize existing alliances</i> <i>Expand and deepen partnerships</i> <i>Build a constructive relationship with China</i>
	Enhance military posture	<i>Distribute presence geographically</i> <i>Improve operational resilience</i> <i>Increase political sustainability</i>
	Field advanced capabilities	<i>Allocate forces to the Asia Pacific</i> <i>Invest in advanced technologies and systems</i> <i>Develop innovative plans and tactics</i>
Prosperity		
	Empower regional institutions	
	Expand economic ties	
Values		
	Promote democracy	
	Advance human rights	

Figure 4 displays the Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 security objectives described below, with Tier 1 and Tier 2 priorities included for the prosperity and values objectives.

- **Advancing security [Tier 1]:** The most frequently cited objective of the U.S. rebalance strategy has been the need to advance regional security. Despite differences in the ordering of U.S. priorities, advancing security has appeared in every major speech and appears to be the primary motivation for President Obama’s and Secretary Clinton’s initial statements on the rebalance.
- **Strengthen relationships [Tier 2]:** Deepening and expanding relationships has been a central feature of most speeches and statements on the U.S. rebalance to the Asia Pacific. Although the focus has primarily been on deepening U.S. bilateral alliances, most notably those with Japan and South Korea, enhancing partnerships

has also been emphasized. In addition, more recent statements of rebalance objectives have tended to address the U.S. relationship with China, calling for more constructive cooperation.

- *Modernize existing alliances [Tier 3]:* Foremost among these are the five U.S. treaty allies in the Asia Pacific: Japan, Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand. With the possible exception of Thailand, since its recent coup, these alliance relationships are already strong, so the focus has been on deepening military cooperation and strengthening political ties.
- *Expand and deepen partnerships [Tier 3]:* In addition to U.S. allies, building relationships with partners, such as Singapore, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, and others, is central to the rebalance. Enhancing these partnerships may require stronger military-to-military ties, more frequent combined training and exercising, rotational deployments of U.S. forces, and additional military assistance, among other initiatives.
- *Build a constructive relationship with China [Tier 3]:* Finally, as part of efforts to improve regional security, the United States can work to build a constructive relationship with China. The Strategic and Economic Dialogue has improved understanding between the two nations, but mistrust and friction continue. Most rebalance statements have suggested that additional measures are needed to increase trust and reinforce crisis stability.
- ***Enhance military posture [Tier 2]:*** As the United States seeks to strengthen its regional relationships, it must also enhance its military posture. In public statements from President Obama and Secretary Clinton to Secretary Hagel and Admiral Locklear, U.S. objectives in the area of military posture have been relatively consistent. The overall focus has been on both expanding U.S. presence in the region and ensuring that the United States can continue to project power in the Asia Pacific despite continuing anti-access/area denial challenges.
 - *Distribute presence geographically [Tier 3]:* The United States seeks greater geographic distribution of its regional assets to lessen vulnerability to attack, expand U.S. presence, and respond to contingencies rapidly. Rotational deployments and access agreements are more feasible, and potentially more advantageous, than traditional overseas U.S. bases.
 - *Improve operational resilience [Tier 3]:* The U.S. military requires more resilience in the face of mounting threats to forward-deployed forces and bases. Although a more geographically distributed posture is one option, hardening may also be critical. In addition, a more robust logistics capability and a more wide-reaching support infrastructure will be necessary to support future operations.
 - *Increase political sustainability [Tier 3]:* Finally, a more sustainable military presence is needed to guard against changing political circumstances, both

in the region and in the United States. Large American bases have often produced local political opposition, forcing the United States to reevaluate traditional facilities in Japan, the Philippines, and elsewhere. Opportunities exist and are being developed for using host-nation bases. If U.S. presence is to be sustainable in the long term, it must be politically viable.

- ***Field advanced capabilities [Tier 2]:*** The final security objective is the development and fielding of advanced capabilities in the Indo-Pacific. Building advanced capabilities requires a long time horizon. Although this priority has periodically been combined with posture and presence in senior leader statements, this report considers it as a separate objective because it concerns not *where* various capabilities are placed but instead *what* regional capabilities exist in the first place.
 - *Allocate additional forces to the Asia Pacific [Tier 3]:* One of the first commitments from U.S. leaders on the rebalance was that the United States would shift some forces to the Pacific theater. Allies and partners in the region will evaluate U.S. accomplishment of this objective either by the total number of forces in the region or by the percentage of U.S. forces that are allocated to Pacific Command.
 - *Invest in advanced technologies and systems [Tier 3]:* The United States possesses some of the most advanced military systems in the world, but other competitors, particularly China, are making progress relatively quickly in both quality and quantity. If the United States is to maintain its military edge, it will have to continue investing in innovation today to field advanced capabilities tomorrow.
 - *Develop innovative plans and tactics [Tier 3]:* Finally, it is critical that the U.S. military seek new operational concepts to address the asymmetric costs of U.S. power projection versus competitors' anti-access/area denial capabilities. Investing in the necessary research and development, testing and evaluation, and production and fielding of innovative plans, tactics, and concepts is central to future U.S. military superiority.

3 | Regional Perceptions of the Rebalance

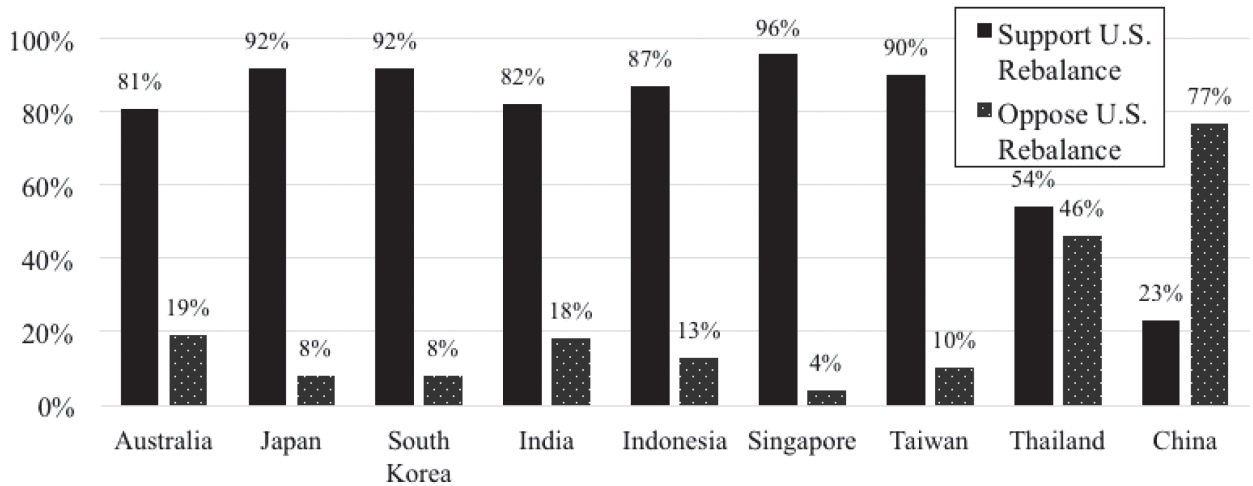
The challenge for policymakers executing the rebalance strategy is that they must articulate a set of policies that simultaneously assure U.S. allies and partners, deter adversaries, and avoid the perception of unnecessary escalation. Calibrating deterrence and reassurance messages is a difficult task, particularly in a rapidly changing regional security environment. With this in mind, CSIS's 2012 Force Posture Strategy noted, "In the past, force posture decisions have been benchmarked against plans, including the capabilities required to prevail over potential adversaries. However, the top priority of U.S. strategy in Asia is not to prepare for a conflict with China; rather, it is to shape the environment so that such a conflict is never necessary and perhaps someday inconceivable. It is therefore critical that the United States can achieve and maintain a balanced combination of assurance and dissuasion to shape the environment. This requires a force posture that enables the PACOM commander to undertake actions that include capacity building for partners that face internal and external vulnerabilities, cooperation on common challenges such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and joint and combined training that enhances interoperability and makes for more effective coalitions in crises."¹ As the report noted, since winning the peace is the first objective of U.S. strategy in Asia, regional perceptions of the credibility of the rebalance and U.S. intentions and willpower are critical to U.S. shaping and reassurance activities.

Given the centrality of perceptions of U.S. intentions and credibility to the rebalance, this section reviews regional perspectives on the security elements of the rebalance. At first glance, support for the U.S. rebalance strategy appears nearly universal. For example, Figure 5 below shows that "strategic elites" in a select group of Asian states broadly support the U.S. rebalance approach, with only those in China and Thailand expressing significant opposition to the rebalance.²

1. David J. Berteau and Michael J. Green, *U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment* (Washington, DC: CSIS, August 2012), 5, http://csis.org/files/publication/120814_FINAL_PACOM_optimized.pdf.

2. CSIS conducted a survey of "strategic elites" in a number of Asian countries, asking them whether they support the U.S. rebalance to the Asia Pacific. See Michael J. Green and Nicholas Szechenyi, *Power and Order in Asia: A Survey of Regional Expectations* (Washington, DC: CSIS, June 2014), http://csis.org/files/publication/140605_Green_PowerandOrder_WEB.pdf.

Figure 5. “Strategic Elites” Support for the U.S. Rebalance

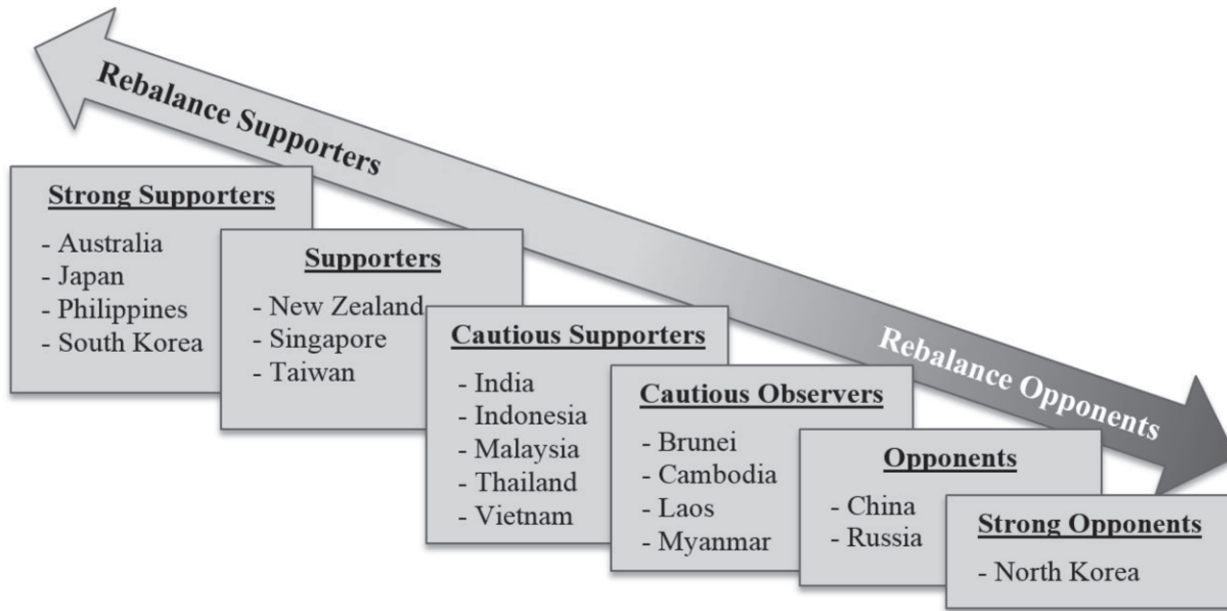


Although polling of publics rather than elites could find different views, these results seem to indicate that regional states broadly support the U.S. rebalance. Yet, government statements on the rebalance have been much more mixed. Some states have actively supported or opposed U.S. policy, but most states have generally avoided public comment. Why might this be, and what does it mean for the successful implementation of current U.S. policy?

This report divides regional states into multiple categories, as shown in Figure 6 below. On the left side of the figure are those states, typically U.S. allies and long-standing partners, that have voiced official support for increased U.S. military engagement in the region. A second group of states, most notably China, is shown on the right side of Figure 6 and has expressed concern about the rebalance and opposed it as potentially destabilizing. The views of these rebalance supporters and opponents are relatively fixed and largely dependent on long-standing national alignments vis-à-vis the United States. A middle group of states, however, has expressed ambivalence about the rebalance; they are categorized as “cautious supporters” or “cautious observers.” The question for U.S. policymakers is whether they should interpret these states’ silence as an implicit endorsement or critique of the U.S. approach. The analysis in this report finds that these states worry about some combination of several issues, including the strategic objectives of the rebalance, the implementation of the rebalance, or the wisdom of speaking publicly either in favor of or against the United States. Despite their public silence, these states are watching U.S. statements and actions closely, and they form a critical audience for U.S. strategists. In particular, the questions for U.S. policymakers is whether, and how, to try to move cautious states to a stronger supporting position.

The following pages address the views of the critical regional players in the Asia-Pacific region, beginning with rebalance supporters and moving to rebalance opponents. This

Figure 6. Regional Views of the U.S. Rebalance



subsection focuses on those countries that have publicly commented on the rebalance and draws from public statements of government officials, written presentations from prominent scholars and commenters, and private conversations with CSIS. A representative sample of the views of 15 Asian nations is described below.

Japan

Japan is central to U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific region and has been one of the strongest supporters of the rebalance. Robust military ties, combined with a shared concern about China’s assertiveness in territorial disputes, have contributed to Tokyo’s support for the U.S. rebalance. This shared perspective is evident in the October 2013 statement by the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee, which noted, “As the United States continues to implement its rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region it intends to strengthen military capabilities that allow our Alliance to respond to future global and regional security challenges.”³

Tokyo has demonstrated a particular interest in military components of the rebalance as Japan’s security environment has deteriorated in recent years. In the 2013 “National Defense Program Guidelines,” the Japanese Ministry of Defense (MOD) states, “[I]t has become more important than ever for Japan’s security to strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance and make it more balanced and effective.”⁴ If there is a concern in Tokyo, it is that the

3. U.S. Department of State, “Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee,” media note, October 3, 2013, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/10/215070.htm>.

4. Japanese Ministry of Defense, “National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and beyond,” December 17, 2013, http://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/2014/pdf/20131217_e2.pdf.

rebalance strategy may not be fully implemented. Japanese newspapers have questioned the execution of U.S. strategy in Asia, with one writer asking whether “the ‘Asia Pivot’ is only a word.”⁵ In interviews with CSIS, officials from MOD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) expressed concerns about the availability of U.S. resources in a time of austerity.⁶ Japan places importance on enhanced military cooperation as both a sign of U.S. commitment to the region and a barometer of the degree to which the rebalance is being implemented.

Japan is also investing in its ability to support the rebalance. Since his ascension to the premiership in December 2012, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made reforming Japan’s security policies one of his chief objectives. Statements from Japanese officials suggest that Tokyo expects the government’s initiatives to complement the rebalance, particularly efforts to permit the exercise of collective self-defense, adopt new arms export guidelines, and form a more dynamic joint defense force.⁷ As Japan’s Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security has noted, “Japan can no longer unilaterally expect the United States to provide sanctuary as it did in the immediate aftermath of World War II. . . . Now is the era in which both Japan and the United States and relevant countries must cooperate to contribute to the peace and security in the region.”⁸ To reinforce these efforts, the United States and Japan plan to revise their defense cooperation guidelines this year. Policymakers in Tokyo hope these changes will allow Japan to contribute more in partnership with the United States.

Australia

Australia has had three prime ministers since the announcement of the rebalance, and all have been supportive of a reinvigorated U.S. role in the region. When President Obama explained the rebalance, Prime Minister Julia Gillard stood next to him and stated, “Our alliance has been a bedrock of stability in our region. So building on our alliance through this new initiative is about stability.”⁹ Two years later, Defense Minister David Johnston

5. Yoshihisa Komori, “Komori yoshihisa Amerika no Asia jūshi’ kotoba dake ka” [Does the United States really think that Asia is important?], *Sankei Shimbun*, October 26, 2013, <http://sankei.jp.msn.com/world/news/131026/amr13102609250004-n1.htm>.

6. Yuki Tatsumi, “Beikoku bouhi-sakugen, Ajia-Taiheiyou-jyuushi-senryaku he no eikyou ha?” [How will reductions in the U.S. defense budget impact strategy emphasizing the Asia Pacific?], *WEDGE Infinity*, April 19, 2013, <http://wedge.ismedia.jp/articles/-/2739>.

7. U.S. Department of State, “Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee.” For Prime Minister Abe, the Secrets Law is important because of its perceived value in advancing Japan’s commitment to great “information security,” as outlined in the October 2013 “2+2 Agreement” between the United States and Japan. The Secrets Law also indicates in Article 3 that such activities as “mutual defense support between Japan and the United States” would be designated as “special secrets.”

8. Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security, “Report of the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security,” May 15, 2014, 14, http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/anzenhosyou2/dai7/houkoku_en.pdf.

9. Julia Gillard, “Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Gillard” (remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Gillard, Canberra, Australia, November 16, 2011), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/16/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-gillard-australia-joint-press>.

called the United States “the cornerstone of [Australia’s] defense policy,”¹⁰ underscoring the deep bilateral ties.

Consistent with its vocal support of the rebalance strategy, the government of Australia has encouraged expanded U.S. presence in the region. In an April 2013 interview, Minister Johnston suggested that Australia could contribute its intelligence capabilities to support the rebalance.¹¹ The government of current prime minister Tony Abbott has also directed the Ministry of Defence to explore joint funding opportunities with the United States, particularly in support of joint U.S.-Australia deployments in Darwin and Tindal. There have been some Australian critics who argue that the United States should take a more conciliatory tone in its relations with China.¹² Nevertheless, polls show high public support for the U.S.-Australia alliance; indeed, many policymakers in Australia were surprised that 74 percent of the populace expressed support for the planned deployment of U.S. Marines to Darwin.¹³

Despite support for the rebalance strategy, Australian experts have expressed concern about the pace of its implementation. Rory Medcalf, director of the International Security Program at the Lowy Institute for International Policy, has warned, “We heard clear rhetoric from President Obama in his Canberra speech back in November, but the extent of material changes to the presence of the United States in Asia is not yet known. . . . What is not clear is whether all this really adds to aggregate American power in the region, whether it will greatly improve the ability to deploy fast and in strength.”¹⁴ Similar concerns have been raised by Peter Jennings, former Australian deputy secretary of defence, who has written, “The only criticism about the new defense activities from the current opposition—the center-right Liberal and National parties—has been that implementation is too slow.”¹⁵

The Philippines

The Philippines has actively and openly encouraged the U.S. rebalance since tensions with China flared in 2013. In a December 2013 speech, Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario described the rebalance as a critical element of Manila’s attempts to

10. David Johnston, “Minister for Defence—Kokoda Foundation Annual Dinner—Rydges Hotel Canberra” (speech delivered at the Kokoda Foundation Annual Dinner, Canberra, Australia, October 31, 2013), <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/2013/10/31/minister-for-defence-kokoda-foundation-annual-dinner-rydges-hotel-canberra/>.

11. David Johnston, “In conversation: Senator the Hon. David Johnston discusses Coalition defence policy,” interview by James Brown, Lowy Institute for International Policy, April 29, 2013, <http://vimeo.com/65113599>.

12. See, for example, Hugh White, *The China Choice: Why America Should Share Power* (Collingwood, Australia: Black Inc., 2012).

13. Fergus Hanson, “The Lowy Institute Poll 2012: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy,” Lowy Institute, June 5, 2012, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/lowy-institute-poll-2012-public-opinion-and-foreign-policy>.

14. Sarah Serizawa, “An Australian Perspective on U.S. Rebalancing toward Asia: An Interview with Rory Medcalf,” National Bureau of Asian Research, April 30, 2012, <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=242#Uvf2unlxV4Y>.

15. Peter Jennings, “The U.S. Rebalance to the Asia Pacific: An Australian Perspective,” *Asia Policy* no. 15 (January 2013): 38–44, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/asia_policy/v015/15.jennings.html#f3.

defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.¹⁶ Secretary del Rosario indicated that an increased rotational presence of U.S. forces in the Philippines, which the United States has pushed as part of the rebalance, would support the country's "development of a minimum credible defense posture through capability-building and combined activities."¹⁷ In April 2014, President Obama traveled to the Philippines and announced a new bilateral defense agreement allowing U.S. forces to increase their rotational presence in the Philippines. This major agreement is one of the primary accomplishments of the rebalance to date.¹⁸

Although the U.S.-Philippines alliance has suffered from political challenges since before the United States withdrew from its bases in the Philippines in 1991, the rapid reversal stems from President Aquino's concern over China's increasingly assertive behavior in the South China Sea, including its announcement of new fisheries procedures and challenges to Filipino resupply of the vessel on Second Thomas Shoal. President Aquino's rhetoric has only toughened in recent months, going so far as to compare China's South China Sea claims to the Sudetenland.¹⁹ The reinvigoration of the alliance provides the Philippines an opportunity to strengthen its deterrent posture and gives the United States the option to expand its presence in the western Pacific. As a result, opportunities exist for enhanced Filipino cooperation and support for the U.S. rebalance.

South Korea

Seoul, like most other U.S. allies, has expressed support for the rebalance, but that position is complicated by South Korea's expanding political and economic relationship with China. This difficult balancing act has been evident in the public statements between Seoul and Washington over partnership in broader U.S. regional initiatives. For example, Defense Minister Kim Kwan-Jin stated in October 2013 that South Korea had no plans to join a U.S.-led ballistic missile defense arrangement in the region. According to Minister Kim, because South Korea's independent missile defense system "is aimed at destroying North Korea's missiles, its target and interception range are different from those of [the American missile defense system.]"²⁰ On this and other issues, the Korean Ministry of Defense may have sought to avoid antagonizing China and to maintain U.S. focus on

16. Albert del Rosario, "An Independent and Principled Philippine Foreign Policy" (speech delivered at the Professorial Chair for Public Service and Governance, Manila University, Quezon City, Philippines, December 3, 2013), <http://www.gov.ph/2013/12/03/lecture-of-secretary-del-rosario-at-the-2013-professorial-chair-for-public-service-and-governance/>.

17. Alexis Romero, "'Deal on US Troops' rotational presence unlikely this year," *The Philippine Star*, December 19, 2013, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/12/20/1270207/deal-us-troops-rotational-presence-unlikely-year>.

18. Keith Bradsher, "Philippine Leader Sounds Alarm on China," *New York Times*, February 4, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/05/world/asia/philippine-leader-urges-international-help-in-resisting-chinas-sea-claims.html>.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Kim Eun-jung, "Defense chief denies U.S.-led missile defense participation," *GlobalPost*, October 16, 2013, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/yonhap-news-agency/131016/defense-chief-denies-us-led-missile-defense-participation>.

countering the threat from North Korea.²¹ The South Korean public is also concerned about the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON), with 64 percent of South Koreans expressing the belief that OPCON transition to Seoul would affect the security situation on the peninsula.²²

Yet, in the wake of the Chinese announcement of an East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone, Vice President Joe Biden told Republic of Korea (ROK) President Park Geun-hye that “President Obama’s decision to rebalance the Pacific Basin is not in question. The United States never says anything it does not do.”²³ Although he sought to mollify South Korean leaders, Biden’s statement reinforced some of Seoul’s concerns about the U.S. stance vis-à-vis China. As one South Korean expert has written, “The most serious concern for South Korea regarding the United States’ rebalancing strategy is how deeply U.S. policymakers understand the fundamentals of East Asian international relations. . . . The United States, as an Asia-Pacific country, is expected to approach and sympathize with these problems with an Asian mindset and act as a global and regional leader to peacefully manage the process of power shift.”²⁴ These words appear to mean that Seoul is concerned that a strengthened U.S. military presence could antagonize China, worsening the regional security situation and eliminating a critical South Korean point of leverage with North Korea.

In summary, Seoul wants a rock solid U.S. commitment with respect to the North Korean threat, but does not want to be explicitly asked to support U.S. strategies vis-à-vis China. Thus, while polling has found that 94 percent of South Koreans view the alliance with the United States as a necessity, only 54 percent of the public supports the rebalance.²⁵ China’s growing economic role, ongoing tensions with Japan over historical issues, and U.S. budget cuts all factor into South Korean concerns about U.S. policies toward the Asia Pacific as a whole, despite strong coordination bilaterally on North Korea issues. Nevertheless, CSIS’s survey of Korean strategic elites found that 92 percent supported the U.S. rebalance to the Asia Pacific and only 20 percent viewed China’s role in regional security as positive.²⁶ Thus, U.S. leaders must simultaneously reassure Seoul that they have the military capabilities the ROK desires while reassuring Korean leaders that the United States does not seek to aggravate the regional security dilemma.

21. Kang Seung-woo, “We don’t buy into US MD,” *The Korea Times*, October 16, 2013, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2013/12/116_144410.html.

22. This effect, presumably, would be negative. Kim Eun-jung, “Over half of S. Koreans concerned about security on peninsula: poll,” Yonhap News Agency, January 14, 2014, <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2014/01/14/46/0200000000AEN20140114004200315F.html>.

23. Seok Jin-hwan, “Biden seeks Seoul’s support on US ‘rebalancing to Asia’ policy,” *The Hankyoreh*, December 7, 2013, http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/614389.html.

24. Chaesung Chun, “U.S. Strategic Rebalancing to Asia: South Korea’s Perspective,” *Asia Policy* no. 15 (January 2013), 17, http://mwbdivjh.muse.jhu.edu/journals/asia_policy/v015/15.chun.pdf.

25. See Karl Friedhoff, “South Korean Views on the U.S. Rebalance to Asia,” Korea Economic Institute of America, May 8, 2014, 3, http://keia.org/sites/default/files/publications/karl_friedhoff_korean_views_of_us_rebalance_aps_paper_final_paper.pdf; and Jiyeon Kim and Karl Friedhoff, *South Korea in a Changing World: Foreign Affairs* (Seoul: Asan Institute for Policy Studies, April 2013), <http://mansfieldfdn.org/mfdn2011/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2012-Asan-Annual-Survey.pdf>.

26. Green and Szechenyi, *Power and Order in Asia*, 8, 12.

Singapore

Singaporean leader Lee Kuan Yew has stated that U.S. military presence in Asia “is very necessary” and that it “makes for peace and stability in the region.”²⁷ Singapore’s leaders have been generally supportive of the rebalance, both publicly and privately.²⁸ As Lee’s quote suggests, this support is encouraged by the perception among Singaporean leaders that a continued U.S. presence in Asia will help to prevent China from changing the status quo to the detriment of Singapore’s interests. Indeed, one of the first announcements associated with the rebalance was the forward stationing of U.S. littoral combat ships in Singapore.

Although there is support for the rebalance in Singapore, its leaders also must take into account their political, economic, and cultural ties with China. Lee has written, “It is China’s intention to become the greatest power in the world,” and expresses concern that this would be disruptive to the environment that has fostered Singapore’s prosperity.²⁹ Nonetheless, Singapore is still aware that it needs to maintain positive trade and security relations with China. Consequently, the country’s leaders often downplay Singapore’s role in supporting the rebalance in official media statements. For example, current prime minister Lee Hsien Long stated in March 2013, “We want the U.S. to have constructive and stable relations with China. That makes it much easier for us. Then we don’t have to choose sides.”³⁰ Despite these concerns, Singapore views a strong U.S. military presence as a necessary balance to the rise of China.

Taiwan

Taiwanese policymakers and business leaders are hopeful that the rebalance will allow Taiwan to deepen its economic ties and trade relations with the United States. In 2012, President Ma Ying-jeou emphasized the United States’ consistent role as a “force for stability in Asia.”³¹ Taiwanese defense officials express optimism about the “wide range” of defense cooperation and strategic relations between Taipei and Washington, as well as

27. Lee Kuan Yew, Graham T. Allison, Robert D. Blackwill, and Ali Wyne, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master’s Insights on China, the United States, and the World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 39–40. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong alluded to this as well, saying that the United States “has a stabilizing influence on the security of the region . . . encouraging countries to exercise restraint.” Lee Hsien Loong, as quoted by Lally Weymouth, “An interview with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong,” *Washington Post*, March 15, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/an-interview-with-singapore-prime-minister-lee-hsien-loong/2013/03/15/5ce40cd4-8cae-11e2-9838-d62f083ba93f_story.html; and Lally Weymouth, “‘We Can’t Be the Nanny’: An interview with Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong,” *Slate*, March 15, 2013, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2013/03/lee_hsien_loong_interview_singapore_s_prime_minister_must_navigate_the_challenges.html.

28. Ng Eng Hen, “Reply by Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen to Parliamentary Question on the US Pivot towards Asia,” Ministry of Defense of Singapore, October 16, 2012, http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/ps/2012/16oct12_ps.html#.Up9ErMReaSo.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Weymouth, “An interview with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.”

31. “President Ma meets former United States National Security Advisor General James Jones,” Office of the President of the Republic of China, June 22, 2012, <http://english.president.gov.tw/Default.aspx?tabid=491&itemid=27616&rmid=2355>.

continued support from the United States.³² Finally, there is also the hope that the rebalance will allow Taiwan to deepen economic ties and trade relations with the United States, expand opportunities for greater international presence, and stymie pressure from Beijing to engage in political talks.³³

Simultaneously, however, some in Taiwan's political establishment worry about the possibility that excessive tensions between the United States and China brought on by the rebalance could jeopardize progress the country has made on improving cross-strait dialogue. Some in Taiwan are also reluctant to join an initiative involving other regional states with which Taipei does not have warm relations. For example, some have been critical of U.S.-Filipino military relations because of a 2013 incident in which a Filipino Coast Guard vessel fired upon a fishing boat in Taiwanese waters, killing the captain of the vessel.³⁴ For these reasons, Taiwan's leaders have avoided public discussion of the alignment between the rebalance strategy and Taiwan's strategic interests.

New Zealand

The center-right government of Prime Minister John Key "warmly supports the United States rebalancing towards the Asia Pacific."³⁵ Still, support seems tilted toward economic components of the rebalance. New Zealand is particularly interested in the direction of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations.³⁶ New Zealand's foreign-policy thinkers have expressed concern about antagonizing China, suggesting that the government is concerned about how Sino-New Zealand relations will be effected by the rebalance strategy.³⁷ Defense Minister Jonathan Coleman alluded to concerns about military components of the rebalance when he stated in an interview that New Zealand needs to "balance out our defense diplomacy with the United States," while "walking this path between the U.S. and China."³⁸

India

Indian perceptions of the rebalance are influenced by New Delhi's positive military relationship with the United States. The ten-year defense framework agreed to in 2005 expanded

32. Wendell Minnick, "Q&A with Nien-Dzu Yang: Taiwan's Vice Minister of Defense Policy," *Defense News*, November 14, 2012, <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20121114/DEFREG03/311140011/>.

33. Edward I-hsin Chen, "Taiwan's Perspective of the U.S. Pivot to Asia Policy," *National Strategy Forum Review* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2013).

34. Floyd Whaley, "Taiwan Demands Philippine Apology for Fisherman's Killing," *New York Times*, May 10, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/11/world/asia/taiwan-demands-apology-from-philippines-for-fishermans-killing.html>.

35. "Clinton, New Zealand's Key on U.S.-New Zealand Cooperation," Department of State, September 1, 2012, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2012/09/20120901135415.html#axzz2sZsRwTiC>.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Robert Ayson, "Australian move might threaten New Zealand relationship with China," *The Dominion Post* (Wellington), October 15, 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/comment/columnists/9283218/Australian-move-might-threaten-New-Zealand-relationship-with-China>.

38. Audrey Young, "Coleman on 'rebalancing' visit to China," *The New Zealand Herald* (Auckland), November 28, 2013, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11163835.

bilateral cooperation and strengthened both political and military ties. As General Bikram Singh, the chief of the Indian army, stated during a trip to the United States for meetings with senior officials in the Department of Defense, the Indo-U.S. military relationship now “encompasses equipment procurement, exchange of delegations, training and conduct of joint exercises.”³⁹ As India seeks to improve its defense capabilities, it is interested in U.S. technology, which could deepen ties.

While security considerations encourage support for the basic premise of the rebalance strategy among Indian defense planners, the execution of the strategy has caused some concern in New Delhi. Indian commentators note that U.S. statements about India’s role in the rebalance belittle India’s own regional security interests.⁴⁰ India’s official position has emphasized the need to balance bilateral ties with both China and the United States.⁴¹ Persistent Sino-Indian tensions underscore the difficulty inherent in that objective and suggest that India approaches the rebalance with a certain degree of caution.⁴² As one Indian expert has written, “A strong and sustainable U.S. role in Asia is welcome in New Delhi, which knows that the regional powers, including India, are not in a position to balance China on their own. Yet India, like many other Asian nations, will not want to be seen as simply joining the U.S. bandwagon against China.”⁴³

Hopes remain high that U.S. relations with India could improve with the election of Narendra Modi’s new Bharatiya Janata Party government. The *NonAlignment 2.0* report released in January 2012 by a number of leading Indian foreign policy experts signaled a new interpretation of the traditional Indian notion of nonalignment.⁴⁴ New Delhi’s skepticism of U.S. strategy and tendency to remain nonaligned are likely to continue, but Prime Minister Modi’s apparent desire to improve Indo-American relations is a positive sign. In just a few months in office, Prime Minister Modi has already demonstrated his personal determination to improve regional relationships and work more closely with the United States. As Figure 7 shows, CSIS polling of Indian experts shows substantial support for the U.S. rebalance, indicating that Indian strategic elites may be positively inclined toward continued U.S. engagement in the region.⁴⁵

39. Press Trust of India, “Gen Singh discusses Indo-US defence ties with Pentagon,” *Business Standard*, December 8, 2013, http://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/gen-singh-discusses-indo-us-defence-ties-with-pentagon-113120800268_1.html.

40. Shastri Ramachandran, “India Rejects Linchpin Role in U.S. Strategy to ‘Rebalance’ Asia,” *InDepth News*, June 13, 2012, <http://www.indepthnews.info/index.php/global-issues/985-india-rejects-linchpin-role-in-us-strategy-to-rebalance-asia>.

41. Manu Pubby, “US says India ‘lynchpin’ of rebalancing strategy,” *The Indian Express*, June 7, 2012, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/us-says-india—lynchpin—of-rebalancing-strategy/958842/>.

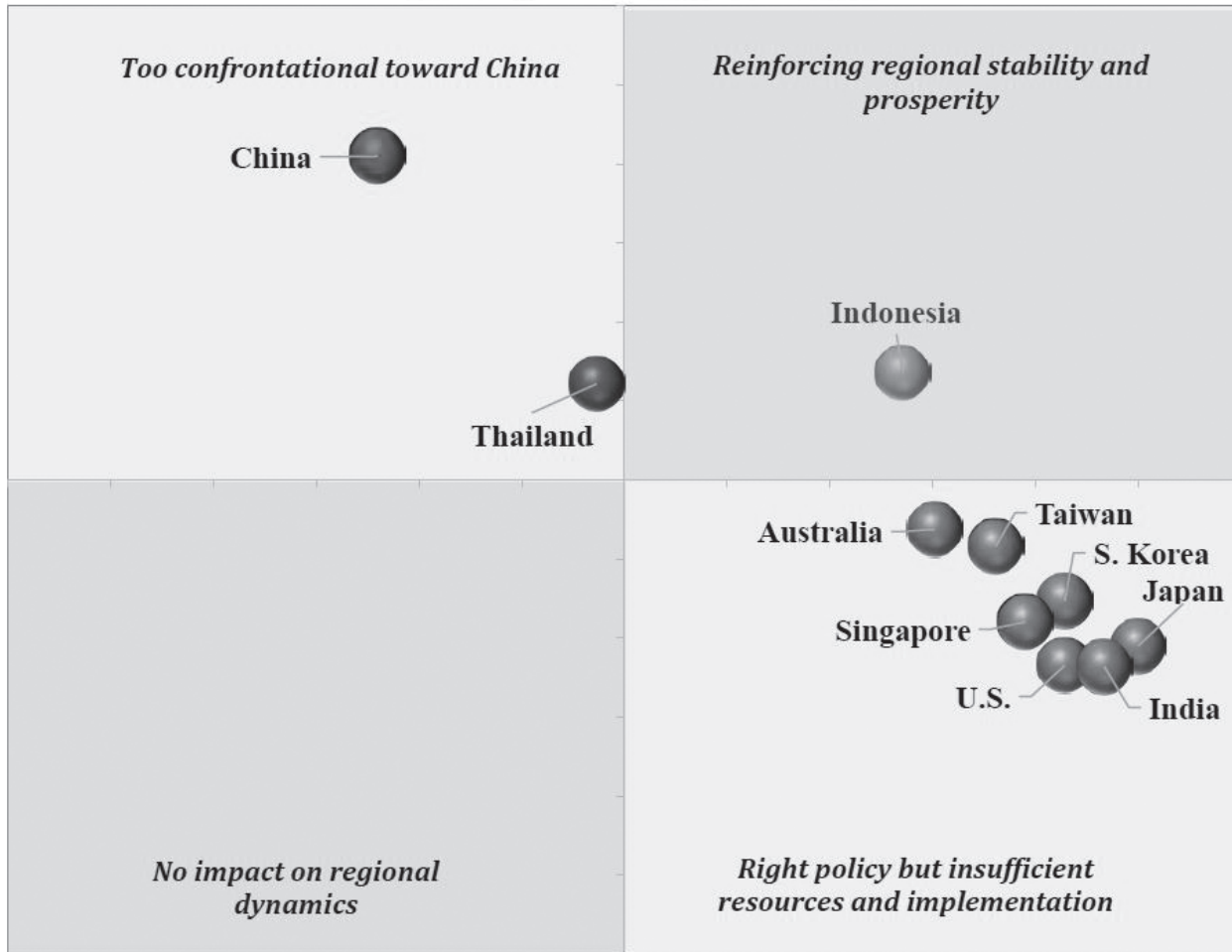
42. C. Uday Bhaskar, “Chinese general warns India even as Antony visits Beijing,” Reuters, July 5, 2013, <http://blogs.reuters.com/india-expertzone/2013/07/05/chinese-general-warns-india-even-as-antony-visits-beijing/>.

43. C. Raja Mohan, “India: Between ‘Strategic Autonomy’ and ‘Geopolitical Opportunity,’” *Asia Policy* no. 15 (January 2013): 21–25, http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/asia_policy/v015/15.mohan.pdf.

44. Sunil Khilnani et al., *NonAlignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, January 2012), http://www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/NonAlignment%202.0_1.pdf.

45. Polling data from Green and Szechenyi, *Power and Order in Asia*, 13.

Figure 7. “Strategic Elites” Evaluation of the U.S. Rebalance



Vietnam

Vietnam has also made efforts to improve ties with the United States as a counterbalance to China’s regional influence. Although Vietnam has sought to avoid antagonizing its northern neighbor, typically shunning the types of official statements that Filipino leaders have made about Chinese activities in the South China Sea, the United States and Vietnam have made substantial progress on bilateral relations in recent years.⁴⁶ Most notably, Washington and Hanoi entered into a “comprehensive partnership” in July 2013, one that specifically included enhanced military-to-military cooperation.

Nevertheless, Vietnam maintains a “strategic partnership” with the People’s Republic of China. Even China’s operation of an oil rig in disputed waters did not result in a major Vietnamese call for increased U.S. engagement in the region. When Secretary Kerry visited Hanoi

46. Some examples are increases in high-level diplomatic and military visits between the two nations and expanded security collaboration on issues like the use of Cam Ranh Bay. See Carl Thayer, “Vietnam Gradually Warms up to US Military,” *The Diplomat*, November 6, 2013, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/11/vietnam-gradually-warms-up-to-us-military/>.

in December 2013, he spoke of the “rebalance within the rebalance”—an increasing U.S. focus on Southeast Asia. Secretary Kerry noted, “Nowhere is this more important or more visible, frankly, than in the heightened investment and engagement right here in Vietnam.”⁴⁷ Secretary Kerry’s counterpart, however, was careful to avoid characterizing the United States as a stabilizing force or mentioning China’s maritime activities in his remarks.

Despite its reluctance to embrace the rebalance, Vietnam appears willing to improve U.S. ties. Foreign Minister Pham Bin Minh alluded to this in 2011, saying, “We welcome the policy of increasing [cooperation] with the countries in the region by all countries, including the United States. . . . [A]nything [that] happens in South China Sea will affect the freedom of navigation, [and] so, of course, affect other countries, not only United States. . . . So we see that—the efforts by countries inside and outside to make that stable. We appreciate that effort.”⁴⁸ These types of comments suggest that the rebalance is welcomed by leaders in Hanoi, but despite closer ties and greater strategic alignment, Vietnam does not appear prepared publicly to support the U.S. rebalance.

Thailand

Thailand, despite its status as the only U.S. treaty ally in mainland Southeast Asia, has offered mixed views of the United States and its rebalance. CSIS polling of Thai strategic elites has consistently shown skepticism about the virtues of U.S. involvement in Asia. Respondents have expressed concern that the rebalance is too confrontational with China. This perspective, however, may not reflect the current views of Thai leaders, given the recent military coup.

When President Obama joined former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in November 2012, the two agreed that “comprehensive and multidimensional engagement with [Asia] by the United States could help to further enhance” peace and prosperity.⁴⁹ President Obama’s visit to Bangkok and Secretary Panetta’s signing of the 2012 Joint Vision Statement for the Thai-U.S. Defense Alliance further solidified the relationship. Prime Minister Shinawatra even echoed some themes of the rebalance in her own public remarks, particularly shared democratic values and respect for civil liberties.⁵⁰ These sentiments, however, have come at a time of political transition in Thailand, and with Shinawatra out of office, Thailand’s leaders are likely to return to a focus on domestic challenges.

47. John Kerry, “Joint Press Availability with Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh,” Department of State, December 16, 2013, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/12/218747.htm>.

48. Pham Bin Minh, as quoted in Bob Woodruff, “A Conversation with Pham Binh Minh,” Council on Foreign Relations,” September 27, 2011, <http://www.cfr.org/vietnam/conversation-pham-binh-minh/p26046>.

49. “Joint Press Statement between President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra,” White House, November 18, 2012, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/11/18/joint-press-statement-between-president-barack-obama-and-prime-minister->

50. “President Obama and Prime Minister Shinawatra Deliver Remarks,” White House, November 18, 2012, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2012/11/18/president-obama-and-prime-minister-shinawatra-deliver-remarks#transcript>.

When a new government takes power in Thailand, it is possible that it could be less supportive of the United States. Some opposition politicians have expressed concern that certain elements of the rebalance are detrimental to Thailand's national interests, concerns that could be exacerbated in the aftermath of the U.S. response to Thailand's coup. Former prime minister Abhisit Vejjavija has been a particularly vocal opponent of expanded U.S. presence.⁵¹ Concerns in Thailand about the U.S. rebalance reflect sensitivity toward trade relations with China. Public opinion toward China remains quite positive in Thailand, and a reported meeting of government officials resulted in agreement that Thailand would have to "look beyond the U.S. alliance, which was more advantageous during the Cold War, and strengthen engagement with China."⁵² As a result, officials may seek to limit U.S. cooperation while strengthening relations with China.⁵³

Malaysia

While military-to-military relations between the United States and Malaysia have improved dramatically during the administration, policymakers in Kuala Lumpur have avoided official statements on the rebalance. It is likely that Malaysian economic interests in China have tempered formal support for the rebalance. Although they have not openly expressed support for the broader strategy, some officials in Malaysia have articulated approval of specific initiatives.

Most notably, U.S. Marine Corps engagement in military exercises and training activities with Malaysia have been welcome.⁵⁴ Malaysia also plans to establish a new Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) base to host its marine corps in Bintulu.⁵⁵ This location is in close proximity to the James Shoal, a bank in the South China Sea over which China, Taiwan, and Malaysia all assert independent claims of sovereignty.⁵⁶ This example and others point to the particular importance Malaysia is putting on maritime initiatives. President Obama's visit to Malaysia in April 2013 was hailed as a major step forward in bilateral relations, but there was no mention of the rebalance by Malaysian officials during the trip, nor was there a major agreement on security during the visit. Nevertheless, there is discussion of U.S. P-8s flying from Malaysian bases. Malaysia might follow the Philippines and Vietnam in seeking deeper security ties with the United States if its territorial dispute with China comes to the fore.

51. See Mr. Abhisit's criticism of the decision to allow U.S. troops to use the U-Tapao International Airport: Wassana Nanuam, "Abhisit asks why govt let US use U-Tapao for relief hub," *Bangkok Post*, June 8, 2012, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/lite/news/297065/abhisit-asks-why-govt-let-us-use-u-tapao-for-relief-hub>.

52. Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Thailand Looks Beyond the U.S. Alliance," *The Nation* (Bangkok), April 17, 2012, <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Thailand-looks-beyond-the-US-alliance-30179152.html>.

53. "Cabinet to discuss US proposals on U-tapao," *The Nation* (Bangkok), June 19, 2012, <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/politics/Cabinet-to-discuss-US-proposals-on-U-tapao-30184432.html>.

54. Dzirhan Mahadzir, "Malaysia to establish Marine Corps, Naval base close to James Shoal," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 16, 2013.

55. Dzirhan Mahadzir, "Malaysian navy chief says Bintulu base will have new regional command," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, November 18, 2013.

56. *Ibid.*

Indonesia

The Indonesian government has expressed mixed views on the rebalance strategy. It is supportive of the rebalance as a renewed U.S. emphasis on engagement with Southeast Asia in general and ASEAN in particular. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono remarked in 2012, “To Indonesia the U.S. pivot . . . represents a deeper sociocultural, economic and political engagement between the United States and East Asia.”⁵⁷ Similarly, Dewi Fortuna Anwar, an adviser to the Indonesian vice president, indicated that the country “warmly welcomed” the U.S. administration’s focus on ASEAN, exemplified in its signing of the organization’s Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.⁵⁸ Interestingly, CSIS polling has found that Indonesian experts give the U.S. administration higher marks for policy execution than do most others in the region.

The government’s support of U.S. engagement, however, should not be confused with support for a strong U.S. military presence in the region. Indonesian foreign minister Marty Natalegawa has said that it is “unfortunate” that the rebalance made U.S. engagement “appear to be uni-dimensional, as if it is only a military presence.”⁵⁹ President Yudhoyono has also noted the importance of international agreements as “insurance against any long-term tensions” that may arise from the military dimension of U.S. policy.⁶⁰ Thus, Indonesia has both welcomed the U.S. focus on Asia and expressed concern about the need to rebalance the military and nonmilitary aspects of its strategy.

Brunei

U.S. cooperation with Brunei has been substantial, particularly during Brunei’s chairmanship of ASEAN in 2013. Brunei is part of the TPP negotiations and has been a consistent supporter of U.S. engagement with ASEAN. In addition, U.S. maritime cooperation with Brunei continues to grow, with Brunei hosting the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) and participating in the Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) exercises. However, when President Obama hosted the Sultan of Brunei at the White House in March 2013, both leaders avoided discussion of security issues, focusing instead on economic and cultural ties between the two countries. Thus, Brunei is likely to continue to work with the United States, particularly on maritime elements of the rebalance, but U.S. leaders have not yet received vocal support for U.S. policies from Brunei.

57. There is no mention of the military dimension in this president’s speech. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, “Remarks at the launch of the *Strategic Review Journal*” (speech delivered at the launch of the *Strategic Review Journal*, New York, NY, September 26, 2012).

58. Dewi Fortuna Anwar, “An Indonesian Perspective on the U.S. Rebalancing Effort toward Asia,” National Bureau of Asian Research, February 26, 2013, 1, http://www.nbr.org/downloads/pdfs/outreach/Anwar_commentary_02262013.pdf.

59. Marty Natalegawa, “Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa (Complete)” (remarks delivered at the Asia Society, New York, NY, September 19, 2013), <http://asiasociety.org/video/policy/indonesian-foreign-minister-marty-natalegawa-complete?page=11>.

60. Yudhoyono, “Remarks at the launch of the *Strategic Review Journal*.”

Myanmar/Burma

The most significant political change in Asia over the course of the rebalance has come in Myanmar, where democratization and political liberalization efforts continue. This process has been encouraged by U.S. leaders, resulting in reciprocal visits by President Obama to Myanmar and President Thein Sein to the United States. Indeed, administration officials frequently note that the opening of Myanmar has been one of the most successful aspects of the rebalance. Some U.S. leaders argue that this amounts to a choice by Myanmar's government to improve ties with the United States and limit Myanmar's traditional reliance on China.

Although Myanmar's leaders have shown renewed interest in ties with the United States, they have generally avoided comment on the U.S. rebalance, making it difficult to definitively assess the leadership's feelings on U.S. strategy. During joint appearances with U.S. officials, Myanmar's leaders have tended to focus on internal challenges such as democratic reforms, poverty alleviation, social cohesion, and military professionalism. These domestic priorities will likely continue to take precedence over geopolitical concerns such as U.S. military presence.

China⁶¹

China's response to the U.S. rebalance must be viewed through the lens of Beijing's broader regional strategy. President Xi Jinping has rapidly consolidated power within the Chinese Communist Party, but his foreign policy objectives are not yet clear. Although Chinese actions have demonstrated increasing assertiveness in the East and South China Seas, Beijing has publicly sought stable relations with the United States as a top foreign-policy objective. China scholar Christopher Johnson suggests that Beijing's "judgment that China is enjoying a window extended through 2020 in which a benign external security environment allows it to focus on its internal development."⁶² Yet, recent interactions between Chinese leaders and their U.S. and other foreign counterparts call into question how China might choose to act during this "period of strategic opportunity."

Chinese leaders may feel threatened by the U.S. rebalance and the prospect of a more capable U.S. military force in Asia, but those leaders have also publicly endorsed a continued U.S. role in the region. For example, during President Obama's state visit to China in November 2009, the countries issued a joint statement that explicitly noted, "China welcomes the United States as an Asia-Pacific nation that contributes to peace, stability and prosperity in the region."⁶³ The United States has also expressed a desire for a constructive

61. North Korea has belligerently expressed its opposition to the U.S. rebalance and to any form of U.S. regional presence, but private conversations with North Korean leaders are difficult to pursue, so this section focuses on Chinese perceptions.

62. Christopher K. Johnson, *Decoding China's Emerging "Great Power" Strategy in Asia* (Washington, DC: CSIS, June 2014), 21, http://csis.org/files/publication/140603_Johnson_DecodingChinasEmerging_WEB.pdf.

63. "U.S.-China Joint Statement," White House, November 17, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/us-china-joint-statement>.

partnership that is “positive, cooperative, and comprehensive.”⁶⁴ Yet, Chinese authorities remain somewhat critical of the rebalance, particularly its military aspects. While defense planners appear to recognize the logic of the rebalance strategy, they also emphasize China’s need to defend its “fundamental national interests” when those interests are threatened.⁶⁵ These officials have warned that frequent joint military exercises and the “deliberate” strengthening of military alliances by “relevant countries” are not conducive to regional peace and stability.⁶⁶

Senior Chinese defense officials have been slightly more restrained, noting that China hopes the rebalance strategy does not target one “specific country” and stressing the “imperative” to balance the security concerns of different countries.⁶⁷ Chinese leaders have also emphasized the need to improve bilateral engagement through a “new type of great power relations.” According to these leaders such an arrangement should be characterized by “mutual understanding and strategic trust,” respect for each country’s “core interests and major concerns,” deepened “mutually beneficial cooperation,” and “enhance[d] coordination and cooperation.”⁶⁸ Despite this spirit of cooperation, Johnson notes that “Beijing wants to draw firm lines concerning the limits of the new type of great power relations when it does not align with China’s strategic interests.”⁶⁹ For example, when commenting on the pivot in December 2011, Chinese assistant foreign minister Le Yucheng remarked that while “the U.S. has never left the Asia Pacific,” being a force for good in the region also means “respecting China’s major concerns and core interests.”⁷⁰

Moreover, Chinese leaders have recently outlined a vision of a new regional order free of U.S.-led alliances. Some have warned that President Xi’s push for an “Asia for Asians” regional architecture at the 2014 Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia summit in Shanghai was designed to erode U.S. influence in the Asia Pacific.⁷¹ The most direct criticism came from Dai Bingguo, who reportedly suggested to Hillary Clinton, “Why don’t you ‘pivot’ out of here?”⁷² Yet, polling shows that Chinese strategic experts nevertheless express the view that for the next 10 years at least, Asia will see a U.S.-led

64. “U.S.-China Joint Statement,” White House, January 19, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/19/us-china-joint-statement>.

65. “Interview: Proper handling of Sino-U.S. ties key to regional, world peace,” Xinhua, June 4, 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90786/7835395.html>.

66. “June 2012 Ministry of Defense Regular Press Conference,” Ministry of Defense, June 28, 2012, http://www.mod.gov.cn/photo/2012-06/28/content_4381068.htm. Chinese government spokespersons rarely reference the United States in their critical statements; they will refer to “relevant” or “some” countries instead.

67. “Department of Defense Press Briefing with Secretary Hagel and Gen. Chang from the Pentagon,” Department of Defense, August 19, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5289>.

68. Xi Jinping, “Speech by Vice President Xi Jinping at Welcoming Luncheon Hosted by Friendly Organizations in the United States” (speech delivered at a welcome reception in the United States, February 15, 2012), <http://www.chinausfocus.com/library/government-resources/chinese-resources/remarks/speech-by-vice-president-xi-jinping-at-welcoming-luncheon-hosted-by-friendly-organizations-in-the-united-states-february-15-2012/>.

69. Johnson, *Decoding China’s Emerging “Great Power” Strategy in Asia*, 21.

70. Le Yucheng, “The Rapid Development of China’s Diplomacy in a Volatile World” (speech delivered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, China, December 18, 2011).

71. Kor Kian Beng, “Don’t bet on China’s ‘Asia for Asians only’ vision yet,” *Straits Times*, May 30, 2014, <http://www.straitstimes.com/news/opinion/eye-the-world/story/dont-bet-chinas-asia-asians-only-vision-yet-2014-0530>.

72. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 79.

order. Furthermore, these survey results suggest continuing ambivalence among Chinese strategic thinkers about whether their country is really ready to lead in Asia, with less than a quarter of Chinese strategic elites identifying either Chinese primacy or a U.S.-China condominium as being in China's best interests.⁷³

Nevertheless, unofficial responses to the rebalance have been quite critical, as evidenced by CSIS polling of strategic elites.⁷⁴ Some argue that the initiative is destabilizing and counterproductive and that it stems from attempts by the United States and its allies to counterbalance Chinese influence in the region.⁷⁵ Some commentators have claimed that Washington "has not made a convincing case . . . that its pivot to the Asia Pacific poses no threat to China."⁷⁶ These commentators emphasize U.S. efforts to bolster "cold-war style security alliances and large-scale military redeployment," which are seen as an attempt to contain China's rise and maintain U.S. dominance in the region.⁷⁷ These observers warn of a "zero-sum" competition between Washington and Beijing.⁷⁸ Others argue that the rebalance has ushered in a new era of "geopolitical confrontation" which has encouraged China's neighbors to leverage the United States to "drive a wedge" between American and Chinese leaders.⁷⁹ Yet, Chinese officials have emphasized Beijing's willingness to engage with Washington to build a prosperous Asia-Pacific region, suggesting that Chinese support for heightened U.S. involvement in the region is conditional on whether or not Beijing views Washington's initiatives as beneficial for safeguarding peace and stability.

Both sides have made efforts to improve relations under the new type of great power relations framework. Yet, despite recent gains in areas like military-to-military exchanges, widespread distrust remains. For this reason, China's suspicions of the rebalance are likely to persist and will remain both a driver of U.S. strategy and a challenge to its implementation.

As the preceding discussion shows, both public and private regional views vary on the U.S. rebalance to the Asia Pacific. Some states, primarily long-standing U.S. allies and partners, strongly and publicly support the rebalance, worrying only about the U.S. ability to execute the strategy. Other states, such as China, openly oppose the rebalance as a destabilizing challenge to regional stability. Still other states remain cautious, due to concerns

73. When regional elites were asked to describe their expectations for international relations dynamics within the next decade in East Asia, 57 percent of respondents predicted continued U.S. leadership. See Green and Szechenyi, *Power and Order in Asia*, 11.

74. Green and Szechenyi, *Power and Order in Asia*, 10.

75. Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Leadership and Elite Responses to U.S. Pacific Pivot," *China Leadership Monitor* no. 38 (2012): 1–26, <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM38MS.pdf>.

76. Deng Yushan, "Build trust to avert Tragedy," Xinhua, May 7, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-05/07/c_131573482.htm.

77. "U.S. will not backtrack on rebalance toward Asia: envoy," Xinhua, July 23, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-07/23/c_132564914.htm.

78. Zhong Sheng, "Goals of US 'Return-to-Asia' strategy questioned," *People's Daily Online*, October 18, 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7620216.html>.

79. See Zhu Feng, "Are China and the U.S. going to enter into a geopolitical confrontation?," *Global Times*, January 13, 2012, <http://m.huanqiu.com/website/24569.html>; Wu Chunsi, "Back in town," *Beijing Review*, January 9, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-01/09/content_24358126_2.htm.

about U.S. intentions, U.S. reliability, national preferences for autonomy, or the desire to avoid public positions that might alienate the United States or China. As a result, clear and consistent communication of U.S. strategy and capability in the Asia Pacific is vital. Even if regional leaders avoid public comment on U.S. strategy, this assessment finds that most foreign policy experts desire substantial U.S. engagement in the region.⁸⁰

80. See findings in Green and Szechenyi, *Power and Order in Asia*.

4 | Conclusion

The coming year is crucial for the U.S. rebalance to the Asia Pacific. Regional supporters are wondering about the U.S. ability and willingness to implement its strategy, which is vital to uphold security, prosperity, and values in Asia. Overall, support for the rebalance is strong, but the range of opinions among allies and partners, and the growing narrative about U.S. “containment” in China, makes consistent declaratory policy and steady implementation indispensable.

Strengthening the rebalance requires simultaneous efforts to reassure allies and partners while dissuading, deterring, and reassuring China. Much has already been done in this regard since CSIS’s 2012 Independent Assessment of U.S. Force Posture Strategy (and consistent with that report’s recommendations). For example, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) is protecting Guam, additional nuclear attack submarines have been scheduled to move to Guam, transition of Operational Control to Korea has been delayed, plans for realignment of U.S. forces on Okinawa have moved forward, a U.S.-Australia force posture agreement has been signed, a U.S.-Philippines Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement has been concluded, and a higher proportion of U.S. forces are headed to the Asia-Pacific region.

Nevertheless, facing multiple foreign policy challenges and declining defense budgets, American policymakers must continue their work to convince regional states that the United States intends to resource and implement its strategy fully and skillfully. Although U.S. defense officials have been generally consistent in their statements of administration priorities, the statements of other U.S. government leaders have been less consistent in recent years. Economic initiatives, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, could reinvigorate the nonmilitary aspects of the rebalance. On the other hand, lack of passage could undermine the rebalance if international negotiations or U.S. congressional actions stall. Perceptions of these choices and priorities will affect the concerns of allies and partners about both the strategy and its implementation. This challenge will be even more difficult in the face of growing Chinese assertiveness and continuing U.S. budgetary constraints, which are likely to increase regional concern about the viability of the U.S. position.

It is therefore critical that the United States continue to develop and articulate publicly its willingness and capability to resource and execute the rebalance, as Secretary Hagel did at the June 2014 Shangri-La Dialogue. However, despite urging from some within the administration, on Capitol Hill, and elsewhere, the administration has not publicly articulated

a unified Asia strategy.¹ The analysis in the first section of this report shows that senior officials' statements have been inconsistent and sometimes contradictory. The analysis in the second section of this report demonstrates that many regional allies, partners, and potential adversaries remain unsure of U.S. intentions and capabilities. A publicly stated, unified interagency strategy for the Asia Pacific is at least as necessary for external consumption as it is for internal consistency and effective implementation. Such a document would serve the purpose of reassuring U.S. allies and partners of U.S. intentions. It would provide a useful basis for engagement with Congress, on which development, articulation, budgeting, and implementation of the rebalance depend.

The U.S. rebalance strategy will take years, if not decades, to implement. Regional partners, however, need to see continuous progress and momentum to sustain support for common objectives, cooperative initiatives, and an enhanced U.S. role in the region. This report suggests that defense leaders should focus on three high-priority areas outlined in this study: strengthening relations (with allies, partners, and potential competitors), enhancing military presence (increasing distribution, resilience, and sustainability), and fielding advanced capabilities (realigning forces, investments, and plans). Beyond the U.S. defense community, national security officials must do more to demonstrate U.S. intent and capability to continue as a positive and stabilizing force in the region. U.S. leaders must clearly signal to allies, partners, and potential adversaries that the United States has a robust and coordinated strategy to strengthen its position in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. On responses to calls for a unified administration strategy on Asia, see Thomas D. Sullivan, "Letter to Congressman J. Randy Forbes regarding Congressman Forbes' letter to National Security Advisor Susan Rice on the Obama Administration's Asia-Pacific Rebalance Strategy," October 9, 2013.

Appendix: Major Rebalance Statements (as of November 2014)

Date	Official	Agency/Dept.	Event/Title
October 10, 2011	Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	State Dept.	Joint Press Availability with Foreign Minister Maehara
November 1, 2011	Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	State Dept.	“America’s Pacific Century”
November 16, 2011	President Barack Obama	White House	Joint Press Conference with Prime Minister Gillard
June 2, 2012	Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta	Defense Dept.	Shangri-La Security Dialogue
June 19, 2012	Under Secretary of Defense Michele Flournoy	Defense Dept.	Transcript on U.S. Engagement in Asia
July 9, 2012	Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	State Dept.	Remarks to International Women’s Leadership Forum
August 1, 2012	Deputy Secretary Ashton Carter	Defense Dept.	U.S. Strategic Rebalance to Asia: Defense Perspective
February 9, 2013	Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell	State Dept.	Interview
March 5, 2013	Admiral Samuel Locklear	Defense Dept.	Statement to House Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture
March 11, 2013	National Security Advisor Tom Donilon	White House	Remarks, The United States and the Asia Pacific in 2013
March 14, 2013	Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell	State Dept.	Alliance 21 Emerging Asia
April 15, 2013	Secretary of State John Kerry	State Dept.	Remarks on a 21st Century Pacific Partnership
April 25, 2013	Assistant Secretary of State (act.) Joseph Yun	State Dept.	Rebalance to Asia II: Security and Defense
June 1, 2013	Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel	Defense Dept.	Remarks by at the IISS Asia Security Summit
June 20, 2013	Assistant Secretary of State (des.) Daniel Russel	State Dept.	Statement to Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 23, 2013	Representative Randy Forbes	Congress	Letter to Susan Rice on the Rebalance

Date	Official	Agency/Dept.	Event/Title
August 25, 2013	Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel	Defense Dept.	Remarks at Malaysia's Institute of Defence/Security
August 25, 2013	Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel	Defense Dept.	Joint Press Conference with Minister Hishammuddin
October 11, 2013	Secretary of State John Kerry	State Dept.	Remarks at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation CEO Summit
November 12, 2013	Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel	State Dept.	Remarks at CSIS Mekong Health Event
November 20, 2013	National Security Advisor Susan Rice	White House	Remarks at Georgetown University
November 22, 2013	Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel	Defense Dept.	Press Conference with Minister Nicholson
May 20, 2014	Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel	State Dept.	Statement to House Foreign Affairs Committee
June 2, 2014	Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel	Defense Dept.	Statement at the Shangri-La Dialogue
September 30, 2014	Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work	Defense Dept.	Statement at the Council on Foreign Relations
November 4, 2014	Secretary of State John Kerry	State Dept.	Statement at Johns Hopkins SAIS on U.S.-China Relations
November 15, 2014	President Barack Obama	White House	Remarks at the University of Queensland

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