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# Introduction to Indo-Pacific Security Challenges

ADM Phil Davidson, US Navy

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Thank you, Peter, for the kind introduction—I appreciate that—and thank you for the invite to speak here at the Forum. On behalf of everyone here, Peter, thank you for the addition of the McCain Award added to the Forum’s program. It is a wonderful way to remember the Senator and his contribution to the Forum.<sup>1</sup>

I’m grateful for the opportunity to talk to you this morning about the Indo-Pacific region. While that might seem like half a world away—and it quite literally is from here in Halifax—I think the security and prosperity of all of our countries depend on the stability of the Indo-Pacific.

Of course, there is plenty of activity ongoing in the Indo-Pacific just this past week. ASEAN has just completed, and APEC will shortly.<sup>2</sup> And I think these are indicative of both the pace and the power of the region. Moreover, it makes clear that through the remainder of the twenty-first century, the Indo-Pacific will be the engine that drives global economic development, and it is in all of our interests that the international community play an active role in preserving the rules-based international order.

If you’re not already sold on the economic potential of the Indo-Pacific, consider the following:

- The Indo-Pacific is home to 10 of the 20 fastest-growing economies;
- The Indo-Pacific currently contains over a third of global GDP and 60 percent of the global GDP growth;
- By 2050, the Indo-Pacific is projected to account for over 55 percent of global GDP, largely due to a growing middle class;
- Speaking of which, 87 percent of the next one billion middle-class entrants

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\* Keynote speech by ADM Phil Davidson, commander, US Indo-Pacific Command, delivered at Halifax International Security Forum, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, 17 November 2018.

will come from the Indo-Pacific;

- And by 2030, 65 percent of the world's middle class will reside in the Indo-Pacific, representing an unrivaled amount of purchasing power.

In short, the potential markets and the economic prospects present opportunities that all can benefit from as long as all nations, large and small, work together.

This is where the United States's Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy comes into play.

You may recall, President Trump announced a vision—or end-state—for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” last year when he traveled to the region for APEC, the East Asia Summit, and a number of bilateral discussions.

But what does a Free and Open Indo-Pacific mean? It may seem self-evident, but let me offer a few thoughts on what we at USINDOPACOM believe when we say Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

We mean *Free* both in terms of security—being free from coercion by other nations—and in terms of values and political systems.

There is agreement that free societies respect individual rights and liberties, to include the freedom to openly practice their religion; free societies promote good governance; and free societies adhere to the shared values of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I also think *Free* means nations do not have to choose who they trade with and who they partner with because of fear or coercion.

An *Open* Indo-Pacific means we believe all nations should enjoy unfettered access to the seas and airways upon which our nations and economies depend.

An *Open* Indo-Pacific includes open investment environments, transparent agreements between nations, protection of intellectual property rights, fair and reciprocal trade—all of which are essential for people, goods, and capital to move across borders for the shared benefit of all.

Now, while the clarity of this vision is new, the core elements of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific are not—in fact, this is how the US has approached the region throughout our 240-plus-year history.

We have advanced this vision for more than two centuries, because we, like nearly all of you here, are a Pacific nation.

American businesses have traded in Asia since the eighteenth century.

We have five Pacific states: Hawaii, California, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska.

We also have Pacific territories on both sides of the International Date Line, like Guam, Wake, and the Northern Marianas. . . . and we have Compacts of Free Association with Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.

Americans fought and bled on these lands, not to conquer them, but to liberate them.

Then, together with partners and allies, we helped rebuild Japan, pushed back aggression in South Korea, and helped create the security architecture of the post-war era.

Five of the United States's seven major security alliances are in the Indo-Pacific, including our oldest treaty ally, Thailand. Indeed, our oldest treaty in the region is a Treaty of Amity and Commerce the US signed in 1833 with Thailand. Today, we are observers in ASEAN and—as the Vice President affirmed this week—we are one of its most vocal supporters. Of course, USINDOPACOM is our military's largest and oldest combatant command.

The United States is an enduring Pacific power. That will not change, and we could not leave the region even if we wanted to—our historical, structural, economic, and institutional ties to the Indo-Pacific are indelible.

But even though America's vision for the region has not changed, some other things have. Most notably, there are a number of challenges that threaten the long-term viability of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

North Korea remains an immediate challenge, and it is important that we remain united in our pursuit of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea as agreed to by Chairman Kim [Jung-un] in Singapore. At PACOM, we continue the enforcement of UN Security Council resolutions in order to help achieve meaningful breakthroughs on denuclearization.

In my role as Commander of USINDOPACOM, I continue to emphasize military readiness while supporting the US Department of State-led pressure campaign as well.

It is also evident that terrorism and other transnational threats continue to challenge this shared vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, as we saw just last year in the Philippines.

Following six months of heavy fighting, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police defeated ISIS and liberated the city of Marawi . . . . and they did this by reaching out to partners.<sup>3</sup>

The United States, Australia, and other countries provided intelligence and support that was essential to the outcome, but the effort was requested and led by the Philippines.

We must continue to work with like-minded nations across the region to develop multinational counterterrorism capabilities and capacity, and to prevent the return of foreign fighters to the region. If we do not, I believe we will see another Marawi somewhere else in the region in the future.

I'm also concerned about Russia's resurgence. While most of Russia's malign activity occurs in other areas of the world, Russia is increasingly active across the region, and it often seeks to block or disrupt the diplomatic efforts of others as they work to sustain the rules-based international order.

There is, of course, an even greater challenge to the long-term stability of the region. Often times, when we think of coercion, we think in military terms and violent outcomes, but with the Chinese Communist Party's desire to keep disagreements just below the threshold of armed conflict, coercion is particularly evident in the sphere of economics.

It is problematic when countries promise loans, improved infrastructure, and economic development, but have a much more opaque intention underneath. When nations accept loans for more than they can possibly afford—often secured through corruption—borrowers quickly find themselves deep in debt and on the path to default, with the lender gaining leverage against the borrower's sovereignty.

This is not right, and it is not new. It is debt-trap diplomacy, or as some say, predatory economics. It is a pernicious and insidious challenge to many in the region today.

The US opposed such practices in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and continues to do so today.

We see similar coercion with the PRC's militarization of features and a sustained campaign to intimidate other nations in the East and South China Seas, while also making excessive territorial claims that the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague does not accept.<sup>4</sup>

As distasteful as these tactics are, we recognize the need to continue to find ways to address many of the problems that have been discussed.

Engagement is critical to designing the solutions that will help promote and advance a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

So the United States will continue to cooperate where we can, but—as the *National Defense Strategy* makes clear—compete where we must. The stakes in the region are just too high.

So what do we do, and how do we respond to those who reject our vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific?



**Figure 1. Keynote speech.** ADM Phil Davidson, commander of US Indo-Pacific Command, delivered remarks about security challenges, collaboration, and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region during the Halifax International Security Forum in Nova Scotia, Canada, 17 November 2018. This year's forum brought together individuals from more than 90 countries who face consequential local threats, writers who challenge and influence the world's thinking on security, and decision makers who make the tough choices. (Photo courtesy of Halifax International Security Forum)

Well, the most obvious point—and one made abundantly clear in the US *National Security Strategy*—is that whatever we do, we must do it together, which means we need to start by identifying areas of agreement.

From my travels around the region, I've found three specific areas where I believe we can ground our efforts to advance a Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Our values, our interests, and our commitment to our mutual security, so that all may prosper.

I was pleased to see during the polling on Day 1 of a recent Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) course, when asked, "What is the best way to improve Asia-Pacific security?" the number-one response international students from across the region gave was, "Through shared identity and values."

First, the vast majority of nations across the region do share similar values—including the core belief that governments should be chosen freely by their citizens and are, therefore, accountable to their people.

Foreign interference in our governments, intellectual property theft, suppression of religious beliefs, malign cyber activities, and attempts to override state sovereignty using fear and coercion all run counter to the idea of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

We must stand together in support of our shared values, and be unambiguous in condemning those who attempt to undermine those values.

I know it's easy to become distracted by the differences between our nations and to think of them as larger fissures, but that's just not the case.

While the Indo-Pacific is one of the largest and most-diverse regions on Earth, these differences are actually strengths, and the thousands of miles of ocean and sky between us do not divide us. In actuality, they are the connective elements that bind us together.

It is our collective responsibility—all of us—to ensure the continued freedom of the seas and skies. . . . more on this in a minute.

Second, the vast majority of nations in the region share a common vision of the economic strength of the Indo-Pacific. As I said at the beginning, economists know the future of global economic growth is in the Indo-Pacific, and that free and open trade are the keys to that future.

This is why the United States is the single largest source of cumulative foreign investment in Southeast Asia—larger than China or the European Union—and why the United States does more two-way trade with the region than anyone else.

Sixty percent of the same APCSS students I mentioned polling a few moments ago also said the most-powerful country is the one that has the largest economy—but we know all nations can advance together in ways that benefit everyone involved, and we want to do it fairly.

Where America goes, we seek partnership and collaboration, not domination. We do not believe in using loans as coercion or development as a weapon.

We seek to work with anyone to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific, so long as that cooperation adheres to the highest standards that our citizens demand.

For example, the United States's Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) has a portfolio of \$3.9 billion invested in the Indo-Pacific and has done so alongside American firms in energy, health care, and banking. For every dollar that OPIC has invested, the private sector has more than doubled it.

And just this past September, the United States passed and placed into law the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act, or BUILD Act,



that will make it even easier for America's private sector to invest in developing countries to create economic partnerships and stimulate economic growth.

We know nations can advance together without sacrificing sovereignty or making corrupt backroom deals, because the power of private investment has lifted billions out of poverty since the end of World War II, and we are confident that it will continue to do so.

Third, the vast majority of nations in the Indo-Pacific also share similar security concerns and challenges—and in fact, cooperating on security is at the heart of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

Of course, security cooperation is more than fighting together in wars; it also means preventing war by presenting a credible deterrent to would-be adversaries.

Security cooperation includes working together to respond to humanitarian crises and natural disasters—such as relief for the hurricane and tsunami that struck Indonesia just two months ago.

Security cooperation also means working together in areas like countering terrorism; illegal drugs; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; and human trafficking.

In brief, cooperating in times of peace and war to make our people safer and the Indo-Pacific more secure.

Thinking about values, interests, and security concerns independently helps us identify common ground, but it's important to remember that these concepts actually intersect, and that challenges to one area have ramifications across all three. Perhaps the best example of this is in the South China Sea.

Earlier this decade, the PRC ignored international law, disregarded legitimate claims from smaller countries, and built a number of illegal features in the South China Sea. Then, despite President Xi's 2015 promise not to militarize these features, the PLA secretly deployed antiship missiles, electronic jammers, and surface-to-air missiles (also known as SAMs) earlier this year.<sup>5</sup>

So what was a "Great Wall of Sand" just three years ago is now a "Great Wall of SAMs" in the South China Sea, giving the PRC the potential to exert national control over international waters and airspace through which over 3 trillion dollars in goods travel every year, along with commercial air traffic, as well as information and financial data through undersea cables.

The PRC says they're militarizing these features in order to defend Chinese sovereignty, but in doing so they're now violating the sovereignty of every other nation's ability to fly, sail, and operate in accordance with international

law—the right of all nations to trade, to communicate, to send their financial information, to send their communications through cables under the sea. It’s not just the right of the US Navy and US Air Force combined.

While the recent unsafe, unprofessional behavior by the PLA Navy garnered significant media attention, we need to remain focused on the broader strategic implications.

Further, in the ongoing negotiations over a South China Sea Code of Conduct, the PRC is pressuring ASEAN states into granting China de facto veto authority over who ASEAN states can sail, fly, train, and operate with in the South China Sea—a clear violation of the international sea and air standards codified in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We must stand together in support of ASEAN—indeed, all nations—in any such negotiations, while also standing together in support of the idea that all nations have the right to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows.

In closing, I would like to make one additional comment on the perception of choice: the United States is not asking anyone to choose. The very phrase *Free and Open* obviates that question.

The United States helped set the conditions for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific following World War II by setting other nations free. What’s clear is the region has mainly benefited from that international rules-based order.

Further, we are seeing a general convergence around the idea of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific across the region. Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and India have all put forth similar concepts or visions.

Yes, there is still much work to do, but the invitation remains an invitation to all—including China—and as Vice President [Mike] Pence commented at APEC, Beijing has “an honored place in our vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, if it chooses to respect its neighbors’ sovereignty, embrace free, fair, and reciprocal trade, and uphold human rights and freedom.”

Thank you for your attention this morning. 

## Notes

1. In November 2017, the Halifax International Security Forum, established a new prize, named for recently deceased US Senator John McCain, honoring outstanding courage and leadership in public service.
2. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
3. The six-month-long armed conflict in Marawi, started on 23 May 2017, between Philippine military forces and terrorists affiliated with the Islamic State (ISIS), including the Maute and Abu Sayyaf Salafi jihadist groups. The battle was the longest urban battle in the modern history of the Philippines.
4. People’s Republic of China (PRC)
5. People’s Liberation Army (PLA)

# A Pathway toward Enhancing the US Air Force–Indian Air Force Partnership and Deterrence in the Indo-Pacific Region

Stephen F. Burgess

*Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed or implied in the Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs (JIPA) are those of the authors and should not be construed as carrying the official sanction of the Department of Defense, Air Force, Air Education and Training Command, Air University, or other agencies or departments of the US government. This article may be reproduced in whole or in part without permission. If it is reproduced, the JIPA requests a courtesy line.*

The article proposes a path toward increased partnership between the US Air Force (USAF) and Indian Air Force (IAF), given China's increasing challenge to Indian and US interests and the two countries' formal commitment to global order, democracy, and technological innovation. Since 2002, the US–India strategic partnership has included a focus on cooperation in nuclear energy, space, high technology, and missile defense.<sup>1</sup> For more than a decade, India's military has held more joint exercises with the US armed forces than with any other country, including those involving the IAF and USAF with combat and transport aircraft and other platforms.<sup>2</sup>

In 2014, Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government came to power, and the US–India partnership is now experiencing a growth spurt. Currently India is striving to develop its armed forces, including its air force, and the capabilities to resist Pakistan's asymmetric aggression and deter China's expansionist tendencies. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) continues to encroach on India's territory in the Himalayan mountain region, and China is implementing its Belt and Road Initiative, with infrastructure projects and other forms of assistance to win over regimes in the Indo-Pacific and, according to some experts, encircle India. Thus, the stage is set for the United States to try creative approaches to strengthen its relations with India and the IAF. Building stronger relations can enhance deterrence and help meet increasing challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

The article begins by assessing what the United States and USAF and India and the IAF would like each other to accomplish, based on a range of Indian and US sources and dozens of interviews. It proceeds to analyze the barriers to progress on both sides. It assesses how the United States and USAF might overcome those barriers and advance both countries' interests and provides recommendations for how

the USAF might be creative in working with the IAF. The article weighs different scenarios regarding how US engagement with India may change and evolve to meet future security goals, including the provision of deterrence, and how the USAF and IAF might be involved.

The article's two main recommendations are that the United States should emphasize building partnership first, while remaining judicious about the transfer of technology, and promoting the acquisition of US aircraft second. The USAF should follow the model of the 26-year US Navy (USN)–Indian Navy (IN) partnership—featuring multipronged strategic/operational-level dialogue, extensive war gaming, linking technology development to service requirements, and increasingly complex exercises.<sup>3</sup>

### **What Would the United States Like India and the IAF to Do?**

According to the 2017 *US National Security Strategy* and other sources,<sup>4</sup> the United States would like India to develop forces that can help provide dominance and deterrence in South Asia and the surrounding waters of the Indian Ocean, especially as PLA forces gain increasing access to the region. Ideally, the IAF would develop equivalent forces to those of the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) units based in Tibet and be capable of deterring them from conflict escalation in the Himalayas and South Asia. The air force would also further develop its capabilities to transport Indian Army forces to the frontier with China in case of conflict escalation. In helping to eventually provide dominance, India would develop the forces, including space and cyber capabilities, to fight a possible two-front war against China and Pakistan. US expectations are that India would continue to develop self-sufficiency in the Himalayas and the IAF would eventually achieve interoperability with the USAF and USN over the Indian Ocean and, in the end, Southeast Asia, the South China Sea, and the Persian Gulf. The IAF would become increasingly expeditionary and work with the IN and US forces in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia in maintaining sea lines of communication (SLOC). This would require the IAF building up its aerial refueling and logistics capabilities.<sup>5</sup> While India and the IAF would take the lead in the Himalayas, the United States would continue to lead in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, South China Sea, and Strait of Malacca. Eventually, the growing USAF–IAF partnership would create a force multiplier that would deter China from taking offensive action in the Indian Ocean and the Himalayas.

The United States and USAF would like India and the IAF to develop a greater shared strategic outlook with the United States and USAF and for India to continue to move away from its traditional nonaligned status and focus on Pakistan. Such a change of perspective would also entail the IAF shifting from concentrating on the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and toward developing a common position with the USAF regarding how to counter China's assertiveness and creating ways to deter Beijing's forces from offensive actions.<sup>6</sup> The IAF would transition to become as focused on countering the PLA and PLAAF as it has been on preparing to fight the Pakistan Army and PAF. The IAF would follow the two navies' partnership model and develop a strategic relationship with the USAF through sustained, multilevel interactions, strategic dialogue, war gaming, and a variety of joint exercises, such as Exercise Malabar,<sup>7</sup> to develop a shared strategic outlook, a high level of trust, and a degree of interoperability in communications and data link/exchanges.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the IAF would engage with the USAF to identify technologies that the US Air Force Research Laboratories (AFRL) and Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) could develop together and have clear operational benefits in the air domain—just as the two navies do.<sup>9</sup> In following the two navies' path to an expanded strategic partnership, the USAF has the experience and capabilities working with other air forces that make it possible for it to work more closely with the IAF.<sup>10</sup> In line with this recommendation, the USAF's involvement in the Joint Technical Group forum has led to the AFRL having five cooperative projects in applied science with DRDO valued at \$22 million, with the costs split equally.<sup>11</sup>

In 2018, the Trump administration announced a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy,” replacing the Obama administration's “Rebalance to Asia” and calling for a strong coalition of democracies committed to uphold the existing order.<sup>12</sup> As part of the vision of this strategy, India and the IAF would increase participation in ensuring a “rules-based order” in the Indo-Pacific, which includes respect for territorial integrity, freedom of navigation, and overflight.<sup>13</sup> To defend that order, the United States has been working with India and other allies and partners to strengthen deterrence and dissuade China from engaging in aggressive expansion. India and the IAF is envisioned as increasingly engaging with the United States and USAF as part of an emerging multilateral defense partnership (also involving the air forces, navies, and land forces of Japan and Australia). The signs of emerging multilateral cooperation include regular meetings of defense ministers and multilateral joint exercises, including those involving air forces.<sup>14</sup> In September

2018, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense James Mattis met with Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj and Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman in the inaugural 2+2 Strategic Dialogue. The United States would like India to continue to engage in and organize multilateral exercises in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, with the IAF becoming more involved and increasingly expeditionary. At the 2+2 Dialogue, the two countries agreed to engage in tri-service exercises, with the IAF and USAF mastering the complexities of multi-domain threats. India and the IAF would have to overcome constraints, including the country's traditional posture of strategic autonomy, the slow-paced increase of India's defense budget, and the IAF's traditional preoccupation with Pakistan and the PAF. A developing USAF–IAF partnership could be an important component of maintaining the status quo in Asia and the Indian Ocean.

US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and its air component, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), would like a stronger partnership with India and the IAF. Its commander from 2015 to 2018, Adm Harry Harris, was a force behind what was hoped to be an emerging quadrilateral defense cooperation—the “Quad”—and a closer partnership with India.<sup>15</sup> In 2016, he envisaged broad and deep cooperation: “USPACOM [US Pacific Command] aims to build a powerful quadrilateral partnership framework of the most powerful democracies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific. India, Japan, Australia and the US working together will be a force for the maintenance of the regional rules-based order, counterbalancing and deterring coercion or unrestrained national ambitions.”<sup>16</sup>

Harris' successor, Adm Phillip Davidson, has reiterated support for the Quad and called for the United States to work with India to reduce its advanced weapons dependence on Russia. The United States would like India to exercise air dominance in the Indian Ocean and South Asia by the 2020s. This would allow the United States to focus on the PLA in the East and South China Seas and on North Korea. PACAF has engaged in joint exercises with the IAF, mostly centered on humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HA/DR). The United States would like the IAF to lead in HA/DR and stabilization (including Afghanistan) in its region and assist the IN in ensuring freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean and in enforcing the Proliferation Security Initiative, which aims at halting trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and nonstate actors.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 1. PACAF–IAF cooperation.** US Air Force Gen CQ Brown, Jr., Pacific Air Forces commander, prepares for an orientation flight in an IAF Mirage 2000 at Cope India 19 at Kalaikunda Air Force Station, India, 14 December 2018. Brown attended the closing ceremony of Cope India 19, a field training exercise focused on enhancing mutual cooperation and building on existing capabilities, aircrew tactics, and force employment. (USAF photo by SSgt Hailey Haux)

The United States and US Central Command (USCENTCOM) and its air component, US Air Forces Central Command (AFCENT), with their forward base in the Persian Gulf at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, would like India and the IAF to assist more in Afghanistan. The commander of US Forces Afghanistan has visited New Delhi on a number of occasions for consultations with Indian officials concerning how India can further assist in the stabilization effort. In the last few years, the US–India Military Cooperation Group has included USCENTCOM representation along with India’s Chief of Defence Staff, the IAF Air Chief, and a USINDOPACOM three-star general officer.<sup>18</sup> The United States and India have recently decided to start exchanges between the US Naval Forces Central Command and the IN, which will be another avenue for deepening maritime cooperation and possibly establishing USAF–IAF links in the western Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.<sup>19</sup> India has vital interests in the Gulf, including oil and gas ship-

ments and the safety of seven million Indian nationals who live and work there. While India does not see a strategic threat from Iran that would spur deterrence cooperation with the United States in the Gulf, there has already been cooperation in Yemen with the IAF's use of C-130Js to evacuate Indian and US citizens. The IAF and USAF could mount joint exercises in the Gulf and elsewhere, preparing for possible noncombatant extraction operations of Indian nationals and others and HA/DR.



**Figure 2. Operation Raahat.** During the 2015 onset of the Saudi intervention in the Yemeni Civil War, the Indian Armed Forces evacuated Indian citizens and foreign nationals from Yemen. The IN began seaborne evacuations on 1 April 2015 from Aden port. The IAF started air evacuations utilizing military and Air India planes on 3 April 2015 from Sana'a. More than 4,640 Indian citizens in Yemen were evacuated along with 960 foreign nationals of 41 countries. (IAF photo)

In the technological and defense procurement realm, the United States would like to continue helping India as the latter upgrades its military forces and capabilities and develops a range of technologies in the air domain.<sup>20</sup> Under such cooperative efforts, India would develop advanced fourth-generation, airspace awareness and other capabilities that can match those of the PLAAF and PAF and eventually refine its aircraft engine technology. The United States would like to see



the development of a more capable and technologically advanced IAF, creation of more advanced joint exercises, and progress toward interoperability. However, the United States will never provide India with the same level of technological capability as that possessed by the USAF and the USN.

India continues to collaborate with Russia in defense technology development, making cooperation in some areas with the United States difficult if not impossible. Nevertheless, the United States would like to expand cooperation in developing defense technologies in other areas that would benefit India's powerful but ponderous DRDO and the country's indigenous defense industry.<sup>21</sup> Under the US Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) and its air systems Joint Working Group (JWG), the USAF and IAF have worked to resolve process issues impeding cooperation and alignment of systems, increase the flow of technology and investment, develop capabilities and partnership in codevelopment and coproduction, and intensify cooperation in research and development.<sup>22</sup> An intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) JWG is helping to advance IAF capabilities in that area and in developing distributed common ground control systems for intelligence processing, exploitation, and dissemination (PED). A major benefit of DTTI is that it brings the IAF, DRDO, and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) together to develop capabilities with the US services. However, the United States does not support using DTTI as a way to codevelop a fourth- or fifth-generation combat aircraft. Instead, the United States would like India to acquire the F-16 Block 70 and/or F/A-18-E/F for greater IAF performance and USAF–IAF interoperability.<sup>23</sup>

In the future, the United States and USAF would like to expand ties with India and the IAF to assist in missile defense, deterrence in space, and cyberspace. Although missile defense cooperation is still a far way off, India would eventually develop a shared strategic vision and interoperability with the United States and Japan.<sup>24</sup> In the space realm, India would continue with its dynamic space program and make progress in preparations against antisatellite (ASAT) warfare.<sup>25</sup> In the cyber realm, India would be better prepared to deter China from waging cyber war and prevail if deterrence fails.<sup>26</sup> The United States and India would build trust and common standards for cyber defense.<sup>27</sup>

India and the IAF would increasingly engage in logistics and information sharing with the United States and USAF.<sup>28</sup> The 2016 Indo–US Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) has opened the door for USAF and IAF access to logistics at each other's bases and will enhance HA/DR exercises and op-

erations in the Indian Ocean region and beyond.<sup>29</sup> Eventually, the LEMOA could provide a logistics hub and forward operating location (FOL) on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the eastern Indian Ocean where the IAF and USAF could work together to demonstrate resolve toward China and deter PLA efforts to dominate the South China Sea and Strait of Malacca.<sup>30</sup>

Concerning information sharing, India signed the General Security of Military Information Agreement in 2002 and the Communication and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (COMCASA) in September 2018.<sup>31</sup> These agreements allow the United States to supply India with US proprietary encrypted communications equipment and systems, enabling secure peacetime and wartime communication between high-level military leaders on both sides. In addition, the COMCASA could establish this capability between Indian and US military assets, including aircraft and ships and advancing USAF–IAF interoperability.

The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) has been pending for more than a decade. The BECA would set a framework through which the United States could share sensitive data to aid targeting and navigation with India and further advance interoperability.<sup>32</sup> COMCASA and BECA combined with PLA expansionism could eventually lead to India becoming a more capable member of the “Pacific Seniors” division of the “five eyes” signals intelligence arrangement. However, there is no indication that India will become a US ally and “sixth eye.”<sup>33</sup>

### **What Would India Like the United States and the USAF to Do?**

India would like the United States to develop a partnership of equals, respecting India’s strategic autonomy and substantial economic relations with China, which calls for a diplomatic approach toward Beijing rather than a military one.<sup>34</sup> Indian leaders and officials want to develop the country’s economic power first, with an increasing role in regional and global leadership. India is pleased with the recent US designation of Pakistani militants as terrorists and the withholding of counterterrorism funding from the Pakistani government. India’s preference would be for the US would continue to lead in building a multinational defense framework that would provide more security in the Indo-Pacific and counter the potential for PLA encirclement. The United States in cooperation with Japan and Australia would draw China’s attention toward East Asia and away from encroaching on Indian territory in the Himalayas and encirclement in the Indian Ocean; would work to

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\* This analysis of what India and the IAF would like the United States and USAF to do is derived from Indian government pronouncements and documents as well as interviews of Indian think-tank experts and IAF officials in New Delhi, November–December 2017.

maintain the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific; and would take the lead in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea, benefiting India’s “Act East” policy. In working with India to counter China’s encirclement strategy, the United States and India would ensure sustained oil and gas shipments from the Persian Gulf and protection of Indian nationals,<sup>35</sup> as well as develop defense and technological relations with Israel.<sup>36</sup> The United States would continue to lead in aiding Afghanistan and its military with substantial but low-key Indian assistance and hold open the door for India and its navy and eventually the IAF to cooperate in helping to provide security in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility in the western Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.<sup>37</sup> India is developing the port of Chabahar in Iran as a means of improving access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, which will enable it to provide more assistance to the regime in Kabul.<sup>38</sup>

India’s interests in the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia mean that its ambitions would gradually expand beyond South Asia and the Chinese frontier and that the IAF would eventually become more expeditionary with US and USAF assistance. The United States and USAF would continue to draw away from Pakistan and the PAF, so that India and the IAF would continue to maintain military and air superiority. The United States would partner with India in preparing for a possible two-front war against China and Pakistan, which would involve strategic dialogue, joint exercises, and upgraded and expanded forces.<sup>39</sup> The United States would continue to engage India in strategic-level discussions regarding the strengthening of theater missile defense against Pakistan and developing ballistic missile defense against China.<sup>40</sup> However, before the United States can transfer missile defense technology to India, Washington would need to change export control restrictions. The United States would start to partner with India in developing space defense, as well as cyber defense.<sup>41</sup>

New Delhi wants the United States to transfer as much technology as possible to enable the development of its aerospace industry and other high-end industries as part of India becoming a major strategic and economic power and to enable the IAF to eventually build a world-class air force.<sup>42</sup> India and the IAF would like the United States and USAF to assist in developing fourth- and fifth-generation combat aircraft and space and cyber capabilities, while benefiting Indian industries.<sup>43</sup> India would become increasingly competitive with China, which is developing fifth-generation fighters, ASAT weapons, and cyberwarfare capabilities. If New Delhi buys US fighter aircraft, the country would like to produce as much of the aircraft and their components at home, secure as much transfer of technology as

possible at a reasonable cost, and provide the basis for skilled job creation.<sup>44</sup> It is important to note here that US officials assess India's expectations in the aerospace sector as somewhat unrealistic.

Some Indian leaders would like the United States and USAF to assist in the development of the country's indigenous aerospace industry, which would propel the development of the strategic partnership.<sup>45</sup> There are those who would like the United States—which has an aerospace industry that remains head and shoulders above those of Russia, China, and others—to enable India to eventually produce world-class combat aircraft with state-of-the-art jet engines. They would like Washington and US defense industries to assist the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL),<sup>46</sup> which has been striving for decades to produce the Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) and other fighter planes and working with DRDO for many years to develop jet engines for more advanced, capable aircraft.<sup>47</sup>

In a shift in policy, the BJP government also would like Washington and US aerospace companies to engage with the private sector that is competing with HAL in the production of combat aircraft. For example, Tata Industries is teaming up with Lockheed Martin in a possible F-16 Block 70 deal that would provide the IAF with a “four-and-a-half generation multi-role combat aircraft (MRCA),”<sup>48</sup> and Mahindra Defence System (MDS) and HAL have linked up with Boeing for an F/A-18-E/F Super Hornet bid that would give both the IN and IAF an MRCA with greater than fourth-generation capabilities.<sup>49</sup> These companies are competing with the Ambani family's Reliance Group, which will be working with the French aircraft manufacturer Dassault Aviation to assemble in country the 36 Rafale multirole fighters that India recently purchased—with the prospect of more to come if the price could be lowered.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, MDS must compete with the Adani Group, which is working with Saab on a possible Gripen fighter deal in which the Swedish company would assist in developing the Tejas LCA and other HAL products. On a smaller scale, innovative start-up companies, especially in Bangalore, could open up opportunities to collaborate under the DTTI air systems JWG.

The IAF would like an equal partnership with the USAF with reciprocity, greater capabilities, and independence.<sup>51</sup> With the signing of COMCASA, the IAF might eventually want to develop a degree of interoperability with the USAF. The IAF would like the USAF to assist in developing strategy, upgrading joint exercises, and training to build more fighter squadrons. The USAF would assist in further developing IAF capabilities to counter the PLA and PLAAF. The United States and USAF would work with India and the IAF to acquire US aircraft that

meet the latter's operational requirements, as well as space and cyber capabilities.<sup>52</sup> Most of the IAF leadership is more concerned with capabilities and less so with the transfer of technology and development of indigenous industries. The IAF leadership has pushed for the emergency acquisition of 36 Rafale fighters due to a dire need for aircraft to maintain a bare minimum number of squadrons. The IAF would like more resources to increase the number of squadrons from approximately 32 to 42 and eventually move toward 60 squadrons.<sup>53</sup> The IAF is also interested in next-generation capabilities, including fifth-generation fighters with stealth and advanced munitions, radar, and e-warfare capabilities.<sup>54</sup> Finally, India and the IAF would like to acquire US armed unmanned aerial systems (UAS), particularly armed Predators or Sea Guardians.<sup>55</sup>

### **Challenges Confronting the Partnership and the IAF**

On the US side, the principal barriers to a stronger partnership are unrealistic expectations that India will become an ally, frustration over the lack of quick wins, and a complex Indian bureaucracy. In the past, some US officials have exhibited paternalism and impatience in their efforts to encourage India to become a dependent ally as some European countries are in NATO. In addition, while the US officials believe that India procuring the F-16 Block 70 is in the country's best interests, advocacy can create the impression that there is greater interest in arms sales than a partnership. India and the IAF want capable fighter aircraft, and there has been recent interest in eventually acquiring the F-35. However, Indian leaders remain cautious about making a major commitment to acquire US planes and being drawn into too close a relationship. On-again, off-again US relations with Pakistan has demonstrated inconsistency. In recent years, Washington has been moving away from Pakistan and taking a harder line toward China. However, the threat of US sanctions over New Delhi's purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system, which reportedly is capable of shooting down an F-35, has puzzled Indian officials.<sup>56</sup> With the finalization of the purchase in October 2018, the United States must decide if it should impose sanctions or grant a waiver (as expected).<sup>57</sup> In addition, US–Indian relations may worsen because of the threat of sanctions for the importation of Iranian oil and gas.<sup>58</sup>

The United States and USAF remains uncertain as to how they should engage in South Asia—and with India. Since 2001, Washington's focus in South Asia has been on Afghanistan. The problem that US policy makers have not historically seen South Asia as strategically important as East Asia, the Persian Gulf, or choke-

points such as the Strait of Malacca, Strait of Hormuz, and Bab al-Mandab Strait. The lack of vital national interests is one of the reasons that the US Department of Defense has placed India in USINDOPACOM (which focuses on East Asia) and Pakistan in USCENTCOM (which is concerned with Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf), creating a strategic seam that runs through South Asia. Thus, the United States has problems demonstrating consistent commitment in working with India and the IAF. Washington has been moving away from its “major non-NATO alliance” with Pakistan but needs to maintain a residual relationship to continue to operate in Afghanistan with the major lines of communication running from Karachi into Afghanistan.<sup>59</sup>

Indian officials and security experts increasingly view China as the greatest strategic challenge, while they see Pakistan as the most intense threat.<sup>60</sup> Washington wants India to engage to the east in the South China Sea and to the northwest in Afghanistan to help fight violent extremist organizations, both of which are in India’s vital interests. The United States has courted India as a potential partner in Afghanistan, but New Delhi has demurred, in part due to lack of financial resources and in part out of concern that Pakistan would escalate support for the Taliban and anti-Indian jihadists.

India’s commitment to strategic autonomy, electoral politics, and a bureaucratic culture remain the principal obstacles to the development of the IAF and relations with the United States and USAF. While Prime Minister Modi has cultivated the US partnership at the expense of his country’s commitment to nonalignment because of the challenge from China, some officials in the foreign policy and military establishments remain suspicious of Washington and its relations with Pakistan and China. While New Delhi is concerned about China’s strategic behavior, many in government and the business community do not want a confrontation between the two powers to escalate and harm the economy.<sup>61</sup>

India’s five-year election cycles mean that successive governments and parliament (the Lok Sabha) give intermittent attention to defense spending and IAF requirements and requests.<sup>62</sup> The political imperative is reflected in India’s purchase of multiple aircraft brands due to shifting criteria, difficulty articulating military requirements, and influence by foreign aerospace firms and governments.<sup>63</sup> Political factors also explain delays in acquiring sufficient aircraft to enable the IAF to maintain the 32 squadrons that it currently has, as well as preventing it from losing squadrons. The slowly expanding budget and shifting government priorities constrain the Indian Armed Forces, especially the IAF, regarding the size, scale,

and frequency of joint exercises.<sup>64</sup> In contrast, China’s defense budget has increased by an average of 10 percent annually for the past two decades, propelling the PLA and PLAAF well ahead of the Indian Armed Forces and IAF.

The structure of India’s government remains an obstacle to the development of the IAF and partnership with the USAF. India’s relatively small, conservative bureaucracy possesses comparatively little capacity to plan and monitor the development of the IAF and its relations with other air forces. In addition, the prime minister’s office, where most political power is concentrated, controls force-development deliberations and decisions and has been found to pay insufficient attention to strategic planning and force requirements.<sup>65</sup> US officials are concerned with India’s lack of a rigorous requirements definition process; they assess that New Delhi’s “requirements” are more specifications or lists, which means that Indian officials have not always thought out why they need a particular item or how they plan to use it. This makes it difficult for US officials to respond when there is a lack of clarity regarding what is desired.<sup>66</sup> The result of an underdeveloped requirements process has often been inappropriate choices of aircraft and other weapons systems. In addition, there are weak links between the country’s strategic planning and requirement generation and actual force development. Force development could be more effective if the government moved greater responsibility to India’s MoD through the still-to-be developed “Defence Staff,” which would work with the services to develop strategic planning and requirement generation.<sup>67</sup> A related problem is that the MoD has no real equivalent to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff to enhance political-military communication and coordination among the Indian Army, IAF, and IN in developing strategy and planning, requirement generation, acquisition, and budgeting.<sup>68</sup> The result is friction among the MoD and the services.<sup>69</sup>

Until these challenges are surmounted, India and the IAF will remain burdened by inconsistent, ad hoc force-development decisions that do not always lead to the most effective force and hinder the development of an equal partnership with the USAF.<sup>70</sup> The most glaring examples have been the process of acquiring 126 medium MRCA since 2004, the controversial 2011 United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government’s decision to buy French Dassault Rafale planes, and the Modi government’s controversial emergency purchase of 36 Rafale MRCA in 2015 after the original Dassault decision stalled. The MRCA procurement process was criticized on a number of grounds, especially that it violated defense procurement pol-

icy and specifically the government's "Make in India" and transfer of technology commitments.<sup>71</sup>

The Indian Army remains the dominant service, and there is weak "jointness" among the three services, leaving the IAF in a secondary position in operational planning and decision-making processes as well as resources and capabilities. It will take years of Indian government and IAF efforts to help the air force become a roughly co-equal service. The IN also is secondary to the Army in priority and resources, but it operates autonomously and has had the advantage of working with the USN for more than two decades in the Indian Ocean, which has led to the development of a shared strategic vision and steps toward interoperability. If the Indian government enables the IAF to become more autonomous and expeditionary and emulate the IN model, this would benefit engagement with the USAF.

The IAF leadership has a conservative organizational culture and vision that presents a challenge, which the USAF and IAF must overcome. This culture has hindered dynamic O-5s (wing commanders) and O-6s (group captains) who are striving to bring about change; also, when one-star general officers (air commodores) become two-star generals (air vice marshals), they tend to stop pushing for change and instead conform to the prevailing culture.<sup>72</sup> The result is that the IAF leadership has tended to persist in its traditional role of supporting the army in defense of the country against Pakistan with mostly aging Russian fighter aircraft.<sup>73</sup> The IAF leadership has tended to question the need for a wider regional vision and mission, which has resulted in slow movement toward organizational change and partnership with the USAF. It has also been slow in developing an expeditionary air force, even though the IAF has been developing ideas about an expeditionary capability since the Kargil War of 1999 and articulated the intention to do so in doctrine and policy statements in recent years. Also, the IAF has resisted developing long-range strategic bombing capability, even though the PLAAF could strike India with similar aircraft. Some in the IAF leadership question the growing threat from PLAAF and PAF capability advances, and the possibility of a two-front war, believing that only skirmishes will occur for the foreseeable future. While the IAF leadership has welcomed a deepening partnership with the United States and USAF, it questions the purpose of the US relationship with Pakistan.<sup>74</sup> A problem related to organizational culture is a lack of continuity and planning in the IAF, which is partly attributable to the generally uneven transition from one air chief marshal to another, weakness of the IAF staff, and lack of an IAF Secretariat. The weakness of planning is evidenced in the 15- and 5-year IAF plans, which the



MoD and the Prime Minister’s Office do not integrate into decision-making processes.<sup>75</sup> The disjointed planning, requirements, and force-development process contribute to why the IAF has been slow to modernize. However, with a concerted approach proposed herein, these challenges can be overcome.

Shortfalls in IAF capabilities are another obstacle to greater cooperation.<sup>76</sup> They include communications, air-space-cyber linkages, aerial refueling, and ISR, which limits the amount and sophistication of joint exercises and the development of interoperability.<sup>77</sup> The IAF has only recently been developing its Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEWCS),<sup>78</sup> which cannot match the long-standing and well-developed USAF Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS).<sup>79</sup> Most significantly, the IAF suffers from a shortage of squadrons and sophisticated combat aircraft that are needed to compete with the PLAAF and PAF and build cooperation with the USAF.<sup>80</sup> The IAF is currently at an estimated 32 squadrons, and the retirement of MiG-21 and MiG-27 aircraft by 2025 means that the IAF could have 28 or fewer squadrons.<sup>81</sup> Given the rising challenge from the PLAAF and PAF, Indian military planners estimate that the IAF will need 42 squadrons by 2027.<sup>82</sup> Given the PLAAF buildup in Tibet and superior combat aircraft, Ashley Tellis estimates that the IAF needs to double the number of squadrons to 60 by 2027.<sup>83</sup> In contrast, Laxman Behera observes that instead of building fighter squadrons, India could rely on missiles for defense and deterrence.<sup>84</sup> Even the goal of 42 squadrons will be difficult to achieve, given the Indian government’s defense budget shortfalls, slow procurement of combat aircraft, and questionable acquisition decisions that have resulted in multiple platforms that are difficult to maintain and operate. For example, the Modi government’s emergency purchase of 36 Rafale MRCA in 2015 to plug a gap in IAF capabilities cost an estimated \$200 million per plane, which will be virtually impossible to expand to fulfill the requirement of 126 planes and will add another aircraft type to the several that the IAF already has to maintain and operate.<sup>85</sup> Security experts have pointed out that India must use all means necessary to acquire more combat aircraft, and one has even suggested that the IAF should give up its attack helicopters to the army to have the resources to buy aircraft and build squadrons.<sup>86</sup>

A related obstacle for the IAF developing dominance and deterrence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean, in partnership with the USAF, is pressure from those in politics, government, and the think-tank world to develop India’s aerospace industry, especially HAL. To achieve this goal, these policy makers are willing to sacrifice significant short- to medium-term capability and future interoperability with

the USAF. These advocates assert that the HAL Tejas LCA is good enough to serve as the LCA in the immediate future and that it can be upgraded in the long run; the same applies to the HAL Sukhoi 30MKI heavy fighter and even the advanced medium combat aircraft that is still under development. Also, advocates for HAL argue that low-cost platforms such as the Tejas and Sukhoi MKI will enable the IAF to expeditiously develop more squadrons.<sup>87</sup> If India follows such a path, the IAF will struggle to generate enough highly capable combat aircraft to deter and possibly fight Pakistan and China. The proponents of indigenization over capability argue that the risk of war is low in the short term and that it is essential for India to develop jobs through a world-class combat aircraft industry over the long run. However, the intensity of the threat from Pakistan remains at an elevated level, and the challenge from China is growing. Thus, IAF leaders want quality over quantity—highly capable fighter aircraft rather than mediocre planes.

Some Indian and IAF leaders want more capability in the LCA and other combat aircraft and agree with aircraft experts who think that HAL will take too long to develop world-class jet engines and planes.<sup>88</sup> Many US officials and experts agree with IAF leaders that India needs capable fighter aircraft as soon as possible, given the growth of the PLAAF.<sup>89</sup> US officials have been hesitant about encouraging their Indian counterparts in regard to the Tejas, while remaining aware that HAL officials and some defense experts are proud of it. US officials think that the Tejas and indigenous jet engines are not as far along as HAL officials and others think they are and that their pride makes it difficult to cooperate when the US side has to be critical.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, US companies are limited in how they can support these indigenous programs.

The BJP government has opened the door to private companies to compete with HAL in the manufacture of fourth-generation combat aircraft. These companies include the Reliance Group, which is working with Dassault Aviation to assemble the Rafale MRCA in India; the Tata Group, which is working with Lockheed Martin to possibly manufacture F-16 Block 70 MRCA in India; and the Adani Group, which is working with Saab to manufacture the Gripen Block 50 MRCA in India.<sup>91</sup> While the insertion of private-sector competition has positive aspects, it also adds to political pressures on government decisions about combat aircraft and could slow down the acquisition process. Any MRCA acquisition must wait until after the 2019 election, and it could be 2022 before a contract can be signed—if there is not an economic downturn. It could be 2026 before aircraft are delivered to the IAF given new acquisition procedures. Lockheed Martin wants the produc-

tion line up and running in 2028 at the latest and wants Indian assurance that at least 100 F-16s will be produced.<sup>92</sup>

In contrast to the IAF, the PLAAF is moving ahead with the development of fifth-generation fighter aircraft and advanced sensors, weapons systems, and cyber capabilities. However, like India, China is encountering difficulties in manufacturing jet engines, trying to develop a fifth-generation stealth fighter by reverse engineering the Russian Sukhoi 35 (a four-and-a-half-generation stealth fighter) to upgrade the locally produced J-20.<sup>93</sup> Beijing is also prepared to fight in multiple domains, with the PLA likely to launch cyber attacks and ASAT warfare well before initiating a large-scale conventional offensive.<sup>94</sup> In addition, the PLAAF is building bases in Tibet that will help it to gain an increasing advantage over the IAF in the Himalayas<sup>95</sup> and protect Chinese mining enterprises on the Indian border.<sup>96</sup> China is increasing its defense budget and developing the PLAAF at a much faster rate than India and the IAF. The PLAAF is helping the PAF to develop ever-more capable fighter aircraft. This means that deterrence will be increasingly difficult to maintain. In the 2017 PLA standoff with the Indian military over the Doklam Plateau in the Himalayas, the PLAAF demonstrated a degree of air and space superiority.<sup>97</sup> As part of a possible Indian conflict with China, the IAF currently is planning for 10–15 days of combat with the PLAAF, with the expectation that there will be third-party intervention to stop hostilities.<sup>98</sup>

In conclusion, the challenges to a growing USAF–IAF partnership are considerable given the US and USAF’s focus on East Asia and the Persian Gulf and India and the IAF’s focus on Pakistan. India’s foreign policy uncertainty and bureaucratic deliberateness are a major impediment. The IAF’s focus on supporting the Indian Army make the partnership difficult to develop in a similar fashion as the USN and IN have in the Indian Ocean and adjacent waters. There are those who ask if the IAF’s baggage is too great as the first steps are taken to make it more strategic and expeditionary. However, the United States and India can use creative methods to surmount the challenges and build a stronger USAF–IAF partnership.

### **How Can the United States and India Be Creative in Strengthening the USAF–IAF Partnership?**

If the United States and USAF approach India and the IAF with the concept of “partnership first and platforms second,” it would serve as the basis for creatively developing relations. Such an approach enabled IN–USN relations to progress for more than two decades.<sup>99</sup> In contrast, while India acquiring combat aircraft from

the United States would benefit interoperability, putting aircraft first creates a paternalistic and transactional impression. Partnership first requires intensified, sustained engagement by the USAF leadership on the basis of equality and a process of developing a shared strategic outlook about the Indo-Pacific region through multipronged dialogue and a range of simulations,<sup>100</sup> especially tabletop war gaming with the IAF.<sup>101</sup> This would lead to larger and more complex joint exercises. While more, higher quality exercises are preferable, they should also be structured to demonstrate the value of interoperability and information sharing (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, C4ISR)—both cross-service and IAF/USAF. Such structuring will highlight the need for greater information and logistics sharing.<sup>102</sup>

If the United States and USAF were to implement a more concerted South Asia strategy and prioritize engagement with India and the IAF, this could eventually facilitate the development of aerospace dominance and deterrence by the IAF, USAF, and other allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. As China's assertive expansion continues, the USAF can use the US partnership with India, Japan, and Australia as a vehicle for developing a shared strategic vision with the IAF. Although India is reluctant to openly balance against China, multilateral defense cooperation provides a mechanism for sharing perspectives about how to deal with the rising power, its partners, and their air forces. The USAF and IAF can take part in multilateral defense meetings and use communiqués as the basis for developing a shared strategic outlook and multilateral exercises. The Quad's naval chiefs have met and deliberated together, which sets the stage for the four air force chiefs to follow suit.<sup>103</sup>

In developing a partnership with the IAF, the USAF can follow the example of the IN–USN partnership that the two services have developed and sustained through various phases of the US–India relationship and in which the two navies have cultivated a shared strategic vision. The USN—as the most expeditionary American service in the Indo-Pacific and the source for most USINDOPACOM combatant commanders—reached out in the 1990s to the IN and worked to develop their relationship through a range of navy-related think tanks and conferences.<sup>104</sup> Also, the IN and USN have engaged in a wide range of frequent tabletop war games, including HA/DR scenarios, to better grasp each other's strategic thinking and standard operating procedures, thereby developing shared strategic and operational visions and mounting more realistic, complex joint exercises.<sup>105</sup> Following the IN–USN example, the USAF and IAF engaging in larger, more

complex joint exercises, including HA/DR, and based upon extensive simulations will help develop the partnership.<sup>106</sup> PACAF is making progress on this front, though it remains focused on the South China Sea. For example, the USAF could assist the IAF in developing contingency gaming models to figure out structures of cooperation and doctrine to prepare for the possibility of a two-front conventional conflict. There could be an exercise in northern India involving US AWACS and ISR assets.<sup>107</sup> India and the United States have committed the IAF and USAF to be integrated eventually into Exercise Malabar with the IN and USN. Washington could also elevate the Indian Armed Forces, including the IAF, to full-participant status in Exercise Cobra Gold in Thailand.<sup>108</sup> However, to make integration effective, the air forces would first have to deal with the cognitive level and extensive war gaming before engaging in such a complex exercise.<sup>109</sup> The IAF and USAF could eventually work out a mechanism to join with the IN and USN to use in countering aggressive moves by China. This could be a joint defense of the SLOCs or a distant blockade beyond PLAAF and People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) air range, while seeking to avoid escalation in a complex and adaptive environment.<sup>110</sup> Washington and New Delhi need to work out how much there should be a division-of-labor approach as against striving for interoperability. For example, the IN with IAF support could increasingly share the burden of patrolling the Gulf of Aden with the United States and its allies. The IAF’s primary focus should remain on deterring China from encroaching on its territory, with possible US support in a contingency. For instance, if the confrontation on Doklam Plateau spirals into a shooting war, the United States could provide logistical support.<sup>111</sup>

The USN has demonstrated cooperation with the USAF in the development of strategy and joint operational concepts that can be useful in the development of an IAF-IN-USAF-USN relationship. For example, the USAF and USN have worked together in strategic planning and in developing the “Air Sea Battle” and Joint Access Measures-Global Commons (JAM-GC) operational concepts and building joint exercises around them, especially in the Indo-Pacific, to counter “Anti-Access and Area Denial” (A2/AD) strategies and operational concepts and capabilities. The USAF and the USN can work with the IAF and IN in developing India’s joint strategy and operational concepts, including anti-A2/AD.<sup>112</sup> Also, the USN has worked with the USAF to become more expeditionary in the Indo-Pacific, especially in Southeast Asia. The USAF and USN can work with the IAF and IN to develop joint expeditionary operations.<sup>113</sup>

If the USAF were to elevate the level of its relationship with the IAF to the Headquarters Air Force (HAF) level with more engagement by the USAF Chief of Staff (CSAF) and Secretary of the USAF (SECAF), it would lead to greater mutual respect and provide a boost of confidence as the IAF seeks to become regionally dominant. Already, CSAF Gen David L. Goldfein visited India in February 2018, but the relationship would advance further if it were institutionalized at a higher level through the SECAF and Under Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs (SAF/IA) and their Indian counterparts.<sup>114</sup> Engaging with the IAF at all levels—top, mid, and bottom—would better enable the partnership to advance. In regard to bilateral ties, there are multiple points of contact that the USAF could pursue, including the IAF Air Warfare Strategy Cell, the Centre for Air Power Studies, and other think tanks.<sup>115</sup> If the USAF leadership would promote the discussion of strategic perspectives in various fora and through multiple nodes, including think tanks and a Track II dialogue involving USAF and IAF civilians and retired senior officers, the two air forces could more easily come to agreement on mutual concerns in the region, including Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf. Among topics for discussion could be how the IAF could cooperate with the USAF and USN in defense of the security of the Gulf, common concerns about multidomain warfare and A2/AD, and the development of strategic nuclear forces and deterrence.<sup>116</sup>

Offering more professional military education (PME) and exchanges to the IAF would help build capacity and advance the partnership. This includes working with the IAF to send more officers and noncommissioned officers (NCO) to USAF PME institutions, including the use of more International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds. Arranging to send a large number of IAF officers at the O-3 (captain) level to the USAF Squadron Officer School, as well as senior NCOs to the USAF Barnes Center, would increase much-needed critical thinking skills and familiarization with USAF tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP).<sup>117</sup> However, such an expansion should be made in concert with engagement with senior IAF leaders to help avoid confusion when junior officers return to India.

More USAF officers and NCOs attending IAF PME schools would familiarize them with IAF TTPs. Such exchanges would bring greater familiarity and development of a shared vision, especially as both air forces are building and revitalizing squadrons. Visa-free official travel for IAF and USAF personnel to each other's country would make exchanges easier and a goodwill gesture. Exchanges by senior USAF and IAF leaders will also build goodwill and trust in the development of the

partnership. For example, in February 2018, CSAF Goldfein responded positively to Indian overtures to either fly the HAL Tejas MK-1 LCA or the HAL Sukhoi MKI; ultimately, he flew the Tejas and was reportedly impressed.<sup>118</sup> If USAF leaders continue such initiatives, they would foster stronger relations. Also, the USAF could reciprocate by having IAF leaders fly the F-35,<sup>119</sup> especially as some Indian leaders have expressed interest in exploring the acquisition of the aircraft as a fifth-generation fighter in the next decade.<sup>120</sup>

At the combatant command level, the renaming of USPACOM as USIN-DOPACOM places a greater emphasis on India and the Indian Ocean and signals the intention of the command and its air component to engage more with the Indian Armed Forces and the IAF. An invitation to the IAF to station liaison officers at USINDOPACOM would help to operationalize this opportunity. If the United States were to invite India to participate more in USCENTCOM and the IAF to develop relations with AFCENT, the US–India partnership would move forward in the Persian Gulf, where both countries have vital interests.<sup>121</sup> If AFCENT was to advocate for the IAF to have a liaison officer at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, it could open the door to greater engagement by India, not only in the Gulf but also Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Working with India and the IAF to increase logistics and information sharing would advance the strategic and operational aspects of the partnership.<sup>122</sup> The LEMOA will enhance joint exercises involving the IAF and USAF and focusing on HA/DR scenarios. Eventually, the LEMOA could provide access for the USAF and IAF to additional FOLs in the Indo-Pacific and the development of the quadrilateral partnership, building the potential to deter China. Working with India in operationalizing the COMCASA would enable the United States to supply India with proprietary encrypted communications equipment and systems. This would enable the USAF and IAF to secure peacetime and wartime communication between their leaders. COMCASA would extend this capability to Indian and US military assets, including IAF and USAF aircraft. The BECA would set a framework through which the United States could share sensitive data to aid in targeting by the IAF.<sup>123</sup> Greater information sharing could eventually lead to Indian entry into a deeper intelligence partnership with the United States, which would help the IAF.

The State Partnership Program (SPP) provides the USAF with another way of engaging with the IAF.<sup>124</sup> The SPP enables the Air National Guards (ANG) of US states to interact with other air forces, largely independently of the active duty

USAF. The SPP and the ANG's flexible, state-based funding stream has facilitated rapid engagement in many cases. Another advantage is that ANG personnel are relatively permanent and are able to engage with their partner countries for a sustained period, building relationships. ANGs also specialize in civil defense and HA/DR, which are also concerns for the IAF and would be the basis for joint exercises. With a large country like India and a large air force like the IAF, it would be preferable for a large ANG from a large US state to engage. The Texas ANG would be one possibility; with the 136th Airlift Wing and its eight C-130 H2s, it would be ideal to engage in HA/DR exercises with the IAF. In addition, the Texas ANG has F-16 Block 32s that it could use to familiarize the IAF with the aircraft. This arrangement could lead the IAF to lease 50 F-16 Block 32s for five years while waiting for the possible acquisition of the more advanced F-16 Block 70s in the next decade.



**Figure 3. State Partnership Program.** Czech Alcas and US F-16s sit side by side on the ramp at Caslav Air Base, Czech Republic. Members of the Texas Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Wing were in the Czech Republic conducting mutual training as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program. Similar ventures with the IAF would foster a deeper USAF-IAF relationship. (US Air Force photo by SMSgt Miguel Arellano)



If the United States and USAF were to engage with India in multiple domains, such overtures could facilitate cooperation in space and cyber to meet various challenges from China and other strategic competitors. In space, the United States and USAF can work with the India's Integrated Space Cell, which includes the IAF, in developing countermeasures to deter China from launching ASAT attacks and other forms of space warfare.<sup>125</sup> US and Indian satellites could be used to track PLAN ballistic missile submarines in the Indian Ocean. The USAF can use its considerable experience to work with other US agencies in assisting DRDO to develop missile defense.<sup>126</sup> The USAF can work with other US agencies in assisting India's Cyber Command, which includes the IAF, to counter China's cyber attacks.

While emphasizing the development of an IAF–USAF strategic partnership above platforms and transfer of technology, the latter are also part of developing stronger relations. A relevant example is the development of the USN–IN partnership, during which India purchased naval hardware from the United States to enable the IN to become more capable and thereby achieved a modest degree of interoperability with the USN.<sup>127</sup> In regard to technology and arms sales, DTTI and JWG's will continue to familiarize the Indian bureaucracy with US policies and procedures and should smooth the way to greater transfer of technology, while the United States remains able to secure its vital secrets. If the DTTI and JWG's would enable their Indian counterparts' practices in the MoD and IAF to improve strategic planning, force development and acquisition, it would provide the basis for the timelier and logical procurement of aircraft and other items. In turn, this would lead to the long-term development of an IAF–USAF partnership. If as much transfer of technology as possible is made, it would advance the partnership and India's defense capacity. The United States and USAF continuing to develop multiple ways to assist the IAF in developing capabilities, such as AWACS and UAS, should eventually lead to the development of the IAF as a world-class air force. In regard to UAS, the United States currently is only willing to sell India an ISR-capable Predator B (Sea Guardian) and not an armed Predator. With the development of the IAF–USAF partnership, trust can be developed that could eventually allow the United States to sell armed Predators to India.<sup>128</sup>

In regard to platforms, India agreeing to the purchase of US MRCA—either the F-16 Block 70 or F/A-18-E/F Super Hornet—would provide the IAF with a capability of “generation four plus” and transfer of US technology that India could use to eventually achieve interoperability with the USAF.<sup>129</sup> Boeing linking with MDS and HAL to coproduce Super Hornets holds out the prospect of IAF–IN–USN

interoperability and would open the door for Boeing to work with HAL in attempting to upgrade the Tejas as a LCA.<sup>130</sup> Lockheed Martin's 2016 agreement with Tata to coproduce F-16 Block 70 MRCA made the aircraft attractive to India, which could produce parts for F-16s worldwide,<sup>131</sup> and would enhance prospects for interoperability with the USAF.<sup>132</sup> Indian defense experts observe that the F-16 would fit well into expanded IAF squadrons. An F-16 Block 70 deal would increase the chances for India working with Lockheed Martin to acquire and coproduce the F-35, which the IAF is exploring as a possible MRCA of the 2030s. One consideration is that Lockheed Martin is shutting down F-16 production in the United States in less than five years; so, India needs to make a commitment after the 2019 elections.<sup>133</sup>

In trying to sell MRCA to India, the United States and its companies are competing with Sweden and Saab, which are selling the Gripen and offering to help HAL develop the Tejas LCA into a more capable fighter and India acquire the Meteor air-to-air missile,<sup>134</sup> which is attractive to the IAF.<sup>135</sup> Given the competition, it would be wise for US agencies to judiciously increase the amount of technology that can be transferred to India, select companies, and devise an arrangement so Lockheed Martin and/or Boeing would assist those companies and DRDO in developing technology for Indian combat aircraft.<sup>136</sup>

In conclusion, India deciding to acquire US MRCA would constitute an important step forward in the relationship. However, even if India moves in a different direction, the United States and USAF engaging with India and the IAF to build the strategic partnership would still pay dividends.

## **Conclusion: The Future of USAF–IAF Partnership and Deterrence in the Indo-Pacific**

This article has provided analysis of what the two countries and air forces want from a partnership and the barriers to realizing stronger relations and a more capable IAF. Additionally, the article has put forward recommendations for how the United States and USAF can creatively engage with their Indian peers. It is evident that both sides want a stronger partnership but for somewhat different reasons and at different levels and rates of speed. The challenges are considerable, but with the right amount of will and creative effort, the United States and USAF are capable of working with India and the IAF to overcome those obstacles and move the relationship forward. Washington has signaled that it is prepared to exert greater will

through the renaming of USPACOM and efforts to try to make India part of a strong quadrilateral partnership.

Given the rising level of US interest and will, the prospects for the development of USAF–IAF cooperation are positive. Going forward, there are three likely scenarios: (1) incremental development in which both sides continue to build the USAF–IAF partnership, with occasional lulls; (2) aggression by China against India that moves New Delhi and Washington toward a stronger partnership or an alliance and USAF–IAF interoperability; and (3) aggression by China against India leading the United States to move slowly toward an alliance commitment and the USAF not becoming interoperable with the IAF. Based upon recent trends, there is a greater than 50-percent chance that “scenario one” will continue to prevail, despite US efforts to push toward a strong partnership and NATO-like interoperability between the IAF and USAF. Incremental development would continue as it has between 2002 and 2008 and 2014 to the present and occasionally plateau again as from 2008–2014, depending on the political situation. Although China continues to encroach in the Himalayas and build relationships in the Indian Ocean region and with Russia, there is little indication that such activities will escalate toward open conflict.<sup>137</sup> However, if conflict does ensue, Washington will have to choose either to move toward a stronger partnership or alliance commitments to India or refrain from them. While the United States and USINDOPACOM have indicated that they want a strong partnership and interoperability with the Indian Armed Forces, making commitments to India may be a bridge too far given existing US alliances.

US and USAF engagement with India and the IAF can eventually lead to greater burden sharing, deterrence, and regional dominance in the Indo-Pacific. Burden sharing is necessary for the United States, with greater security interests in East Asia and the Persian Gulf than in the Indian Ocean and South Asia. Countering the continued rise of China and Beijing’s incipient strategy of eventually dominating Eurasia, including the energy producing Gulf, and the Indo-Pacific will require burden sharing and stronger partnership, including the USAF and IAF. The development of deterrence of China in the region will require a quadrilateral partnership in which the four armed forces and air forces commit themselves to acting in concert in case the PLA and PLAAF acts aggressively in one area of the Indo-Pacific. Regional dominance will require a strong quadrilateral partnership, including the expeditious buildup of the IAF with US and USAF assistance. US and Indian leaders need to constantly stress that India is a lynchpin of the Quad.<sup>138</sup>

The IAF and USAF can play a role in preventing China from achieving dominance by developing a shared strategy, interoperability, and the capability to deter China from further encroaching in the Himalayas and encircling India in the Indian Ocean. Multilateral defense cooperation is the optimal way in which the IAF can assist in fielding a regionally or globally dominant air force in a changing world with increased challenges and enhance deterrence in Indo-Pacific region. A USAF–IAF partnership could enhance deterrence prospects in South Asia and the Indian Ocean in relation to China. Ultimately, deterrence works better in the quadrilateral framework with Japan and Australia—and even better when Vietnam and Indonesia are added to the equation.

In overcoming obstacles, the United States and USAF can undertake initiatives to help arrest the decline of the IAF and help it to become a regionally dominant force. As the number of fighter squadrons is declining and remedial measures have proven insufficient to plug the gap, the United States and USAF can assist with training and equipment, including working toward selling US MRCA to India, which would enable training and squadron development to proceed faster. US engagement could also provide the IAF with a substantial capability boost, with DTTI and other bilateral mechanisms to develop ISR, PED, and AWACS. The role of Office of the Secretary of Defense and HAF in helping IAF and MoD to develop is worthwhile but will be a long and continuing process. The departments of State and Commerce and SAF/IA should work with Lockheed Martin and/or Boeing to facilitate greater transfer of technology, while safeguarding US national security.

In closing, the US should continue to build the partnership with India and the IAF primarily through various forms of dialogue, simulations, and exercises as well as security assistance and exchanges. The USAF and the air components in the Indo-Pacific and Persian Gulf can lead in partner development, while avoiding a paternalistic and transactional relationship. Secondly, Washington should promote US combat aircraft with the aim of the USAF developing interoperability with the IAF. The United States should work with India and the IAF to reverse the decline in the number of fighter squadrons and begin building the IAF into what eventually could be a regionally dominant force. **JIPA**

## Notes

1. While US and Indian officials have discussed missile defense since 2002, thus far there has been no cooperation between the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency and its Indian counterpart. Additionally, while US–India space cooperation has developed since 2004, there is not yet cooperation on military space issues.

2. Dr. Abhijit Iyer-Mitra, Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, and Angad Singh, Zone5Aviation, interview by the author, 28 November 2017. However, communications in most joint exercises remain underdeveloped—often conducted over mobile phone.

3. Ibid. The USN and IN have mutually acculturated, cross-pollinated ideas, and engaged in joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations. However, there is little interoperability, especially for joint freedom of navigation operations (FONOPS), and the prospect of joint antisubmarine warfare (ASW) operations is even further in the future.

4. Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, December 2017), 45–47, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>. This analysis of what the United States wants India and the IAF to do is derived from the 2017 NSS, 2018 National Defense Strategy, posture statements of USINDOPACOM, news from the PACAF–IAF steering group meeting, and interviews with officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs, and US Embassy, New Delhi.

5. Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan, director, National Maritime Foundation, interview by the author, 11 December 2017. The admiral noted that the IAF has the vision to become more strategic and expeditionary but that the logistic burden is great.

6. US officials, interviews by the author, New Delhi, 5 December 2017. Some observed that the PLA's offensive actions on the Doklam Plateau in Summer 2017 could be a “game-changer” in US–Indian relations had led Indian officials, including the IAF Chief, into a closer relationship with their US counterparts and to discussions about a future “alliance”.

7. Subimal Bhattecharjee, “2+2 Will Revitalize US–India Defence Ties,” *The Hindu*, 14 September 2018, <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/22-will-revitalise-indo-us-defence-ties/article24948626.ece>. “The announcement at the 2+2 dialogue of the creation of a new, tri-services exercise and to further increase personnel exchanges between the two militaries and defence organisations is a major development and is expected to happen next year. . . . Clearly these exercises will also have the benefit of COMCASA [the Communication and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement] in terms of enabling better interoperability.”

8. Ajai Shukla, journalist and a retired colonel of Indian Army, interview by the author, New Delhi, 12 December 2017.

9. US official, to the author, e-mail, 17 September 2018. Two more collaborative opportunities are in the field discussions stage: high-altitude human performance testing and psychological assessment and training.

10. Chauhan interview.

11. US official, to the author, e-mail, 17 September 2018.

12. Michael D. Swaine, “Creating an Unstable Asia: The U.S. ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ Strategy,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Security, 2 March 2018, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2018/03/02/creating-unstable-asia-u.s.-free-and-open-indo-pacific-strategy-pub-75720>.

13. Office of the Spokesperson, US Pacific Command, “Joint Statement from the US Department of State and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka on the Second US–Sri Lanka Partnership Dialogue” (joint statement, Washington, DC, 6 November 2017), <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/1364170/joint-statement-from-the-us-department-of-state-and-the-ministry-of-foreign-aff/>.

14. Stephen F. Burgess and Janet Beilstein, “Multilateral Defense Cooperation in the Indo-Asia-Pacific Region: Tentative Steps toward a Regional NATO?,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 39, no. 2 (2018), 258–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2017.1386953>.

15. Wyatt Olson, “US Fleet Forces Commander to Replace PACOM Head Harris,” *Stars and Stripes*, 10 April 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/us-fleet-forces-commander-tapped-to-replace-pacom-head-harris-1.521394>.

16. House, *Statement of Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr., U.S. Navy Commander, U.S. Pacific Command Before the House Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture*, 114th Cong., 2nd sess., 24 February 2016, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20160224/104587/HHRG-114-AS00-Wstate-HarrisH-20160224.pdf>.

17. MSgt George Maddon, “U.S., Indian Air Forces Solidify Cooperation through Steering Group,” *Pacific Air Forces*, 16 December 2016, <https://www.pacaf.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1032996/US-Indian-air-forces-solidify-cooperation-through-steering-group/>.

18. US officials, interview by the author, New Delhi, 5 December 2017. USINDOPACOM is making efforts to raise the level of discussion from the tactical to strategic level.

19. Bhattharcharjee, “2+2 Will Revitalize US–India Defence Ties.”

20. According to US officials, the USAF has not yet developed space and cyberspace partnerships with the Indian military, but there are efforts under way to do so.

21. Rajat Pandit, “To Up Efficiency, Centre Gives DRDO More Financial Powers,” *Times of India*, 28 June 2018, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/to-up-efficiency-centre-gives-drdo-more-financial-powers/articleshow/64770965.cms>. This was done to “enhance its efficiency and effectiveness’ but the body requires a drastic overhaul rather than just mere tinkering to ensure India develops a robust defence-industrial base in the years ahead.” Also, US officials interview, 5 December 2017, who—among others—commented that DRDO was being criticized for focusing more on emerging technologies and less on applied research for the services, including the IAF, which can only do basic maintenance on its C-130Js.

22. Richard Weitz, *Promoting U.S.-Indian Defense Cooperation: Opportunities and Obstacles* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, 7 June 2017), 13–18, <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1355>.

23. Ashley J. Tellis, *Troubles They Come in Battalions: The Manifold Travails of the Indian Air Force* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2106), [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Tellis\\_IAF\\_final.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Tellis_IAF_final.pdf) Ashley Tellis is a US strategist and architect of the US-India Strategic Partnership that developed under the administration of President George W. Bush.

24. Samir Nair and Guru Amrit Khalsa, “Toward U.S.–India Missile Defense Cooperation,” *cogitASIA* (blog), 6 June 2013, <https://www.cogitasia.com/toward-u-s-india-missile-defense-cooperation/>.

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26. Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, “FACT SHEET: Framework for the U.S.–India Cyber Relationship,” 7 June 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/07/fact-sheet-framework-us-india-cyber-relationship>.

27. James Carafano, Walter Lohman, David Inserra, Dean Cheng, Riley Walters, Paul Rosenzweig, and Steven Bucci, “Trump–Modi Agenda for Next Steps in U.S.–India Cybersecurity Cooperation,” *Heritage Foundation*, 1 May 2017, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/trump-modi-agenda-next-steps-us-india-cybersecurity-cooperation>.

28. Ashley J. Tellis, Alison Szalwinski, Michael Wills, and John H. Gill, *Power, Ideas, and Military Strategy in the Asia-Pacific* (Washington, DC: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2017). India needs to develop an automated logistics system.

29. “LEMOA Comes in Force, US Tanker Refuels Indian Navy Ship in the Sea of Japan; Know What the Memorandum Is All About,” *Financial Express*, 11 November 2017, <https://www.financialexpress>.

com/india-news/lemao-comes-in-force-us-tanker-refuels-indian-navy-ship-in-the-sea-of-japan-know-what-the-memorandum-is-all-about/928773/.

30. Darshana M. Baruah, “The Andaman and Nicobar Islands: India’s Eastern Anchor in a Changing Indo-Pacific,” *War on the Rocks*, 21 March 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/the-andaman-and-nicobar-islands-indias-eastern-anchor-in-a-changing-indo-pacific/>. India’s Andaman and Nicobar Command is in the process of development and could host joint IN-IAF-Indian Army exercises, but the islands’ infrastructure needs to be upgraded.

31. According to US officials, the Indian media have been overly optimistic about what COMCASA will be able to achieve. *See for example*, “Seven Reasons Why COMCASA Is so Important for India,” *Economic Times*, 7 September 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/seven-reasons-why-comcasa-is-so-important-for-india/articleshow/65707682.cms>.

32. Ankit Panda, “LSA, CISMOA, BECA and the Future of the US–India Defense Partnership,” *The Diplomat*, 7 April 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/04/lsa-cismoa-beca-and-the-future-of-the-us-india-defense-partnership/>.

33. Ryan Gallagher, “The Powerful Global Spy Alliance You Never Knew Existed,” *The Intercept*, 1 March 2018, <https://theintercept.com/2018/03/01/nsa-global-surveillance-sigint-seniors/>. India became a member of SIGINT Seniors Pacific Division when it was founded in 2005 to fight terrorism. However, Indian signals intelligence officers leaked intelligence in 2008, which caused problems for upgrading to a higher SIGINT status.

34. Raji Rajagopalan and Abhijnan Rej, roundtable, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 6 December 2017. India must contend with evidence that China is winning the economic competition in Asia, with Beijing’s high volume of regional trade and investment and with the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Belt and Road Initiative. Most Southeast and South Asian nations are finding it hard to resist China’s politico-economic influence.

35. Brigadier Arun Sahgal, Indian Army, retired, and Lt Gen Anil Ahuja, Indian Army, retired, interview by the author, Delhi Policy Group, New Delhi, 5 December 2017. Currently, India is concerned about the blockade of Qatar by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

36. Rupam Jain, “Israel’s Netanyahu Eyes Trade, Defense Ties on Trip to India,” Reuters, 12 January 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-israel/israels-netanyahu-eyes-trade-defense-ties-on-india-trip-idUSKBN1F11SD>. Indian interests in Southwest Asia also include its increasingly close defense ties with Israel.

37. Dhruva Jaishankar, Brookings India, interview by the author, 11 December 2017. In regard to India’s interests in its diaspora and energy and complex cooperation with Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, the country has a clearer “look and act west” policy than its official “Act East” policy toward the “messy East” with the “Quad” and trying to counter China and the PLA. It is possible that the Indian Navy will be able to replenish from a base in Oman by 2022.

38. Catherine Putz, “Iran Scores a Chabahar Port Exemption in an India and Afghanistan-Inspired Sanctions Exemption,” *The Diplomat*, 8 November 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/irans-chabahar-port-scores-an-india-and-afghanistan-inspired-sanctions-exemption/>; and “U.S. Exempts Iran’s Chabahar Port from Sanctions in Nod to Afghanistan,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 7 November 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/us-exempts-iran-chabahar-port-project-from-sanction-in-nod-to-afghanistan-india/29586874.html>.

39. Ashley J. Tellis, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Security, telephone interview by the author, 15 November 2017.

40. Nair and Khalsa, “Toward U.S.–India Missile Defense Cooperation.”

41. Raghuvanshi, “India Kick-Starts Military Satellite Programs”; and ET Bureau, “India, US Renew Agreement for Cyber Security Coordination,” *Economic Times*, 11 January 2017, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-us-renew-agreement-for-cyber-security-coordination/article-show/56484102.cms>.

42. Discussions at the Centre for Airpower Studies (CAPS) and Indian Air Force Headquarters, New Delhi, December 2017. There was interest in hypersonic and unmanned aerial system (UAS) technologies, among other technologies.

43. US officials, Washington, DC, to the author, e-mail, 26 September and 2 October 2018; and US officials, conversations with the author, US Embassy, New Delhi, December 2017. These officials voiced skepticism about India developing its own fourth and fifth-generation combat aircraft, given the under-performance of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in the sector. Instead, the view is that it is in India’s interest to purchase the F-16 Block 70 and/or F/A-18-E/F as the optimal way of enhancing India’s air combat capabilities in a timely manner.

44. US officials, conversations with the author, New Delhi, 5 December 2017. US officials commented that Indian government contracts often fall apart and that they are not willing to pay the price for new technology.

45. Air Marshal M. Matheswaran, IAF, retired, Matheswaran Strategic Consulting, interview by the author, New Delhi, 6 December 2017.

46. HAL is an Indian state-owned aerospace and defense company headquartered in Bangalore, India, and under the management of the MoD.

47. US officials, interview by the author, New Delhi, December 2017. The United States has no interest in transferring valuable jet engine technology to HAL and DRDO, which have struggled but failed for more than three decades to develop competitive jet engines.

48. US officials, interview by the author, New Delhi, India, December 2017; and Sahgal and Ahuja interview. There is prejudice against the F-16 Block 70. For example, one retired air vice marshal, who is now a defense consultant, pined that India would be acquiring “third-generation” combat aircraft, when it would actually be procuring four-and-a-half-generation ones. Others thought the Pakistan F-16 Block 30 (a third-generation aircraft) would be equivalent to the F-16 Block 70.

49. Sanjeev Miglani, Jamie Freed, “India Eying Boeing’s Super Hornet in Latest Twist to Air Force Procurement,” *Reuters*, 14 March 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-boeing-analysis/india-eying-boeings-super-hornet-in-latest-twist-to-air-force-procurement-idUSKCN1GR081>.

50. Rajat Pandit, “Government Says Rafale Cost Secret, but Had Disclosed It in 2016,” *Times of India*, 7 February 2018, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/government-says-rafale-cost-secret-but-had-disclosed-it-in-2016/articleshow/62812165.cms>.

51. A common theme from interviews in India in November–December 2017 was that India and the IAF valued partnership with the USAF over interoperability.

52. Discussions at the Centre for Airpower Studies (CAPS) and Indian Air Force Headquarters, December 2017.

53. US official, to the author, e-mail, 28 September 2018. The USAF is in the process of building more squadrons and revitalizing others, which provides an area for partnership going forward.

54. Royal Australian Air Force, “Five Generations of Jet Fighter Aircraft,” *Pathfinder: Air Power Development Centre Bulletin* 170 (January 2012), <http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/APDC/media/PDF-Files/Pathfinder/PF170-Five-Generations-of-Jet-Fighter-Aircraft.pdf>. This article classifies aircraft as follows: **fourth-generation fighters**: developed from 1970 to the late 1980s, feature head-up displays, fly-by-wire, swing-role fighters and include the following aircraft: MiG-29, Su-27, F/A-18, F-15, F-16, and Mi-



rage 2000. **Four-and-a-half-generation fighters:** from the late 1980s into the 1990s (fell short of a fifth-generation fighter due to budget cutbacks), feature stealth technology, radar-absorbent materials, thrust vectoring, active electronically scanned array radar, network warfare, and capable of multirole missions and include the F/A-18-E/F, F-15SE, Eurofighter Typhoon, Saab Gripen, and Dassault Rafale. **Fifth-generation fighters:** from 2005, feature stealth technology, multispectral sensors, and networking and include the F-22, F-35, PAK FA (Su-57), and Chengdu J-20. See also, John A. Tirpak, “The Sixth Generation Fighter,” *Air Force Magazine*, October 2009, <http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2009/October%202009/1009fighter.aspx>. Tirpak classifies the fighters as follows:

- 4th—features pulse Doppler radar, high maneuverability, and look-down/shoot-down missiles and includes the F-15, F-16, Mirage 2000, MiG-29. 4th plus – features high agility, sensor fusion, and reduced radar signature and includes the Eurofighter Typhoon, Su-30, F/A-18-E/F, and Rafale.
- 4th plus—features active electronically scanned arrays; continued reduced signatures or “active” (waveform canceling) stealth technology, and super-cruise and includes the Su-35 and proposed F-15SE.
- 5th—features all-aspect stealth with internal weapons bays, extreme agility, full-sensor fusion, integrated avionics, and some or full super-cruise and includes the F-22 and F-35.

55. US official, to the author, e-mail, 5 December 2017; and Rajat Pandit, “Satellite Control Set to Give Armed Drones More Sting,” *Times of India*, 22 September 2018. The United States and India are in the advanced stages of purchasing the armed Predator-B or Sea Guardian UAS.

56. “With CAATSA, the U.S. Is Trying to Make Russia Hurt,” *Stratfor*, 28 May 2018. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/situation-report/china-russia-airborne-security-cooperation-continues>.

57. “India, Russia Formally Ink the \$5.2 Billion Deal for S-400 Air Defence System,” *Economic Times*, 5 October 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-russia-formally-ink-the-5-2-billion-deal-for-the-s-400/articleshow/66082930.cms>.

58. Press Trust of India, “India to Continue to Iranian Oil Imports Post-US Sanctions,” *Economic Times*, 5 October 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/india-to-continue-iranian-oil-imports-post-us-sanctions/articleshow/66088584.cms>.

59. Lexington, “The President Was Never Going to Smile on Pakistan,” *The Economist*, 8 December 2018, <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2018/12/08/the-president-was-never-going-to-smile-on-pakistan>.

60. T. V. Paul, “Explaining Conflict and Cooperation in the China-India Rivalry,” in *The China-India Rivalry in the Globalization Era*, ed., T. V. Paul (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018), 5.

61. Sahgal and Ahuja interview. They see the most likely scenario being China succeeding through Belt and Road in subordinating Asian states; the next most likely outcome being the Quad leading in balancing against China; and least likely, China hitting a growth wall.

62. Laxman Behera, Institute for Defence and Security Analyses, interview by the author, New Delhi, 26 November 2018.

63. Sahgal and Ahuja interview. India’s relatively weak industrial base explains the failure to develop combat aircraft and jet engines.

64. *Ibid.* IAF participation in the USAF Red Flag exercise cost 1 billion dollars.

65. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview. Prime Minister Modi plays the dominant decision-making role in the prime minister's office and projects the government's position, with the national security advisor, Ajit Doval, subordinate to him.

66. US official, to the author, e-mail, 5 December 2017. This official provides the following examples: Indian officials have requested "roll-on/roll-off kits for C-130s but are not sure which ones they want; electro-magnetic launchers for aircraft carriers they but do not know what sortie rate they are trying to achieve; and sonobuoy dispensers on unmanned aerial systems but are not sure how they want to use them."

67. Bharat Karnad, Centre for Policy Research, interview by the author, 30 November 2017.

68. Shukla interview. The MoD has made no attempt to create a defense acquisition specialization as exists in the US Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). The lack of such a specialization will hamper the efforts of the DTTI JWs to upgrade Indian acquisition procedures. The key official for DTTI in MoD is Shri Shambhu Kumaran, Joint Secretary for Planning and International Cooperation (JSPIC).

69. Dhruva Jaishankar, Brookings India, interview by the author, 11 December 2017. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is better integrated with the military than the MoD. There are serving military officers in the MEA.

70. Behera interview.

71. Amit Cowshish, "Defence Acquisition: Procurement Procedure Separate from Procurement Policy," *Economic Times* (blog post), 24 November 2017, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-commentary/defence-acquisition-procurement-procedure-separate-from-procurement-policy/>.

The unseemly controversy surrounding the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter aircraft lays bare the drawback of mixing procurement policy with procurement procedure, and the absence of proactive disclosures regarding defence contracts. This leaves the field wide open to all kinds of inferences and accusations. Since 2002, the procurement of all major equipment, weapon systems and platforms has been governed by the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP). The DPP has been tweaked several times since then. But it continues to be a queer mix of the policy on—and the procedure for—capital acquisitions for the armed forces. . . . Several components of what should ideally be a distinct overarching procurement policy (such as those related to defence offsets or the use of agents) are enmeshed with the procedure by way of guidelines, a part of some specific provision in the DPP, or as separate chapters. The problem arising from the policy-procedure mix is that any deviation from procedure tends to be viewed as a deviation from policy. Thus, even if such deviation is absolutely necessary to ensure that the procurement proposal does not get derailed, this fear prevents the procurement personnel from taking bold decisions to break the procedural logjams that crop up in practically every procurement programme. Nothing exemplifies this better than the view many hold that off-the-shelf purchase of defence equipment, without any transfer of technology (ToT), violates the putative 'Make in India' policy and impedes the stated objective of indigenisation of defence production. This view disregards the fact that it is not mandated by any policy or concomitant procedure to seek ToT in every case.

72. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview; and Karnad interview.

73. Indian officials, interviews by the author, New Delhi, 11 December 2017. Indian officials recognize that Russian weapons, such as the Sukhoi MKI, are more expensive than American ones in the long run.

74. Centre for Airpower Studies, lecture and interaction, 6 December 2017. Some former IAF officers downplay the 1962 PLA victory over India as an anomaly because the IAF was not used, while extolling the IAF role in the 1999 Kargil War that helped to turn the tide, even though aircraft were not allowed to cross the Line of Control because of Pakistan's threats of nuclear retaliation. US officials, interview by the author, New Delhi, 5 December 2017. US officials commented that the IAF was not properly positioned to take out Pakistan forces during Kargil and the PLA during Doklam and had lessons to learn.

75. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview; Behera interview; and Shukla interview. The Indian Navy has methodically planned and developed its fleet with 36 ships procured in the last two decades. In contrast, defense experts observe that the Indian Army has been the worst service in regard to planning, with the IAF second worst.

76. Behera interview. The IAF still has considerable amounts of 1970s technology, though it has advanced subsystems.

77. Tellis interview. Tellis observes that intellectually the IAF is “platform-obsessed” like the USAF was in the 1980s. IAF leadership is not focusing on the development of networks or complementary capabilities or precision munitions or secure data links. Also, IAF bases need modernization. These issues lead to doubts about the IAF’s ability to sustain an air campaign.

78. Rajat Pandit, “India to Launch AWACS Project to Counter China, Pak,” *Times of India*, 19 June 2012, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-to-launch-AWACS-project-to-counter-China-Pak/articleshow/14253161.cms?referral=PM>.

79. India is also developing a system to match the Northrop Grumman E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (Joint STARS), which the USAF is phasing out and folding into its AWACS program.

80. The PLAAF Western Theater Command that faces India and the IAF has four fighter divisions that amount to an estimated 36 fighter squadrons. The PAF has an estimated 21 fighter squadrons. This places India’s likely foes with a total of 57 squadrons at India’s front door.

81. Shukla interview.

82. Franz-Stefan Gady, “India’s Air Force Will Field 42 Combat Squadrons by 2027,” *The Diplomat*, 6 October 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/10/indias-air-force-will-field-42-combat-squadrons-by-2027/>.

83. Tellis, “Troubles They Come in Battalions” 2016.

84. Behera interview.

85. Manu Pubby, “Rafale Deal: Pricing Issues, India’s Insistence on 50% Local Spending Lead to Missing of July Target,” *Economic Times*, 31 July 2015, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/rafale-deal-pricing-issues-indias-insistence-on-50-local-spending-lead-to-missing-of-july-target/article-show/48288656.cms>.

86. Ajai Shukla, “Indian Air Force Initiates Rs 33,000 Crore Buy of 83 Tejas Fighters,” Broadsword (blog), 21 December 2017, <http://ajaiashukla.blogspot.com/2017/12/indian-air-force-initiates-rs-33000.html>.

87. Shukla interview; and Karnad interview.

88. Rajat Pandit, “Armed forces say no to advanced versions of indigenous ‘Tejas’, ‘Arjun,’” *Times of India*, 13 November 2017, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/armed-forces-say-no-to-advanced-versions-of-tejas-arjun/articleshow/61620740.cms>.

IAF, for instance, says Tejas is yet to become combat-ready or achieve ‘final operational clearance’ after being in the making for over three decades. Moreover, with its limited range and weapon carrying capacity, the Tejas simply does not give IAF the punch and cost-effectiveness it needs. Tejas, which has just about 50% of the capabilities of an F-16 or Gripen in terms of endurance, payload etc., will have to fly under the protection of other fighters during conflicts,” said an officer. Grappling with just 33 fighter squadrons when 42 are need to take care of the “collusive threat” from China and Pakistan, the IAF feels the single-engine fighter project is necessary to maintain adequate force-levels till an entirely new Tejas Mark-2 becomes a reality.

89. Amit Gupta, “Global Arms Industry: From Hi-tech to Lo-tech,” *Geopolitics* 8, no. 11 (April 2018): 12–16, <https://www.scribd.com/document/392249685/Geopolitics-April2018>. India has long

lacked the technological and industrial base to develop a world-class aircraft industry, and there are few signs of improvement.

90. US official, to the author, e-mail, 5 December 2017.

91. Iyer-Mitra interview. The Adani Group specializes in resource trade and has limited experience in high-end manufacturing, but the company is politically well-connected to the BJP. Tata has disconnected manufacturing programs. Both would need to build the factory, train the team, and start manufacturing the aircraft. Shukla interview. The closeness of the Adani Group to the BJP could also draw increased opposition and slow down any deal.

92. Behera interview. The Indian government is handicapped by the lack of a centralized defense acquisition authority. Prime Minister Modi also campaigned on allowing 100 percent foreign direct investment to spur industrialization, but the government has not followed through.

93. David Majumdar, "If the J-20 Stealth Fighter Is So Amazing, Why Is China Buying Russia's SU-35?" *National Interest*, 2 November 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/if-the-j-20-stealth-fighter-so-amazing-why-china-buying-18273>.

94. Karnad interview.

95. Press Trust of India, "China's Airfields in Tibet Lack Military Infrastructure for Offensive Ops: Air Chief Marshal B S Dhanoa," *Indian Express*, 9 September 2017, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/china-airfields-in-tibet-lack-military-infrastructure-for-offensive-ops-air-chief-b-s-dhanoa-4836195/>.

96. Stephen Chen, "How Chinese Mining in the Himalayas May Create a New Military Flashpoint with India," *South China Morning Post*, 20 May 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2146296/how-chinese-mining-himalayas-may-create-new-military-flashpoint>.

97. Manoj Joshi, "After Doklam, Military Postures Continue to Escalate in India, China," *Asia Times*, 23 March 2018, <http://www.atimes.com/post-doklam-military-postures-continue-escalate-india-china/>; and Tellis interview. The IAF has problems with operations in mountainous regions.

98. Indian officials, interviews by the author, New Delhi, 11 December 2017. India, the United States, and Japan see China's actions in Doklam as part of its "salami-slicing" tactics that Beijing is also employing in the South China Sea and East China Sea.

99. Commodore C. Uday Bashkar (Indian Navy, retired), director, *South Asia Monitor*, interview by the author, New Delhi, 8 December 2018.

100. Sahgal and Ahuja interview. These two retired officers recommend strategic-level discussions and red-blue-green gaming first; technology transfer second; and the development of India's conventional deterrent third.

101. "Wargaming," RAND Corporation, accessed 14 June 2018, <https://www.rand.org/topics/wargaming.html>

102. US official, to the author, e-mail, 5 December 2017.

103. Indian officials, interviews by the author, New Delhi, 11 December 2011.

104. Chauhan interview.

105. Chauhan interview.

106. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview.

107. Indian officials, interviews by the author, New Delhi, 11 December 2017.

108. US officials, interviews by the author, New Delhi, 5 December 2017.

109. Chauhan interview.

110. Stuti Banerjee, India World Affairs Council, interview by the author, New Delhi, 8 December 2017.

111. Matheswaran interview. In such a case, India needs to explicitly state that the United States and India are working together in a contingency and not as part of an alliance.

112. Tellis interview.

113. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview. A number of hurdles need to be crossed before the IAF and IN can achieve interoperability.

114. Press Trust of India, “Indian, U.S. Air Forces to Deepen Cooperation in Indo-Pacific Region: U.S. Air Force Chief,” *The Hindu*, 4 February 2018, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-us-air-forces-to-deepen-cooperation-in-indo-pacific-us-air-force-chief/article22650919.ece>.

115. Some think tanks that the USAF could interact with include the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies; Institute for Defence and Security Analyses; Observer Research Foundation; and Brookings India.

116. Jaishankar interview.

117. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview. If the US president were to impress upon the Indian prime minister the urgency of lowering bureaucratic barriers to International Military Education and Training (IMET), engagement, exchanges, and exercises, the USAF–IAF partnership would develop more rapidly.

118. Gen Goldfein was supposed to fly the HAL Sukhoi MKI but could not due to technical difficulties. Previously, there was concern that these aircraft needed to undergo air worthiness certification, the wait could be worth it, but this concern was overcome.

119. US official, to the author, e-mail, 5 December 2017. Lockheed Martin does not want to advocate for the F-35, which may distract India from the F-16 Block 70. Also, most Indian in leaders have not shown much enthusiasm for the idea of acquiring the F-35 given the expense.

120. Jaishankar interview. If Lockheed Martin could make the F-35 case privately to the Indian government, perhaps as a follow-on aircraft to the F-16 Block 70, the chances for a sale would increase.

121. *Ibid.* If USCENTCOM would give India special treatment, the IAF–USAF relationship would benefit.

122. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview. If Prime Minister Modi would intervene, the process of signing the BECA would accelerate.

123. Panda, “LSA, CISMOA, BECA.”

124. Pushpinder Singh, Society for Aerospace Studies, interview by the author, New Delhi, December 2017.

125. Air Marshal Anil Chopra, IAF, retired, “India’s Military Space Program,” *South Asia Defence & Strategic Review* 11, no. 5, (November–December 2017). <http://www.defstrat.com/india%E2%80%99s-military-space-program>. The ISC is jointly operated by all the three services of the Indian Armed Forces, the civilian Department of Space, and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

126. Nair and Khalsa, “Toward U.S.–India Missile Defense Cooperation.”

127. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview. The IN purchased vessels from Russia in the past, and Russia does not want US equipment installed on its ships. Therefore, some IN ships have difficulty communicating with each other.

128. US official, to the author, e-mail, 5 December 2017.

129. Nayanima Basu, “Full Transfer of Tech in Defence Aviation is Non-negotiable,” *The Hindu*, 21 November 2017, <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/world/full-transfer-of-tech-in-defence-aviation-is-nonnegotiable/article9968794.ece>. “Keith Webster, Senior Vice-President (Defence and Aerospace), US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), said while the Trump administration is excited about the \$10-billion single-engine fighter jet deal, Lockheed Martin will not be going for full transfer of technology. In an interview with *BusinessLine*, he said if India decides to buy the F-16s, the first few planes will be bought off the shelf.”

130. Press Trust of India, “Boeing Says F/A-18 Super Hornet Fighter Jet Can Help India Grow Its Aerospace Ecosystem” *Economic Times*, 18 May 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/>

boeing-says-f/a-18-super-hornet-fighter-jet-can-help-india-grow-its-aerospace-ecosystem/article-show/64175203.cms.

131. Jaishankar interview. There are approximately 4,000 F-16s worldwide.

132. Mike Stone, "Lockheed Signs Pact with Tata to Make F-16 Planes in India," *Reuters*, 17 June 2017 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-airshow-paris-india-idUSKBN19A1G0>.

133. Behera interview. The Ministry of External Affairs disqualified the F-16 and FA/18 during the last MRCA competition in 2014. There is still a question concerning whether Lockheed Martin and Boeing can rebid.

134. Ajit Kumar Dubey, "Setback for IAF's Plans to Arm Fighter Jets with Meteor Missiles," *India Today*, 4 June 2018, <https://www.indiatoday.in/mail-today/story/iaf-s-meteor-missile-plans-likely-to-take-a-hit-1249650-2018-06-04>.

135. Iyer-Mitra and Singh interview. There will be no money in the budget for a possible Gripen deal with Saab before the 2019 elections. Also, there needs to be a two-year lead time for the purchase, which means that 2024 is the earliest date that the Gripens could arrive.

136. US officials, interviews with the author, New Delhi, 5 December 2017. Evidently, IAF leaders preferred the Gripen and were giving lip service to the F-16.

137. US official, to the author, e-mail, 27 September 2018. China participated in Operation VOSTOK with Russia in September 2018. The United States and India could engage in similar large-scale exercises to bolster India as a strong partner.

138. Harinder Sekhon, Vivekenanda Institute, interview with the author, New Delhi, 29 November 2017.



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# Preparing for the Last War

## Insurgency in the Era of Great Power Competition

Karl Umbrasas

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China's economic influence poses a threat to the international balance of power.<sup>1</sup> China uses its economic influence to achieve geopolitical goals that directly threaten US interests. This is seen in China's economic infusion in Latin America, which increases China's influence in the Western Hemisphere relative to the United States.<sup>2</sup> China organized the economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa into a structure that evades US economic leadership, and China created its own banking system to rival the World Bank—a US-led institution.<sup>3</sup> In 2013, China announced its intention to create land and sea corridors that would reorient the world economy toward China.<sup>4</sup> This One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative will also offer China a trade route through Eurasia should the South China Sea (SCS) be closed to commerce due to a conflict in the waters. The Eurasian trade route, however, is vulnerable to disruption by religious and ethnic-based insurgency from groups in Central Asia. Lessons from insurgencies and proxy wars during the Cold War may inform an approach to frustrating China's advance through Eurasia. This article begins by examining some of the insurgencies sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. This is followed by an examination of the sociopolitical context in regions along the OBOR. Lessons learned from this examination are then applied to policy recommendations for US competition with China.

### Learning from the Past

A popular injunction among strategists is that preparation for the next war based on the last war is dangerous.<sup>5</sup> This point is highlighted in Western Europe's ineptitude against Germany at the beginning of World War II.<sup>6</sup> France, for example, prepared its forces in the 1930s for a war that resembled the Great War, em-

phasizing static lines of defense.<sup>7</sup> Preparation along these lines proved disastrous for France, which capitulated six weeks after the German invasion. German maneuver warfare evolved substantially from 1918 and allowed Germany to outclass Allied forces decisively at the war's outset. Even with these evolved tactics, Germany eventually found itself in a protracted, multi-front war, which contributed to its downfall—just as it had in 1918. Though extrapolating the past merits caution, a look to the past can offer a glimpse of recurring historical patterns, such as those inherent in great power competition.

One historical pattern in great power competition is the presence of insurgency.<sup>8</sup> Low-intensity conflict, such as insurgency, is a likelihood in great power competition because high-end military capabilities tend to deter direct conflict and push the fighting to the geopolitical periphery.<sup>9</sup> The high-end military capability that is perhaps most effective at deterring direct conflict among great powers is nuclear weapons.<sup>10</sup> Nuclear weapons likely prevented the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) from turning the Cold War hot during their 45-year standoff. Instead of nuclear escalation, both nations engaged in proxy wars, many of which were insurgencies.

Support for insurgencies was deliberate and a matter of foreign policy.<sup>11</sup> Geopolitics—not the religious, ethnic, or social grievances that animated these conflicts—was the driving force behind the support. Insurgencies provided the great powers a forum for war by other means.<sup>12</sup> This forum allowed the United States and the USSR to vie for influence on the world stage by promulgating their respective ideologies and economic systems—many times through subversion and violence. Proxies would be selected and shaped for their capacity to effect social, political, or economic change through low-intensity conflict.<sup>13</sup>

For the United States, this policy could be traced back to the containment approach articulated by George Kennan.<sup>14</sup> Kennan observed that the Soviet Union sought to flood the world with its influence, but if the Soviet Union encountered sufficient resistance in a particular region, it would redirect its attempt to exploit other opportunities.<sup>15</sup> The Soviet persistence in spreading its influence necessitated a long-term strategy that contained Soviet expansion, rather than anticipated a single decisive victory. Efforts to contain Soviet expansion could be seen in the counterinsurgencies and insurgencies supported by the United States. Two notable examples, each with starkly different characters, were in Vietnam and Nicaragua.

In addition to containing Soviet expansion, support for low-intensity conflict facilitated a bloodletting of the Soviet Union, which—coupled with other instru-



ments of power—had a ruinous effect on Soviet viability.<sup>16</sup> The Soviet's Afghanistan experience is a prime example. The protracted conflict caused great fiscal strain on the Soviet economy at the same time the Soviets relied heavily upon an unstable oil market. Saudi Arabia quadrupled its oil output in 1985, which caused a collapse in oil prices and significant loss in revenue for the Soviets, exacerbating preexisting problems feeding the latter's population and funding its government.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the Soviet military experienced its own bloodletting as it struggled to adjust to the mujahedeen's unconventional warfare in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> By the end of the Afghan War, the Soviet Union was on the verge of collapse.

Insurgency was also an important way to degrade great power influence, so it could not be concentrated on other priorities during the Cold War. The Soviet Union's involvement in Latin America sought to distract the United States from other regions of the world by creating instability in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>19</sup> The Soviets' communist ally, Cuba, also sought to dissipate US global influence by sponsoring low-intensity conflict in Africa and Latin America.<sup>20</sup> Ernesto "Che" Guevara inveighed in his 1967 message to the Tricontinental Conference of Marxist revolutionaries from around the globe that the world needed "many Vietnams" to overextend the United States to facilitate its demise.<sup>21</sup> The Soviet Union specifically supported revolutionary movements in Latin America to make the United States less effective in its global competition with the USSR.<sup>22</sup> The Soviets' long-term objective for this type of influence was to eventually supplant US influence in Latin America.

The effects sought by the Soviet Union in the Western Hemisphere were multifaceted. The Soviets believed that supporting insurgencies in Latin America would threaten American security interests, such as access to the Panama Canal. Security threats and instability in the Western Hemisphere would result in a siphoning of resources and attention from other more contested Soviet interests elsewhere in the world. The Soviets believed that the United States had to become deeply involved in Latin America to stop a cascade of revolutions in the region. Yet, direct involvement in the region by the United States, according to the Soviets, would draw international condemnation and harm American credibility. The Soviets supported insurgencies in Latin America through intermediaries and surrogates to avoid a direct provocation of the United States.<sup>23</sup>

Currently, China's ongoing ties to Latin America has gained American attention. Most conspicuous is China's economic statecraft in the region. China has already invested hundreds of billions of dollars in the region and has pledged more.

Though China is not overtly hostile in Latin America, its influence is not necessarily benign. China supports the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA, Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America), an organization hostile to US interests and a counterbalance to US-led organizations in the region.<sup>24</sup> China's assistance has helped fund the Bolivarian socialist projects that emanate from these countries. Bolivarian threats are notable for their potential to cause great instability in the region.<sup>25</sup> China's influence in Latin America, such as its support for ALBA, could be perceived as a way of undermining of the US-led order in the hemisphere and a glimpse of its worldwide ambitions.<sup>26</sup> Chinese support to these regimes could also grow into something directly hostile to US security, such as the Super Insurgency across Latin America promulgated by the now-deceased Hugo Chavez and his acolytes.<sup>27</sup> Even if not overtly hostile now, growing Chinese influence and capacity in Latin America can emerge as a capability directly hostile to the United States in the future.

### Characteristics of Cold War Insurgencies

Several authors have distilled the elements of successful insurgencies. Robert Taber's classic work on guerilla warfare, for example, showed the importance of the insurgents' ability to inspire revolutionary fervor within local populations.<sup>28</sup> Successful insurgents nurtured their connection with the community because it was essential to the insurgents' survival. Organic connection with local populations is a strength insurgents have that poses an ongoing problem for counterinsurgents. Another important advantage enjoyed by insurgents is initiative. Insurgents begin the war and decide where and when to strike. They enjoy increased mobility and decreased territorial commitments. Victory for the insurgent is merely survival. This is the so-called "war of the flea," where a protracted conflict against an amorphous foe results in eventual exhaustion of military, political, and economic resources to sustain the fight. The Cuban Revolution exemplifies these aspects of insurgency. Fidel Castro's revolutionaries occupied a remote area of Cuba, where he and his *fidelistas* enjoyed sanctuary, while recruiting soldiers and running an economy. The government army was quite vulnerable to ambush by the fidelistas, who would only fight when the odds were in their favor. This resulted in constrained movement by government forces, which were rendered ineffective by the guerilla tactics. Although not a proxy war between the United States and Soviet Union, Castro's victory soon resulted in Cuba's affiliation with the Soviets and posed a source of ongoing concern in the Western Hemisphere.

Unlike the Cuban Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent insurgency there could be seen as a fight by proxy between the United States and Soviets. One of the most important aspects of the mujahideen's success was the ongoing and substantial support they received from outside sources, most notably the United States.<sup>29</sup> The insurgents received increasing levels of monetary and materiel support that allowed them to equalize aspects of the fight with the Soviets. This was clearly seen in the delivery of shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles that allowed the insurgents to degrade the Soviet air capability. Yet, the insurgents did not have to defeat the Soviets in a conventional sense. They simply had to survive and continue to drain Soviet will and capability. Furthermore, in addition to insurgent tactics, the conduct of the Soviets had an important role in the insurgents' success. The Soviets did not have a counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy, so they brought conventional military hardware to the fight with the intent that they would "crush" the insurgents. The insurgents' mobility, in addition to weapons that equalized certain aspects of the battlefield, allowed them to surprise, exhaust, and ultimately prevail against the Soviets. The Soviet Union lacked legitimacy throughout the conflict, both within the Afghan culture and within the international community, which continued to harm Soviet efforts for the duration of the war.

Nicaragua was another battleground for a proxy fight between the United States and Soviet Union. The Soviets supplied the Sandinista government with military hardware, including tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, and helicopters. The United States, by contrast, provided funding and assistance to the counterrevolutionaries (i.e., "Contras") that fought the Soviet-backed Sandinista government. The United States also provided substantial support to covert operations during the insurgency—targeting important infrastructure, such as bridges, oil pipelines, and harbors—and supported the targeted killing of Sandinista leaders.<sup>30</sup> Both the insurgents and counterinsurgents adapted to their adversaries' tactics during the conflict. The Contras, however, remained viable by not giving up. Their persistence led to political talks within the government and ended in success when a US-backed candidate was elected president of Nicaragua. An overarching factor that contributed to the insurgents' success was ongoing US support.

### **China and the Road to Insurgency**

China's pursuit of regional dominance is inherently hostile to US interests. China wants to displace the United States as the dominant power in the Indo-Pa-

cific region and aspires toward reshaping the international system to make it more favorable to Chinese interests.<sup>31</sup> China is rapidly modernizing its military, while also asserting its military prowess in the absence of American presence. China employs other instruments of power, such as economic, diplomatic, and intelligence, to persuade or coerce weaker states to conform to its priorities.<sup>32</sup>

The United States, according to China, is employing a containment strategy to stifle China's influence.<sup>33</sup> In addition to pressure by the United States, China has ongoing tension with its neighboring states related to issues of sovereignty near its territorial waters. Because of these constraints, China has looked to its west and south for ways to ensure its economic and political viability without being exclusively reliant upon the SCS. The OBOR initiative is a way to achieve that aim. China's OBOR extends economic and political influence throughout the Eurasian landmass, offering a way to reshape the international order by making China central to the world's economy. The OBOR has a number of trade corridors across Eurasia (i.e., the belt) and the Indian Ocean (i.e., the road). Countries involved in the land belt include China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Turkey, and Russia. The sea road includes stops in Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti, and Egypt.

China's project relies on safe travel through states with social, political, and economic difficulties. Most of the states involved in the OBOR have elevated warnings for instability.<sup>34</sup> A substantial number of states have either a high warning or a very high warning for instability. Other states have alert status, and one, Somalia, has a very high alert status.<sup>35</sup> This suggests that some of the locations China will rely upon for its project cannot ensure safety of the commerce, and for those that can, preexisting instability leaves those countries at risk for further decline. Many of these countries have high levels of grievance within their populations, which is a major factor in societal discord and, in conjunction with other factors, insurgency.

China itself may be vulnerable to insurgency within and across its borders. China has a sizable Muslim Ethnic-Uyghur population, which has a range of grievances and a history of uprisings. One of the land belt corridors will pass through the Uyghur autonomous region in Xinjiang province. A major grievance held by the Uyghurs in China is related to their minority status and China's identification of them as a problem group. China has enforced interethnic mingling, suppressed Uyghur language instruction, and stifled Uyghur political expression.<sup>36</sup> Chinese authorities have hastily imprisoned millions of Uyghurs and placed others in re-education camps that entail degrading treatment and insensitivity to cultural

and religious observations. China's response has left the Uyghur population with a sense that its culture is in jeopardy.<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 1. Testimony of former Uyghur detainee.** Mihrigul Tursun, a Uyghur woman who was detained in China, testifies at the National Press Club in Washington about the mass internment camps in China and the abuses she suffered therein. (Department of State photo by David A. Peterson)

The perception that Muslim cultures are in jeopardy has animated Islamic radicals for decades. The Soviet Union and then the United States became the target of Islamist hatred for what was perceived as outside powers attacking Muslim societies. With the OBOR, China may have a similar experience. A number of Islamic non-state actors are active in Central Asia, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), al-Qaeda, and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM).<sup>38</sup> Kyrgyzstan, for instance, has witnessed a number of fighters travel to and from Syria to participate to fight alongside the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and the Kyrgyzstan government has been concerned that terrorists may leave Afghanistan and occupy the country's mountainous region, which could become a sanctuary for fighters. In 2016, a person

identified as a Uyghur separatist detonated a vehicle borne improvised explosive device outside the Chinese embassy in Bishkek, suggesting specific animus toward China.<sup>39</sup>

China's belt initiative through Central Asia travels through a milieu of risk factors for insurgency. Successful insurgencies historically have been able to mobilize local grievances, often of a peasant nature, and take control of rural areas, while forcing a larger foe into a state of protracted conflict.<sup>40</sup> Insurgencies benefit from irregular terrain, which provides challenges to counterinsurgents and cover for insurgents.<sup>41</sup> Most importantly, insurgencies require support from a sympathetic population.<sup>42</sup> Insurgencies in the twenty-first century are notable for their cultural and religious motivators, which offer potential for broader bases of support.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, twenty-first-century insurgencies are transnational rather than confined to specific borders; so, they may involve larger swathes of territory and have uprisings in regions dislocated from the main theater.

These factors appear prevalent among China's proposed Central Asian belt. China's attempted exploitation of the region may appear colonial as it invests in projects that support Beijing's economic interests rather than those of the local populations. Western liberalism is notably absent from Chinese policy, suggesting that human rights and individual freedoms may be absent from its international development projects. Instead, China's authoritarianism may be projected along with its investments in the region, further inflaming tension with indigenous populations that do not conform to China's plans. The propensity for Chinese initiatives to stimulate popular backlash is seen in Ecuador, where resistance to Chinese projects has included violent protests.<sup>44</sup>

China's close ties to the regimes in Muslim countries may agitate Islamic fundamentalists. Muslim countries have remained relatively silent on China's treatment of the Uyghur population. Such silence is seen as the result of close trade relations with China.<sup>45</sup> China's relationships with Muslim regimes may inflame grievances, however, as it ties into a common Islamist narrative that apostate Muslim leaders regularly sell out their coreligionists for secular opportunities. As such, regimes that cooperate with China on the OBOR may be at risk for hostility directed at them from Islamist elements within their own populations.

China's Uyghurs and neighboring non-state actors pose a potential threat for a transnational insurgency against China's interest in Central Asia based on ethno-religious grievances. As China's influence in Central Asia grows, local populations may perceive China more as an imperialist power whose basic tenets are antitheti-

cal to the Muslim societies its project spans. Though this appears to be an organic confluence of factors for insurgency, insurgency could be accelerated by outside organization and support.<sup>46</sup> Resistance to China's OBOR project could even bring larger instability to the region as the weak states involved in the OBOR may themselves be vulnerable to collapse due to insurgent violence.<sup>47</sup> China's approach to COIN is hard-power centric, which may only perpetuate insurgent violence, and leave China in a protracted conflict in Central Asia.<sup>48</sup>

### **A Strategic Opportunity for the United States**

China's OBOR project portends a scenario where China encounters insurgents in Central Asia and elsewhere. The current geopolitical context may support and accelerate the collision of China and Islamists. This scenario leaves the United States with an opportunity for a bait-and-bleed strategy through which China and Islamist fighters degrade each other, while the United States remains physically out of the fray.<sup>49</sup> The United States is decreasing its footprint in certain locations around the world, while China is actively increasing its own. This may gain China more recognition as a self-interested, colonial power. China's mistreatment of its Uyghur minority and its heavy-handed means of repression may only serve to inflame Islamist fervor as China becomes more and more noticeable on the world stage. Moreover, the weakness of many states China seeks to partner with in its economic endeavor increases the chances that the states will fail if faced with ongoing violence, leaving China with loss of investment and conflict.

Consistent with the transnational nature of contemporary insurgencies, resentment of the OBOR may also occur in regions outside of Central Asia. Somalia, for example, is a projected stop on China's sea road and is exceedingly unstable and teeming with extremists. China's activity in Central Asia could become a rallying cry for extremists in Somalia, who by themselves would not likely need an issue such as China's treatment of Uyghurs to foment chaos. China's belt and road also come into contact with a number of other countries with politically active Muslim populations that might take issue with China's treatment of the Uyghurs and China's exportation of Beijing's worldview. This could create a potential for protest and agitation against countries that deal with China. The center of gravity in this scenario, however, would be in Central Asia, where treatment of the Uyghurs and the exportation of China's self-interest becomes a local and possibly an international issue.

The United States would benefit from a bait-and-bleed strategy, but it is not without US investment. The United States would have to keep Afghanistan from being the main attraction for foreign fighters for this strategy's maximum impact. The Afghan government is not strong enough to protect its territory without US assistance, which leaves the United States with an important role in securing the country. To do this, the United States would have to increase troop numbers in Afghanistan substantially to provide proper training for Afghan forces and to secure Afghanistan's borders—particularly its eastern flank.<sup>50</sup> A strong US presence in Afghanistan that pushes fighters out of the country would leave China's OBOR an easy target for displaced fighters. The displacement of fighters from Afghanistan in conjunction with clarion calls to take up arms against China's imperialism may make China's commerce belt through Central Asia the target of insurgent activity, just as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria were attractions to fighters in the recent past. China may naturally seek to secure its route, which invites a protracted fight between a COIN-naïve Chinese military and Islamist radicals. Though the United States would remain out of the fight, US troops in Afghanistan would be an important deterrent to China seeking entry to Afghanistan to draw fighters away from its trade route.

Peace and security in Afghanistan have a direct relationship to concentration of fighters—or potential fighters—along the OBOR. Though a substantial US troop presence is important to secure Afghanistan's borders, troops in Afghanistan nonetheless attract foreign fighters, which may deplete the concentration of fighters along the OBOR. A peace negotiation with the Taliban would help minimize the incentive for foreign fighters to enter Afghanistan and would provide plausibility for a large troop presence in the country. A peace agreement that links alteration of location and mission of US troops and likelihood of eventual withdrawal to the Taliban's acceptance of peace and stability may be possible considering the latter has shown signs of willingness to negotiate, and though militarily confident, is realistic about its marginal prospects of retaking Kabul anytime soon.<sup>51</sup> A negotiation such as this would be consistent with recent trends of continued talks about a peace agreement in Afghanistan. Perhaps more importantly, however, a peace agreement would allow maximal concentration on competition with China.

Inability for the OBOR initiative to get started, or its failure once begun, would highlight China's lack of options for power projection. The inability of China to create its land-based trade route leaves China beholden to the SCS. Since the US Navy is the dominant sea power in the region, this forces China to accede to US



presence or engage in a sea-based confrontation that aims at expelling the US presence from the SCS. China's military build-up and provocations in the waters suggests it may eventually choose a path of naval confrontation. Not only is entering battle with an experienced and technologically superior navy perilous, it is also self-injurious because China is highly dependent upon exports and needs the SCS open to commerce. More than 60 percent of China's trade travels by sea; so China's waters are extremely critical to Beijing's overall viability.<sup>52</sup> Yet, trillions of dollars from the global economy also transit the waters, including commerce from close US allies, such as Japan. As such, a conflagration in the SCS would have wide-ranging implications, which would have negative effects on the United States and its allies, not just China. Even so, the implications are existential for China, whose economy mostly relies on safe passage in its waters.

### **Preparing for the Last War**

Insurgencies had an important role during the last great power competition. The United States and Soviet Union used insurgencies to great effect—most successfully by the former, however, which was the winner of the Cold War. The great power competition with China may also call for alternatives to open warfare, degrading China's strength without entering into a high-end confrontation. As with past competitions, proxy fights are only one aspect of the larger contest. Other instruments of power will be necessary to maximize the effect of a bait-and-bleed strategy. The economy, for example, will play an important role in sealing China's fate—as will diplomacy with allies and strategic partners.

A bait-and-bleed strategy against China would be advantageous to the United States, but it would not be conclusive. At the end of the fight, a foe would still exist. If China endures, it would probably be degraded after fighting a protracted insurgency, which would invite other opportunities to continue bloodletting or even a change in strategy, such as a golden bridge that allows China to return to the global economy as a productive member—but certainly *not* as regional hegemon. If Islamists sufficiently stall the Chinese from getting through Central Asia, the remaining Islamists would need to be addressed. This would require timely engagement by the US military to prevent a repeat of the aftermath of the Soviet–Afghan War, where US disinterest fed Islamists' delusion of grandeur. This would also underscore the importance of diplomacy in the region as well as a secure Afghanistan. Even if China's economic plans for Central Asia and beyond encounter significant obstacles, it is still possible that China would consider seizing control of the SCS

by force. Yet, because China is so dependent on the sea lanes, such a move could be perilous, as China would effectively be shut out from the world economy.

A sharp halt to China's economy would place great strain on the communist regime. The hundreds of millions of Chinese who attained middle-class status and the hundreds of millions who live in poverty comparable to sub-Saharan-Africa would experience a dramatic downgrade in their way of life. This would pose a new source of unrest for China, a country with a history of factions. As China's economy faded so would its regime's power. The Chinese economy would dissipate quickly with a SCS fight because China needs access to ports where materials imported so it can make products that it then exports. Since violence increases when power is at risk, economic catastrophe that delegitimizes the regime may precipitate harsher crackdowns by the government, which would likely invite more rebelliousness and fictionalization.<sup>53</sup> A SCS fight may produce revolutionary fervor within China's own borders.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Information operations should take place that amplify the plight of the Uyghurs on the world stage. News organizations should be encouraged to cover testimonials from dissidents, and stories related to Uyghur mistreatment should be made widely available online. Media should be introduced to the environmental enablers inherent to the situation, such as ethnic fissures, animosities, authoritarian repression, and others, which may stir passions related to the issue.<sup>54</sup> The aim is to create awareness of the issue in sympathetic populations around the world and to incite a desire to help the Uyghurs out of their plight. This awareness would also reach malcontents in certain parts of the world, who are animated by cultural paranoia and interested in their next transnational fight. Diplomacy, such as work within the United Nations, should make the Uyghurs plight a main topic to legitimize the issue and to enhance its media coverage.

Early implementation of information operations is important because China may try to deny an unconventional warfare strategy from being employed by continuing to make large investments in the region. Loans, labor jobs, and stimulation of local economies, along with promises of returns on investment, could logically be targeted at regimes and their indigenous populations with the aim of placating them so they do not take up arms against Chinese interests. The limits to buying favor are yet to be seen, however. The resentment at China from segments of the Muslim world is already burgeoning due to China's treatment of the Uyghurs.

China's exploitation of the region also underscores its authoritarian character and may stimulate resentment by local populations for that reason itself.

China's economic investment in the region is essentially mismatched to the challenge it faces. China faces a potential religious and ideological battle in Central Asia and elsewhere along the OBOR against which economic pledges may have little consequence. China's economic largesse could have a bifurcating effect on Muslim societies, where leaders and certain elites may welcome the investment, but those same investments may naturally frustrate Islamist interests. A major grievance nurtured by Islamist thought is related to the perceived marginalization of Muslim orthodoxy by secular interests.<sup>55</sup> This belief galvanized resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and has fueled ongoing resentment at the United States. A new generation of "near enemies," therefore, have the potential to emerge based on close economic ties to China, in addition to a new "far away enemy" in China. Support of apostate Muslim regimes earned the United States great scorn and, along with policy toward the Palestinian people, served as the rationale for decades of terrorism against the United States, which culminated in the September 11, 2001 attack.<sup>56</sup> This hostility has occurred despite billions of dollars in American aid, opportunities for private investments, and military assistance to Muslim-majority countries. Even after heroic diplomatic efforts, segments of these societies maintain a highly distorted and hostile view of the United States. There is no reason to suppose that China's economic investments would elicit a different reaction from radicals in these countries. China's tendency to suppress basic human rights of those it identifies as enemies of the state and Beijing's other human rights violations may make it simply easier for regional animosity to emerge against China.

Special forces should establish ties with indigenous populations in Central Asia to develop allies and to gain knowledge of the culture and language. It is best for special forces to develop allies who have secular interests in opposing China's OBOR, such as those found in ethnic-based grievances instead of religious fundamentalism. These allies in the region could be designated key players at the end of a successful campaign against China and possibly supported in their efforts to assert control over territory, which itself would be in various levels of disrepair due to protracted low-intensity conflict. In addition to indigenous forces deemed favorable to the United States, US diplomats should work channels with Muslim allies in the Middle East and South Asia to motivate politically active Muslims to fight for the Uyghurs. China's mistreatment of the Uyghurs and its imperialism in Muslim lands would serve as the siren song of handlers who motivate Islamists

against China, much as Pakistan's intelligence service motivated warring factions against the USSR during the Soviet-Afghan War.<sup>57</sup>

Intermediaries will be important in accelerating the collision between Islamists and China. Though animus would naturally be organic to the situation, materiel and personnel would be needed for an effective insurgency. The examination above suggests that outside assistance is crucial to successful insurgencies. Indeed, surrogates may be more important in this instance because the United States would have no physical role beyond amplifying messages and creating allies close to the fight. In a bait-and-bleed strategy, the United States has no real interest in seeing the insurgents through to victory as it did with, say, the Contras in Nicaragua. Surrogates will also be important in maintaining plausible deniability for the United States. Such deniability is important to prevent escalation. However, if the Cold War is any lesson, discovery of support for proxies may lead to more proxy fights, rather than conventional war.

The United States must underscore its nuclear capability throughout the competition. A critical assumption is that great powers will not engage in a high-end fight because they acknowledge that such a confrontation could lead to nuclear escalation. Evidence that the US military is upgrading its nuclear arsenal and that US leaders are willing to use nuclear weapons if sufficiently provoked will have an important deterrent effect, which is needed to keep the fighting on the geopolitical periphery. However, such posturing must occur in a fashion that does not provoke unnecessary anticipation of a first strike.

### **Benefit to the National Security Strategist**

The National Security Strategy of the United States holds that America will use all instruments of power to prevent regional domination by any country.<sup>58</sup> A bait-and-bleed strategy against China in Central Asia meets this requirement, while also maintaining the United States' strategic depth. China is but one actor in a multipolar world; so, the possibility exists that the United States will be faced with other near-peer adversaries concurrent with, or sequential to, open warfare with China. A bait-and-bleed strategy would maintain the United States' high-end military capabilities, while China and Islamists degrade each other. The United States' overmatch capability, as a result, is not degraded with this approach should other conflicts erupt.

Another benefit of this strategy is that it can achieve success in defeating China. Some of the ablest militaries have historically struggled with insurgencies. In itself,

engaging in a protracted COIN would reduce China's capability to address issues it had prioritized, such as those related to regional dominance or undermining the international order. Yet, the nature of insurgency in Central Asia along China's OBOR has greater implications because of China's investment in the project and China's need to diversify its ability to conduct commerce. Denying China its commerce belt through Central Asia would strike at one of China's vital interests. This strategy, therefore, offers a way to weaken China, and, depending on the courses of action China chooses during its fight, could lead to the failure of its government.

### **On Opposing Views and Counterarguments**

An opposing view to the strategic approach described above is that insurgencies are not always successful against an established power. The irredentist Hmong insurgency in Laos, for example, did not achieve its separatist aims against Laotian government forces. This view, however, overlooks the fact that the aim of the above strategy is not to install a new regime. Rather, this strategy seeks to impose additional constraints on China that will affect Beijing's strategic decision making and its advance across Eurasia. To be sure, the strategy proposed above is a bait-and-bleed strategy that does not have use for insurgents beyond a source of friction that frustrates China's advance. To this end, the insurgents do not have to "win" in a conventional sense. This strategy will nonetheless have value if China finds itself in a COIN quagmire that drains military, political, and financial resources.

The strategy stands the risk of provoking a Chinese backlash if US support for insurgencies against China's interests are discovered. Despite this, the competition between the United States and China is already developing into a game of hardball. American tariffs on Chinese goods and Chinese naval operations that put US warships at risk also have potential for backlash. Even if support for insurgency is attributed to the United States, such a strategy must be appropriately placed within the context of great power competition. In this context, where vital interests are at stake, discovery and its resultant escalation may be an acceptable risk. Unconventional warfare would be an unsurprising aspect of great power competition.

This strategy does not aim specifically for regime change in China, but second- and third-order effects of this strategy may occur that result in the implosion of the regime. Such an implosion would be due to China's decision making as it navigates its constraints—not due to an overt US objective. A backlash by China to frustration along the OBOR that incites a SCS conflagration and its attendant ef-

fects on the Chinese economy—and government—would be a chain of events set in motion by Beijing. Within the context of great power competition, China faces a number of threats to its internal stability that Beijing must carefully manage. China's intentional or accidental provocation of a conventional naval confrontation, for example, carries risks for regime instability as does its economic maneuvering. Great power competition is naturally perilous.

The above strategy not only affects China but also impacts those countries that may host fighting between insurgents and China. Central Asian countries may find themselves the battleground for increased insurgent activity against China. Diplomatic and political backlash against the United States may occur if America is seen as the instigator of these insurgents. It is clear that Central Asia currently has an Islamist problem, with a number of Islamist terrorist groups active in the region. Some of these groups may share not only a religious affiliation with the Uyghurs but also an ethnic connection. This has nothing to do with the United States and everything to do with the counterterrorism policies of these countries that left their nations vulnerable to non-state actors. The willingness of the United States to step out of the way and allow insurgents and China to inflict damage on each other is simply not a legitimate grievance against the United States.

It is important to underscore that the strategy discussed above is a theoretical discussion of geopolitics. Since this strategy deals with future events, it cannot be known whether the strategy would unfold as discussed. Important facts can change or emerge that might alter the course of this approach. For instance, this strategy expects that the same animus that emerged against the USSR and United States from Islamic radicals would emerge against China. Yet, certain geopolitical events could mitigate such hostility and therefore alter the strategy. Despite this limitation, the above discussion can elucidate geopolitical vulnerabilities that exist in isolation or as a whole, which can inform strategic competition with China.

## Conclusion

Insurgency played a major role during the last great power competition between the United States and Soviet Union. The history of insurgency in this context shows that proxy wars can distract, drain, and, in conjunction with other factors, contribute to the downfall of a major power. This does not suggest that the situation presently studied is a carbon copy of the past; most certainly it is not. Constraints exist, however, that make patterns more likely to occur, such as an effort to

avoid nuclear conflict or a large-scale war. Certain geopolitical realities serve as powerful motivators for war by other means.

China's actions against its Uyghur minority and its influence projection have a ready-made adversary in Islamist fighters who are themselves targets of American lethal operations. A strategy that fosters the collision of Islamist fighters and China is advantageous to the United States, which can remain out of the physical fight while each foe exhausts the other. This strategy defeats China's attempt at regional domination and undermining of the world order by distracting and eroding China's political, economic, and military capabilities. Failure with the OBOR initiative would leave China beholden to the SCS. Though this reality could cause China to attempt to dominate its waters, doing so would quickly suffocate its economy, placing its regime at risk. Very importantly, this strategy prevents the United States' high-end capability from being depleted against China in open warfare. This conservation of resources is particularly needed in the multipolar world, where other competitors with high-end capabilities themselves can attack the United States' interests around the world or in the homeland. **JIPA**

## Notes

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# The 2016 European Global Strategy, European Union Defense Integration, and Asian–European Security Cooperation in a Declining Multilateral International Order

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On 10 November 2017, the European Council launched the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO),<sup>1</sup> completing a set of major steps in the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and a key movement for an augmented and different European Union (EU) role in global affairs. In June 2016, the EU heads of state and government started this process at the European Council Summit, which was mainly dedicated to CSDP. The European Council received, from the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative (VPC/HR) Federica Mogherini, a new strategic vision, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe; A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (often referred to as *EU Global Strategy* or *EUGS*). The new vision included a CSDP with a more defined role, opening a process for enhancing the effectiveness and strengthening of military capabilities and the European defense industry through an “Implementation Package.” Undoubtedly, the process and creation of such a document and the subsequent initiatives represented a remarkable achievement in the European integration process. However, this is happening in a less than favorable context.

The internal and international environment that the EU faced was challenging due to several factors: first, the refugee/immigration crisis; second, one of the bloodiest years in terrorist attacks on European soil in 10 years; and third, the Ukraine crisis—all of which had marked European security with a dangerous conflicting dynamic since 2014. The United States under the Trump administration also suggested a difficult future track for transatlantic relations, and finally, the decision by the United Kingdom to abandon the EU, called into question the very viability of that organization.<sup>2</sup> All these have created a new scenario for the Euro-

pean integration process, for European security, and for the EU goal of “strategic autonomy.” However, the seemingly most serious long-term strategic problem that the EU is facing is one of the main anchors regarding mission and vision for the organization: a declining ability to sustain an already embattled liberal multilateral international order.

### What Liberal Order?

According to international relations theorist John Ikenberry, this would be an “open and rule-based international order . . . enshrined in institutions such as the United Nations and norms such as multilateralism.”<sup>3</sup> This order is composed of many elements, each mutually reinforcing. These elements include a set of legitimate global institutions—such as the UN and the World Trade Organization—as well as many issue-specific organizations; a set of international legal conventions as, for instance, the 1982 Convention on Sea Law; several arms control regimes, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which constrain the actions of states; and an emerging set of inchoate, but often powerful, shared norms. However, Hedley Bull’s definition of *international order* could explain better the structure and parameters: “a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society.”<sup>4</sup> These goals include the preservation of the states system, state sovereignty as a principle, general peace among states, and the limitations on violence to protect rules of property. However, this order would also be a “World Order” that “signifies the regimes of values, morals, and rights that extend to all humanity and infuse the international order with a sense of justice and purpose.”<sup>5</sup> It connotes the complex of Western liberal international law and economics that is currently institutionalized through international organizations, like the United Nations. Thus, any security order established by the states system would be an order in which what states can and cannot do is not simply determined by power. Rather, international law constrains the action of states. In this vein, the EU holds a proactive trade agenda supporting the multilateral liberal international order. On one hand, the EU promotes this agenda through a set of administrative areas with several regional actors in Asia and the Americas (states and organizations). For instance, the EU has closed a long negotiation with Japan, establishing one of the most extensive free trade agreements (FTA) in the world. The EU is also Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) second-largest trading partner and is a strategic area because the 20 percent of EU trade passes through the Malacca Strait and the South China Sea.<sup>6</sup> The EU also is the biggest

provider of foreign direct investment (FDI) to ASEAN countries, accounting for almost a quarter of total FDI in ASEAN. The EU has concluded negotiations for bilateral FTAs with Singapore and Vietnam and is negotiating FTAs with several other ASEAN countries. These agreements are building blocks toward a future full-fledged EU–ASEAN region-to-region FTA. In a March 2017 joint statement, the EU and ASEAN agreed to take new steps toward resuming talks for this region-to-region agreement. On the other hand, the “2012 Guidelines on the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia,”<sup>7</sup> reinforced by Mogherini’s address at the 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue<sup>8</sup> and the 2015 Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council “The EU and ASEAN: A Partnership with a Strategic Purpose,”<sup>9</sup> includes a roadmap for strengthening EU–ASEAN security cooperation. These documents address challenges such as counterpiracy, cybersecurity, maritime security, energy security, environmental security, natural disaster response, conflict mediation, and even potential military contribution in East Asia. Meanwhile, EU member states are suppliers of military-relevant technology, including complete weapons systems and components, to Indo-Pacific countries, including Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. These exports amounted to €44.1 billion in 2015 (€30.2 billion in 2014).<sup>10</sup> However, the impact of the 2008 recession and the whirlpools of the political crisis in the several EU member states and the EU as a whole seemed to offer a bleak future. The economic crisis and subsequent political debates included the enacting of reduced budgets in the EU member states (even previous to the crisis) and has affected severely security and defense capabilities, including reductions on deterrence, crisis management, and political influence.

Former US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stridently warned European governments in 2010 about not only defense budget limitations but also a dangerous state of affairs regarding going “to too far in the other direction.” From Gates’ perspective, large parts of the public and political class were so averse to military force and the risks that go with it that the climate had become an impediment to achieving real security:

*These budget limitations relate to a larger cultural and political trend affecting the alliance. . . . I believe we have reached an inflection point, where much of the continent has gone too far in the other direction. . . . The demilitarization of Europe—where large swaths of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it—has gone from a blessing in the 20th century to an impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the 21st.*

*... Not only can real or perceived weakness be a temptation to miscalculation and aggression, but, on a more basic level, the resulting funding and capability shortfalls make it difficult to operate and fight together to confront shared threats.<sup>11</sup>*



**Figure 1. VPC/HR Federica Mogherini in Indo-Pacific.** Federica Mogherini meets with Dionísio da Costa Babo Soares, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Timor Leste, while attending the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and related meetings. (Photo courtesy of European External Action Service)

This situation has generated a dangerous impact on the EU's political and strategic positions, not only in the short term but, and this is more important, in the long term. From an Asian point of view, in spite of the large EU–ASEAN economic and trade relation, this situation could show an image that would create a perception of declining ability concerning security cooperation in common security problems and a reduction in the perception of strategic assurance at a time of rapid global change. Nevertheless, an absence of a real global vision, instruments, and political will would reduce the EU's credibility for present and future commitments and cooperation. It seems clear the EU is committed to and defends an international rules-based order and an international fair-and-free trade system, but

the changing dynamics in the global security environment could represent a different challenge for the EU, which probably would represent a major game changer in the EU strategic vision and mission. Despite the impact of the economic crisis and the declining resources to face security and defense matters, a clear message regarding the political will, a strong strategic vision, and a clear role for the CSDP and its instruments could show further reliability and commitment in these areas—even with reduced mechanisms and options.

### **Beyond Economics and Trade: Strategic Autonomy and PESCO**

However, for the European Union, a narrative of relative decline does not necessarily establish the strategic options available. Indeed, these positions come from a particular situation in the domestic politics of the member states and the EU—not merely from a social and economic crisis but also from a deep crisis about values and objectives. Despite the fact that the new 2016 *European Global Strategy* makes constant reference to the uncertainty in the international system, paradoxically it did not explicitly refer to the specific policies to be implemented in this context:

*We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned. To the east, the European security order has been violated, while terrorism and violence plague North Africa and the Middle East, as well as Europe itself. Economic growth is yet to outpace demography in parts of Africa, security tensions in Asia are mounting, while climate change causes further disruption. Yet these are also times of extraordinary opportunity. Global growth, mobility, and technological progress—alongside our deepening partnerships—enable us to thrive, and allow ever more people to escape poverty and live longer and freer lives. We will navigate this difficult, more connected, contested and complex world guided by our shared interests, principles and priorities. Grounded in the values enshrined in the Treaties and building on our many strengths and historic achievements, we will stand united in building a stronger Union, playing its collective role in the world.<sup>12</sup>*

Probably, the 2016 *EUGS* is not truly a grand strategy as it is far away from attaining that status devised by the major powers. It cannot reach such a level because the EU is not yet such a strategic, unitary, or autonomous player. Second, the *EUGS* is not a security strategy either, because it is undoubtedly weak in content, the hierarchy of threats and challenges, and the means to face such obstacles—although it sees the challenge of sophisticated threats as the effects of asymmetry, interdependence, and multipolarity, including the regional crises in the Union's eastern and southern neighborhoods. The EU faces a security dilemma

mainly created by the reduction of capabilities during the 2008 recession and the perception of a partial abandonment of the transatlantic alliance by the United States. Nevertheless, the *EUGS* is a foreign policy project, framing security and defense aspects within the context of the EU's external action and setting out the main principles, values, and operational patterns of the Union's international conduct. In this vein, and with the goal of strategic autonomy in mind, the EU institutions launched a set of initiatives during 2016, the so-called "Winter Package"—the Implementation Plan on Security and Defense (to respond to external conflicts and crises). These initiatives cover the full range of CSDP tasks in civilian and military crisis management, capacity building of partners to strengthen the CSDP, and protecting the Union and its citizens along the nexus of internal and external security. The other main initiatives are a European Defense Action Plan and a joint NATO–EU declaration. The European Council also invited the VPC/HR and the European Defense Agency to create a Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD) that will help foster capability development, addressing shortfalls, deepening defense cooperation, and ensuring more optimal use—including coherence of defense spending plans. Following this track, the next step was to launch the "Defense Package" in June 2017. This initiative includes two main elements: first, a "Reflection Paper on the Future of the European Defence."<sup>13</sup> This document establishes three possible scenarios for the period 2017–2025. First, security and defense cooperation under which member states continue to pursue individual agendas but work toward ad hoc measures aimed at EU solidarity. This scenario also calls for the establishment of a European defense fund, which would include two different programs: the European Defense Research Program created to stimulate research in the field of defense (€90 million for the next three years). Additionally, a European Defense Industrial Development Programme (€500 million for the period 2019–2020) and, as from 2020, the European Commission will be prepared to invest in approximately €1 billion annually.<sup>14</sup>

In the second scenario, development of a shared security and defense agenda under which member states undertake measures to ensure "operational and financial solidarity," assisting one another on issues of border security, cybersecurity, intelligence sharing, and EU–NATO coordination. This scenario is seen as enhancing the Union's "ability to project military power and to engage fully in external crisis management and in building partners' security and defence capacities."<sup>15</sup> Collaboration among member states would lead to development of joint acquisition pro-



grams and maintenance capabilities, focusing on enhancing interoperability and dramatically reducing duplication of efforts.

In the third scenario, member states would more dramatically deepen their integration to establish a common defense and security arrangement. The aforementioned European defense fund would be used to support common procurement of systems and materiel, and “cutting-edge knowledge would be pooled, enabling critical research and start-ups to develop key technologies to address Europe’s security challenges. Efficient defense spending and more and better defense outputs would be achieved through the right mix of competition and consolidation, specialization, economies of scale, the sharing of expensive military assets and technological innovation aimed at getting the best value for money spent.”<sup>16</sup>

The PESCO could be the primary mechanism to gather the member states progressively toward this new reality. Thus, the European Union established a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), a permanent command-and-control structure at the military strategic level within the EU Military Staff as part of the CSDP. Composed of up to 25 staffers, the MPCC is devoted to assisting with the planning and conduct of so-called non-executive (i.e., training and assistance) missions.<sup>17</sup>

### **EU Defense and European Defense? “Eppur, si muove.”**

The European Union has tried, in a tortuous and challenging way, to define itself and its role in an international system in a transformation that will hardly respond to the global framework integrated by Western countries since the end of the Cold War. Thus, the EU understands what it is currently facing: the world today is a more complicated space that is interconnected regarding dependency, connectivity, migration, citizenship, and development. This international system is increasingly anarchic, sustaining a set of uncertainties, regarding issues and reliable actors of the past. These geopolitical issues include the political future of the United States, the rise and possible leadership of specific powers such as China and India, the positioning of Russia, and the direct implications on the EU derived from the Brexit. From the geo-economic point of view, the main issues range from the incipient economic recovery to the global situation regarding energy, water, and other resources, which do not allow observers to predict the next stages regarding international politics. Likewise, the EU considers that the world today is a place in controversy or in question. In this sense, the global system today has many more actors, less and worse leadership, and a more complex agenda than in the

past. Nevertheless, the EU sees itself as a promoter of peace and guarantor of the security of its citizens and territory.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Europeans, working with partners, must have the necessary capabilities to defend them and live up to their commitments to mutual assistance and the solidarity enshrined in the treaties that bind their member states together. Still, certain European elites and major allies have harbored a worrying perception. Again, former US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stridently warned European governments in 2011:

*If you told the American taxpayers, as I just did, that they're bearing 75 percent of the financial burden of the alliance, this is going to raise eyebrows. And so my hope is that the reality—that the fact that reality is changing in the United States will get the attention of European leaders to realize that the drift of the past 20 years can't continue—not if they want to have a strong transatlantic partnership with the United States.<sup>19</sup>*

This resounded as a warning for the European allies when most of them do not invest enough in military capabilities to deal with the threats the Union identifies in the 2016 *EUGS*. From this point of view, it was clear that the European Union still ought to operate with allies and partners. Thus, the EU itself signed a joint declaration with NATO at the Warsaw Summit in July 2016. Paradoxically, most of the first efforts responded precisely to create a core around collective defense: first, Article 47.2. (Lisbon Treaty), which creates a mutual assistance clause (a NATO article V (and IV)); second, Article 222 (Lisbon Treaty, which establishes a solidarity clause); and, finally, Article 42.6 (Treaty on European Union), creating the PESCO. In fact, France, due to the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, invoked, for the first time, Article 47.2, which, unlike the other listed articles, directly addresses terrorist attacks. In direct response, 28 European governments pledged their unconditional support of French counterterrorist operations, initiating a continent-wide security clampdown.<sup>20</sup>

This incident offered a slightly different vision about the EU defense integration goals for the member states, opening a debate about the central role of all these structures because power projection appears as the primary goal for France, but for other countries, collective defense is emphasized. Still, some member states continue to look to NATO for this mission in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis that began in 2014.

At the same time, Germany and France have been taking steps outside the NATO and EU frameworks to advance European defense. Berlin, using the Framework Nations Concept, which consists of around 20 partner nations and covers a wide array of defense cooperation in different areas such as medical;

chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear; civil-military cooperation; logistics; and so forth, started to put military units from other European countries under German command.

Meanwhile, France, understanding the difficulties in moving decisively and quickly in some vital regions (mainly Europe's southern periphery), has also launched defense cooperation outside the EU framework. The European Intervention Initiative would allow willingly European states to act militarily independently from the existing institutional structures of the EU or NATO. French president Emmanuel Macron launched the idea in his September 2017 Sorbonne speech,<sup>21</sup> and the 2017 French *Defense and National Security Strategic Review* established the European Intervention Initiative as a priority.<sup>22</sup> In this regard, Paris' delegation at the 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue mentioned France's bases and forces deployed in the Asia-Pacific. The German and French postures seem a duplication of effort, although both could not match very well nor develop a proper European strategic culture.

### **The Next Debate: Collective Security, Deterrence, and Power Projection**

The EU has emphasized the cooperative nature of security engagement in Asia, with a priority on mutual security, focusing on nontraditional security issues, inviting cooperation, and arguing for greater diplomatic engagement on hard security issues. Consequently, the EU sees itself as a diplomatic broker on hard security issues and not as a strategic actor. Thus, most of Indo-Pacific experts in Europe frame the discussion of Asian security around "the allegedly limited influence the EU exerts through diplomatic statements."<sup>23</sup> As a result, the EU has only had a negligible impact on the motivations and behaviors of Asian states, leading many in Europe to conclude that involvement in Asian security is hopeless. At the same time, there are critical postures concerning the costs for the EU's interactions in the region, including fears that standing up for international sea law in the Indo-Pacific would have a negative impact on EU-China relations, concerns that EU resources should focus more on national security priorities, apprehension over the handling of Russian assertiveness, and worries of further jihadist terror attacks. Nevertheless, the 2016 *EUGS* has an enthusiastic approach toward Asia, focusing on supporting collective security all across the board: "We will also develop a more politically rounded approach to Asia, seeking to make greater practical contributions to Asian security."<sup>24</sup> This approach includes support to an ASEAN-led regional security architecture, with a particular focus on freedom of navigation; re-

spect for international law, including the Law of the Sea and its arbitration procedures; and encouraging the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes. The range of this approach includes cooperation on counterterrorism, antitrafficking, and migration, and enhances transport, trade, and energy connectivity. However, the endeavor focuses on nonproliferation challenges in the Korean peninsula—although the EU has a minor role there. Thus, the EU capability for reinforcing collective security and defending the status quo of the multilateral international order and international law is reduced due to a (perceived) lack of will and credibility. Nevertheless, one must acknowledge the growing security relations of some EU member states such as France and the United Kingdom with Indo-Pacific powers like Japan and Australia. With military presences and territories in the Indo-Pacific, it is unsurprising that the two latter countries remain more engaged in the concerns of the region. For example, the UK is a member of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, a series of defense relationships established by a series of multilateral agreements between the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Singapore. Signed in 1971, these arrangements bind the signatories to consult one another in the event or threat of an armed attack on any of these five countries for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken jointly or separately in response. Additionally, the UK maintains a military presence in the area in Brunei and a support facility in Singapore. According to Michael Fallon, former British defense secretary, Britain will increase its presence in the area, and by the 2020s, one of the two *Queen Elizabeth*-class aircraft carriers will be in the region. Likewise, France has military installations and territories, specifically in Polynesia and New Caledonia. The UK and France have plans to increase power projection capabilities as the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region grows, but the Brexit and the current developments of EU defense integration complicate any overarching EU approach other than security cooperation as outlined above.

However, the European Union does not rely mainly on its capacity for the projection of power. Instead, the EU prides itself on being a model for prosperity and a facilitator for the peaceful resolution of problems and reconciliation. Europe leads this model as an example for the rest of the world, and there is a compelling logic behind this notion. Unfortunately, this position also maintains a series of postulates that are either outdated or have not responded to the evolving dynamics of the international system. The influence of European leadership decreases rapidly with an increase in geographical distance and the reduction of the EU's economic capacity. Paradoxically, the states on its borders present a whole series of strategic

problems, which can no longer be addressed by normative power alone. The EU's behavior, as demonstrated during the Arab Spring, the civil war in Syria, and the Crimea/Ukraine crisis showed a worrying disconnect between the EU's vital interests and the necessary military, economic, and technological capabilities and instruments to protect those interests. Not only does the EU need a realistic understanding about the nature, rules, and consequences of a new and evolving international system-in-the-making, it also requires the will to develop the necessary changes and adequate policies to work in this new environment. Failing to do so, the EU could enter a security dilemma, not perhaps in the short or medium term but in a longer term—strongly affecting the future of the multilateral liberal international order. **JIPA**

## Notes

1. According to the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, the Council is likewise the institution responsible for adopting decisions relating to civilian and military tasks, defining their objectives and scope and the general conditions for their implementation (Article 43.2) Treaty of the European Union (TEU) and may entrust the implementation of a task to a group of member states (Article 44.1 TEU). Thus, The Council shall adopt a decision establishing permanent structured cooperation (Article 46.2 TEU), a decision confirming the participation of a member state in structured cooperation (Article 46.3 TEU), a decision suspending the participation of a member state in structured cooperation (Article 46.4 TEU). This mechanism has been regulated in arts. 42 and 46 of the TEU and in an annexed Protocol. Then the Permanent Structured Cooperation, PESCO, is defined as: “Those Member States whose military capabilities fulfill higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions shall establish Permanent Structured Cooperation within the Union framework.” Unlike ordinary enhanced cooperation (open to the participation of all member states), structured cooperation requires a member state to possess military capabilities that fulfill high criteria and a wish to make more binding commitments in this military sphere. The participation of such states in the mechanism for structured cooperation entails belonging to the European Defense Agency. All the member states of the Union, except Denmark, are currently members of the agency. This PESCO is not limited exclusively to the states that originally established it; other member states are allowed to join provided, of course, that they notify their wish to the Council and the High Representative. The Council, comprised solely of the member states participating in the structured cooperation, shall be responsible for authorizing the decision acting by qualified majority, after ensuring that the member state in question fulfils the criteria and takes on the commitments established in articles 1 and 2 of the Protocol on Permanent Structured Cooperation.

2. The UK probably means a 25 percent EU's military capability, but also a solid actor regarding intelligence capabilities and power projection.

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5. *Ibid.*, 20–21.

6. European Commission, “Countries and Regions: Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN),” website, 1 August 2018, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/asean/>.

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14. *Ibid.*, 12–13.

15. *Ibid.*, 13.

16. *Ibid.*, 14–15.

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# Anatomy of Failure

## Why America Loses Every War It Starts

Manabrata Guha

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In a “critical notice” referencing Derek Parfait’s *On What Matters*, Michael Rosen fleetingly, but acutely, poses a question that is of some relevance to what follows. Rosen asks, “[are] book reviews—the ranking of others’ work, delivered in a tone of apparent omniscience—examples of . . . academic gatekeeping?”<sup>1</sup> This critical review does not pretend to engage in any kind of gatekeeping exercise—academic or otherwise. However, that still leaves the question of how to engage with Harlan Ullman’s text, *Anatomy of Failure: Why America Loses Every War It Starts* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017), Kindle version.

At the outset, it is best not to mince words. Ullman’s book is a challenging read. While the book is littered with some rather perceptive and profound observations, the reading experience is, at best, disjointed. One immediately obvious reason is the style of presentation, which reminds this reviewer of the explanatory notes that accompany the ubiquitous PowerPoint (or equivalent) presentation slide deck. More importantly, however, Ullman’s book is challenging because, in effect, it seeks to interrogate *how* we think about war and its conduct, which is far more disturbing, as it compels us to rethink the problem of war afresh. From a reviewer’s perspective, it is also challenging because—in a situation like what Rosen faced when reviewing Parfait’s work—Ullman’s book is almost impossible to review conventionally.<sup>2</sup> What should the reviewer do? Summarize its contents? That is very easily done. Over seven chapters—each addressing a specific event/strategic condition in US military history and interspersed with a number of “personal vignettes”—Ullman relentlessly pursues one key question: “Why, given what we believe is the greatest military in the world, [is] our [the American] record in war and military interventions . . . so failure prone?” (p. vii) However, such an exercise in



summarization would only serve to reduce Ullman's thesis and, more importantly, its import to mere slogans and "calls for action," which, while providing catchy "sound bites," will only perpetuate the very condition that Ullman writes against. That said, ironically, it appears that Ullman is himself not above a bit of sloganeering—case in point: "the brain-based approach!"

Then there is the question of "assessment." How does Ullman's work stack up against the plethora of books and articles that investigate and examine the US strategic military capability and its effectiveness in actual use? While it is possible to cast Ullman's thesis within an even more fine-grained evidential background than what he provides, the core problem highlighted in this book cannot be denied—though it should be noted that such an exercise is also not unique to him. Others, in different ways, have addressed these and related matters. Moreover, it would be wrong to assume that American strategy and security managers are not fully cognizant of this less-than-stellar history of US strategic military power. However, what is unique about Ullman's work is his call to reevaluate the very foundations on which American (and, by extension, Western) strategy making/war waging rests. While we will have occasion to assess how far his call for a reevaluation goes, a question that is tempting to pose in the immediate context is whether Ullman's book endures or not. That, in my opinion, would be an inappropriate question given the explicit and implicit stakes involved. What is in no doubt, however, is that Ullman highlights a matter that is not only of pressing concern for America's strategy and security managers but also one that is, most certainly, a matter of high interest for their counterparts globally—friendly *and* adversarial.

Regardless, as Rosen points out, "the idea that one should just recommend a work and leave the rest to the reader seems inadequate."<sup>3</sup> Works such as Ullman's—though engaging with a very serious topic—also run the risk of being dismissed as being mere "pop(ular)" or "folk" commentaries on war, strategy, and politics, and as such, they are open to misinterpretation leading to the obscuring of what I refer to as the "metastrategic armature" that underwrites such efforts.<sup>4</sup> Surely, when the stakes are so high, a more nuanced engagement with such books is necessary, and Ullman's latest effort is no exception. Like Rosen, therefore, while I will not shirk the responsibility to engage with Ullman's work with care, I will begin by clarifying a few preliminary points that may enframe my engagement with his work better.

First, my original intention was to write a combined critical review essay on Ullman's book and Rufus Phillips' memoir.<sup>5</sup> My reasoning was not as obtuse as it may

appear to be at first glance. Phillips' account suggests that a growing disjoint between its political and military strategies wracked the US strategic effort in Vietnam. And, while Phillips' focus is primarily on the shortcomings and failures of the former, his account provides a close look at how this disjoint manifested itself—needless to say, to the detriment of the overall American effort in Vietnam—at every level, i.e., from the strategic to the microtactical. In effect, Phillips' memoir serves to not simply elucidate Ullman's chapter on Vietnam in detail but also to forcefully reiterate Ullman's contention that US strategy making was not (and is not)—in Ullman's terms—"brains-based." Further, as Ullman notes, his own experience in strategic-military affairs began with his service in Vietnam, which he describes by means of three "personal vignettes" in the introduction, which only serves to confirm an obvious congruence and overlap between the two texts. However, repeated close readings convinced me that a combined review would not—indeed, cannot—do justice to either book, which would be tragic given that both deserve our close attention. Thus, my decision was to focus only on Ullman's text.

Second, Ullman's principal concern in the book is about "the larger reasons for failure and the damning impact of the absence of sound strategic thinking." (p. viii) Ullman is under no illusion—and he leaves the reader under no illusion—that the American strategic-military posture is flawed, and he fleshes out his contention in the 236 pages of his book. It is important to mention here that Ullman's argument is not that the American strategic-military establishment is staffed with and by dullards. Indeed, he clarifies, "There is no doubt that today's American military is by orders of magnitude more professionally competent, committed to service, and able" than ever before in the country's history. Instead, Ullman posits that the American strategy-making process has become rote. It has become subservient to technology, it has become bureaucratic and, consequently, sluggish, given the interagency struggles that ensue during the strategy-formulation and execution process—leading to strategic failures.<sup>6</sup> That being said, we should also not fail to recognize and appreciate that the "strategy-making process" is not simplistic, linear, or iterative. It is a multidimensional, multidomain, and multimodal exercise, particularly in the context of the modern nation-state and of the globalized (and increasingly informationalized) world that we currently inhabit and that we can look forward to inhabiting in the near- and mid-term future. Equally, we should also remember that strategy making is also not a "freewheeling" exercise. It is not so in the context of commercial or social enterprises, and it is certainly not so in

the case of nation-states. In effect, the strategy-making process is, to use Rousseau's phrase out of context, "bound in chains." The chains that I am referring to here, which Ullman also invokes, albeit indirectly, are not simply those of technology, the weight of institutions and bureaucracies, among others, they are also the cognitive-conceptual frameworks within which the strategy-making (or any other) process unfolds. In this sense, these cognitive-conceptual frameworks serve as a metastrategic armature, which shapes how we understand concepts such as "victory," "defeat," "friend," or "enemy"; how we engage with technology; how we develop strategies, doctrines, and tactics; and how we design and operationalize institutions. As such, this metastrategic armature plays *a foundational role in how we make strategic sense of the world and how we respond to it strategically*.

Third, and related to the above, while it may not be confidence inspiring in some quarters to invoke former Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, nevertheless, it is necessary to pay heed to his call to *change how we think about war*.<sup>7</sup> Ullman issues a similar call when he presents us with an awkward term—*brains-based strategy*—and a stern admonishment to "use the matter between our ears." In this sense, it is worth observing that Ullman—like Rumsfeld—is not recommending a specific strategy; *instead, he is recommending an approach to strategizing*.

My aim in this critical engagement with Ullman's work is to suggest that Ullman's argument, despite whatever reservations we may have, seeks to draw our attention to a subtle and metastrategic question—namely, *how* to strategize. This is not simply a process-related question; rather, it is, at its most potent—but also at its most subtle—an opportunity to investigate the nature and constitution of the aforementioned metastrategic armature, which I contend underwrites the strategy-making process. Second, I examine a few of the elements that Ullman identifies as constituting his notion of *brains-based strategy* and assess their resilience when examined against the very criteria that Ullman proposes. Third, I reiterate Ullman's assertion that we are in a state or condition of existence marked by fast-paced transformations in not only strategic-military affairs but also, to steal a phrase from Michel de Certeau, in the very "practice of [our] everyday life."<sup>8</sup> These transformations, which are changing the nature of the emergent battlespace in ways that were the preserve of science fiction just a decade or two back, compel us to reinterrogate "how we think about war" in the twenty-first century. I will conclude by pointing out that while Ullman's solution—the "brain-based approach to strategy-making"—may have its shortcomings (principally, falling victim to the "blind-

ness of insight” trap), that does not undermine, however, the critical importance of the call that he issues, which merits our most urgent attention.

## The Foundational Concerns

In May 2015, at an event where Ullman was presenting his last book, he had an exchange with a conferee, which he reports as follows:

*Conferee: Can you also explain why it is that the United States has lost every war it has started since 1945? Is it because government fails, or something else?*

*HKU: Your question is my next book. The simple answer is that no matter who or what party is in power and whether the president is seasoned or inexperienced, ideology, political expediency, and failure to pose and answer difficult questions or to challenge basic policy assumptions too often dominate and become surrogates for sound strategic thinking.*

*Nor do we always fully understand the issues and consequences of action and inaction. Vietnam was the most blatant example. The second Iraq war is another. And the intervention in Libya in 2011 is a third. “Every time we initiated using force without just cause or legitimate provocation, the results at best damaged our security and at worst were far more destructive. Unfortunately, every administration since Vietnam, less one—that of George H. W. Bush—ignored or did not understand this reality.*

*Without a major revolution in how the nation provides for the common defense and its security, do not expect the future will prove any more successful than the past five decades when we decide to commit force to protect or advance our interests. The most worrying possibility is that this propensity to start wars and use force for the wrong reasons may now be deeply embedded in the nation’s DNA.*

*That does mean we should not use force when we must. But we must be certain when we do use force that it is for the right reasons and in our national interest. (p. 23, emphasis added)*

This, effectively, is a summary of the core issues that appear to animate Ullman’s concern, and it is only fair that we engage with them head-on.

Ullman, quite reasonably, contends that the use of force must be chosen as a course of action if, and only if, the “reasons” are “right,” and when it is in the (American) “national interest.” Considering that, notionally, these are the basic principles on which any nation-state—ideally—wages war, Ullman is not making a point that is outside the norm. However, Ullman elides a critical concern; namely, nation-states often confront situations where the *right reasons* may conflict with *national interest*. This conflictual condition does not seem to merit much of

Ullman's attention. That said, the critical issues at stake here are (1) what constitutes *national interest* and (2) what is meant by *right reasons*. Let us assume—not without foundation and as a bare minimum—that *national interest* involves (a) the protection of the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of the nation-state, (b) the provision of sociocultural and economic security for the citizens, and (c) ensuring that (a) and (b) are protected and, to the extent possible, furthered. However, the case of “right reasons” gives us reason to pause. If considered in the context of national interest as described above, then any act that furthers this national interest is always the right reason.<sup>9</sup> Ullman confirms this when he asserts that “every time we initiated using force without just cause or legitimate provocation, the results at best damaged our security and at worst were far more destructive.” (p. 23) In the process, we also see how Ullman, albeit tacitly, is suggesting that the use of force for a “just cause,” which may, at times, even transcend the requirements of national interests, is also a right reason. This is consistent with the duties and responsibilities that a nation-state assumes as a responsible member of the international state system. Nevertheless, at the same time, it is important to recognize that it is also a pathway to interventionism. I am highlighting this specific point because it ties in what Ullman mentions at the beginning of his reply to the conferee. Ullman says sound strategic thinking should be free from influences of ideology and political expediency, which he then cojoins with his call to interrogate the underlying assumptions on which policy (strategy) is based. Ullman's insistence on this point—and we come across this theme or a variation of it—repeatedly throughout the text, could lead us to conclude that, perhaps, he is invoking a monochromatic political and strategic landscape wherein there is total and absolute unanimity on the notion of right reasons. Nevertheless, the question stands: can “sound strategic thinking” be kept away from ideological, political, cultural considerations? Indeed, one is pressed to ask: is not the determination of which reasons are *right* (or otherwise) also a function of ideology, political systems, cultural dispositions, and institutional imperatives? In the real world, it is impossible to sanitize the strategy-making process from such considerations unless one presumes a condition wherein strategy is divorced from politics. However, this would result in an untenable situation; principally because if, as Clausewitz asserted, “war is an extension of politics by other means,” then it is unavoidable that the strategy-making process will remain untainted by the specter of politics in the applied and abstract senses of the term. Nevertheless, let us, for the moment, give Ullman the benefit of the doubt and assume that what he is referring to are the partisan politi-

cal struggles that strategy makers often must contend with that are internal to the political system of which they are a part. This, to some extent, is understandable, particularly in the context of Ullman's firsthand experiences during the Vietnam War. Reality, however, dictates that any strategy-making process will inevitably be subject to the internal pulls and pressures of a variety of constituencies: political, bureaucratic, cultural, among others.<sup>10</sup> Wishing them away is only possible under a system of government that is authoritarian and dictatorial, which would undermine the very basis of the American (or any democratic) political system.<sup>11</sup> Again, giving Ullman the benefit of the doubt, let us assume that what he is calling for is a consensus between the various constituencies involved to reach a common ground—defined by national interest and the right reasons—which is bereft of such partisan political activities. But then again, it is also necessary to recognize and appreciate that such pulls and pressures often serve as checks and balances against the wanton use of executive power and privilege, with the caveat that such checks and balances should not stymie the strategy-making process, particularly under wartime conditions.<sup>12</sup>

Notwithstanding, Ullman makes a larger, more controversial, point, contending that “successive administrations of both parties, despite asserting that force was a last resort, too often turned to force as the first resort of policy, ignoring or marginalizing other tools of government.” (p 23) He goes on to assert that “the United States . . . [seems to be] incapable of applying sound strategic thinking and judgment, of treating the causes and not the symptoms of crisis, threats, and challenges to security and well-being—and always with predictable and unwanted results.” (p. 23) This leads him to ask what, to me, is a key question: “Has this propensity of failure become permanently grafted onto America's political DNA? Is failure a product of a political system that is seemingly unable or unwilling to govern...? Or do today's multifaceted, complex, and numerous challenges, some of which defy solution, simply exceed the capacity of any individual and administration, no matter how capable, to respond effectively?” (p. 23) It is at this point that Ullman veers into dangerous territory. He asserts,

*Each of the post-World War II presidents, from Harry Truman to Richard Nixon, with the exception of JFK, was reasonably prepared to assume . . . high office. While Truman may not have possessed obvious, outward qualifications for the presidency and had been excluded by Roosevelt from may decisions. . . few presidents read more history or knew more about every prior presidency. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Nixon, and Gerald Ford likewise were seasoned. . . . Jimmy Carter was the first president whose resume could be called into question regarding his fitness to assume the office on Day One. (p. 26)*

While pointing out Kennedy's inexperience in presidential-level activities, Ullman grants him a pass by noting, "The young Kennedy's charisma and selection of the so-called best and brightest for his team offset his lack of experience." (p. 26) He similarly gives a pass to Ronald Reagan, asserting, "He had twice been governor of a state with a gross domestic product larger than those of most countries and had presided over the Screen Actors Guild for many years [!]" (p. 26, emphasis added)<sup>13</sup> Ullman is critical—to the point of being disparaging—of the presidents that followed Kennedy, with the exception of George H. W. Bush, for whom he reserves his highest praise, stating that he "was as qualified as any president in recent history . . . how he and his administration dealt with the implosion of the Soviet Union, made Europe 'whole, free, and at peace,' and ejected Saddam Hussein from Kuwait in 1991 are textbook cases of the application of sound strategic-thinking and judgment." (p. 26) However, is this a valid assessment even by Ullman's own standards? When considered superficially, Ullman may seem to have a point. Nevertheless, consider also the facts that the implosion of the Soviet Union has now led to the rise of an aggressively authoritarian Russia, which has—or so it is alleged—materially intervened in and disrupted the American democratic process; Europe is gradually becoming a "new" battleground, where a newly resurgent Russia is increasingly flexing its muscles; and, Iraq has degenerated into a quagmire that oscillates between violent sectarian violence and an uneasy peace between rival factions. Ullman, of course, can (and probably will) argue that the advantages accrued by the actions of Pres. George H. W. Bush have been squandered by later administrations. Yet, one cannot escape the facts that (1) strategy is a long-term activity and should be—in Ullman's own terms—planned and engaged in accordingly and (2) the reality is that it is impossible to predict the effects that the design and implementation of a strategy will or may have in the long term.

So, to what does Ullman ascribe this apparently shoddy history of American strategy making? He lists five points:

1. Lack of a sense of history;
2. Unachievable aspirations and objectives;
3. Insufficient knowledge and understanding of situations;
4. Group think, which eliminates the "challenging of assumptions and arguments"; and

5. Politicization of issues that are at stake. (p. 214)

In addition to these, Ullman attributes the progressive decline of American strategy-making ability to a “broken government,” which he attributes (correctly, in some measure) to the increasingly polarized conditions afflicting the domestic American political scene and to structural deficiencies such as the constitution of the National Security Council and the office of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, among others. While some of Ullman’s concerns ring true, the manner in which he presents them takes away from the force of his argument. Thus, for example, using the Iraq War of 2003 as an example, Ullman notes that Pres. George W. Bush’s aim to “transform the geostrategic landscape of the Middle East” (p. 214) is reflective of an unquestioned belief in American exceptionalism, a flawed ideology, a sense of moral superiority, and confidence in the ability of the US military to resolve complex political, socioeconomic, religious, and cultural divides and conflicts. (p. 214) While the strategic rationale underwriting the younger Bush’s administration’s strategic-military efforts in Iraq was and remains eminently questionable, it is also worth bearing in mind that post–World War II, as the world segued into the Cold War, the United States remained the sole and paramount global power. With the Soviet Union battered after its brutal victory over the Axis forces, it fell to the United States to take the place of the British Empire, which could not sustain itself in the aftermath of the war, and to take the lead in the reconstruction of a shattered Europe. Matters were made more acute by the growing perception—not unfounded—that, while devastated, the USSR did not hesitate to extend its influence over nation-states that were, at the time, emerging from under the yoke of colonialism. To combat such a turn of events, the United States had no choice but to step into a role that has been often described in terms of the *world’s policeman*. Now, Ullman makes an important point. He suggests that to assume that the United States will continue to carry the burden of being the world’s policeman into the twenty-first century is untenable and unfair. Understandably, Ullman calls for America’s allies to shoulder a part of the responsibility, particularly in the context of dealing with violent pan-global insurgencies fostered by entities like the Islamic State (IS)/Da’esh, among others. The same logic applies to the Korean peninsula; though, in that specific context, the matter on hand requires a more nuanced stance given the role played by nuclear weapons and the presence of their long-range delivery systems.

Further, Ullman does not hesitate to point out—again, correctly—that with the collapse of the USSR and the advent of the twenty-first century, the strategic com-



mons has lost the comfortable bipolarity that the world had segued into after the World War II. While this is not, per se, a new observation, given that this has been debated across academic journals ad nauseam, Ullman's call to recognize the ramifications of this—he refers to it as the “No World Order”—is important and worthy of our consideration. Ullman's litany of complaints, with the exception of the American involvement in the First Gulf War, continues across multiple administrations. The theme is always the same; namely, the presidents were/are underqualified, America has developed a propensity to engage in *unproductive wars*, and the American national security establishment is not brains-based and is held hostage to partisan party politics and to the inertia of the bureaucracy—among other problems.

### The Brains-based Approach

Arguably, the last two chapters of Ullman's book represent a summary of his core thesis. In them, he tells us “how to win,” and it is not surprising that his solution is the “brains-based approach to sound strategic thinking.” According to Ullman, this approach consists of “three parts: complete knowledge and full understanding of all aspects of the problem set and solutions; a mind-set that is based on the realities of this, the twenty-first, century and not the last one; and a focus on affecting, influencing, and controlling the wills and perceptions of real and potential enemies.” (p. 211) It is worth pointing out that Ullman's insistence on cultivating and employing a twenty-first-century mind-set is not at the expense of a sense of history. Indeed, Ullman argues “history counts.” However, unfortunately, he does not pursue this line of thinking in any systematic manner by which the reader can profit. Instead, after a few perfunctory statements, he launches into a rehashed version of his complaints, with which the reader, by now, is very familiar.

Nevertheless, it is also in this section that Ullman introduces some of the more interesting points/issues that warrant our attention. Thus, for example, Ullman brings up the topic of deterrence and asks how and in what ways the concept of deterrence is valuable or even applicable in the twenty-first century. Observing that the world is now more interconnected than ever before and the loss of the bipolar system that collapsed with the dismantling of the USSR, Ullman makes a forceful and thought-provoking point when he asserts, “A new definition of deterrence must also be fashioned for so-called peer competitors.” (p. 221) Former Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, in 2016, proposed a “four plus one” threat matrix involving “the four main contingencies for which the Pentagon was to be prepared

. . . (a resurgent) Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran. . . The ‘one’ refer[ing] to IS.” Ullman observes—not without reason—that “given this planning guidance, it followed that the services would attempt to identify what it would take to deter and if necessary to defeat such an adversary if war were to come.” (p. 221) He finds this as being an instance of “inadequate and flawed strategic thinking.” According to Ullman, “Planners were asked . . . to employ mindsets and concepts of the twentieth century to deal with twenty-first century issues.” (p. 221) His contention is not without merit. Is the concept of deterrence relevant, particularly in the context of terrorist insurgents like the IS? And, if yes, how and, more importantly, by what means can such organizations (and movements) be deterred? These remain major unresolved questions in strategic-military affairs given that what is at stake is not simply the matching of weapons systems and capabilities but, more importantly, of influencing hearts and minds. Ullman then goes on to make a curious, but dubious, recommendation in this regard. He suggests—here reiterating his assertion that history counts—that perhaps one way would be to revisit how given that in “terms of historical comparisons, the decades between the 1880s and 1920s were far more rife with terrorist attacks, including the assassination of kings, tsars, prime ministers, and presidents.” (p. 223) While it is certainly the case that such events marked the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, to equate them to the rash of planetary-scale violent insurgencies that are underway in the twenty-first century would be inappropriate and inaccurate. Even a cursory glance at the historical records of the time shows that the revolutionary movements marking the late immediately preceding centuries were driven more by independence movements, which are markedly different in nature and character from the rationale that appears to underwrite modern-day insurgencies and terrorist movements. In sum, therefore, while Ullman’s assertion to pay attention to history is laudable, it is important that in the process we should not misread and misunderstand history and the lessons that it holds up for us.

More than anything else, the tripartite constituents of Ullman’s brains-based approach are interesting and revealing, and it is worth paying attention to them, particularly in the context of our increasingly informationalized world. In the first instance, Ullman suggests that a “complete knowledge and full understanding of all aspects of the problem set and solutions” is a necessary prerequisite for sound strategic thinking. This is not as unique a proposition as Ullman may make it out to be. Consider, for example, the dominant battlespace knowledge (DBK) and full-spectrum dominance (FSD) models.<sup>14</sup> While both invoke a knowledge-centric

model in the context of strategic-military affairs, they have also invited sharp criticism for the lack of modesty with which they—particularly the FSD model—invoke the notion of *knowledge*. Even so, it is interesting to note, particularly in the case of the DBK model, that the use of the word *dominant*—as opposed to *complete knowledge*—suggests that the designers and proponents of this and similar models were sensitive to the fact that the fog of war ensures that complete knowledge of the battlespace (or, alternatively, of the global strategic commons) is impossible to achieve. Granted that with the advent of the network-centric model of warfare coupled with recent advances in sensor-technology, data sciences, machine learning, and artificial intelligence systems, our knowledge of the world and our ability to catalogue it has grown exponentially. Nevertheless, the notion of *complete knowledge* remains a misnomer simply for the fact that the world and its constituents are not closed systems; rather, they are open systems, which are constantly in a state or condition of transformation. As such, the “known unknowns” and the “unknown unknowns” remain real and potent barriers to the acquisition of complete knowledge. However, what leads Ullman to argue for complete knowledge? Aside from it being a desired ideal, it is also reflective of the mind-set that Ullman brings to the argument, which is a matter that we will explore in the following section of this essay.

The second constituent of the brains-based approach is the development and cultivation of a mind-set that is more in sync with the twenty-first century. Ullman’s call to revisit the concept of deterrence in the twenty-first century is, in part, motivated by this concern. In principle, one cannot help but agree with Ullman. However, what constitutes a twenty-first century mind-set? While it is undeniable that rapid advances in information technology and the computational sciences have triggered, in part, what Gernot Böhme refers to as “invasive technification,” it is still unclear as to how these trends have impacted the way by which we cognize the world, particularly in the strategic-military context.<sup>15</sup> Further, it has been argued that as the process of globalization intensifies leading to the emergence of what Kenichi Ohmae referred to as “the borderless world,” there is a renewed assault on the concept of the nation-state.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the mainstay of the international system remains the nation-state. Even the rash of planetary-scale insurgencies and other nonmilitary emergences such as global pandemics, natural disasters, and flows of population fleeing areas of violence, famine, and such, have not fundamentally broken the concept and architecture of the nation-state, though it may have weakened it. How then are we to pay heed to Ullman’s call for the cultivation of a

twenty-first century mind-set? Given that for Ullman “national interest” in the American context is a key concern, we can see how he contradicts himself if we assume that at least one element of the twenty-first century mind-set—particularly in the strategic-military context—is the emergence of a “borderless world.”

The third constituent of Ullman’s solution is a “focus on affecting, influencing, and controlling the wills and perceptions of real and potential enemies.” This has a lineage that can be drawn back to a 1996 text that he coauthored with James P. Wade and others from the Defense Group Inc.<sup>17</sup> That text, titled *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*, was primarily an analysis of military operations that are specifically designed to radically undermine an adversary’s war-waging ability by the imposition of overwhelming force.<sup>18</sup> Some of the examples that the authors of that text include in their analysis are the so-called Blitzkrieg operations undertaken by the Wehrmacht during the Battle for France in 1940, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Battle of Grozny (1994–95), and the Iraq War of 2003. For our purposes, however, it is necessary to recognize that “*shock and awe*” was a doctrine that was identified as being applicable at the military-operational level. The key idea of this doctrine was to impose a cognitive overload on an adversary, which would cripple its war-fighting capability. As Ullman himself explained in an interview with *CBS News*, “You’re sitting in Baghdad and all of a sudden you’re the general and 30 of your division headquarters have been wiped out. You also take the city down. By that I mean you get rid of their power, water. In 2, 3, 4, 5 days they are physically, emotionally and psychologically exhausted.”<sup>19</sup> It is also important to recognize that such a design can work within a battlespace that is limited in scope and extent, though its trickle-effects should be felt across the myriad of adversarial capabilities. This is evident from the examples that Ullman and Wade provide in their collaborative work.

Against this backdrop, we are compelled to ask: what does Ullman mean when he says, “focus on affecting, influencing, and controlling the wills and perceptions of real and potential enemies?” Notice, in this context, his invocation of *potential enemies*. This suggests that he is attempting to apply the doctrine of shock and awe beyond the confines of the battlespace to a wider strategic landscape. Again, there is some merit to this. However, such a posture will involve factors that include, but which are not limited to, the military and its use of force. It will involve a kind of diplomacy that can create and sustain a strategic narrative that will convey to friends and foes alike of America’s consistency, its resilience, and its principled stance in the use of force. When considered in this light, and when cast against

Ullman's contention that America's use of force has often been misapplied, one can appreciate the import of what Ullman is trying to convey. Yet, as I have observed over the course of this essay, Ullman hobbles his own efforts given the manner in which he presents his case.

### The "Blindness of Insight"

The tragedy of Ullman's latest effort lies in the fact that while he provides us with some truly thought-provoking concepts and ideas, he does not develop them to their fullest potential. I have remarked on his questioning of the concept of deterrence in the twenty-first century, his insistence on disrupting the cognitive capabilities of adversaries by the use of shock and awe, and his emphasis on developing a mind-set attuned to the twenty-first century. These are all valuable insights. Nevertheless, they are not, per se, new. In addition to this, in the process of offering us these insights, it appears that Ullman falls victim to the very point with which he began his exposition—namely, an inability to interrogate the foundations on which his propositions stand.

Recall Ullman's insistence on interrogating the fundamental assumptions that underwrite strategy and policy. It then behooves us to query the assumptions on which his own prescriptions stand. Let us take, by way of an example, his insistence on the need for "complete knowledge and full understanding of all aspects of the problem set and solutions." As discussed above, the notion of *complete knowledge* in the context of an understanding of the world as an open system is a misnomer. Yet, Ullman is insistent on this. It, therefore, falls on us to ask what allows Ullman to make this assertion.

James Gibson, in his insightful book titled, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam*, informs us that, according to Henry Kissinger,

*American foreign policy [and, by extension, strategic policy] has been based "on the assumption that technology plus managerial skills [gives] us the ability to reshape the international system and to bring domestic transformations in 'emerging countries.'" He indicates that there are virtually no limits to this technical intervention in the world: "A scientific revolution has, for all practical purposes, removed technical limits from the exercise of power in foreign policy." Power thus becomes measured solely in technical terms: political power becomes physically embedded in the United States' large, efficient economy, its war production system capable of creating advanced war machines, and its economic-managerial science for administering these production systems.<sup>20</sup>*

Despite Ullman's cautionary note on being subservient to technology, it is obvious that he is grounded within a scientific-technical construct, which is, in turn, a consequence of "a scientific revolution, which has, for all practical purposes, removed technical limits from the exercise of power."<sup>21</sup> Thus, as Gibson reports, power "is measured solely in technical terms." Ullman makes this assumption without being explicit about it. At the cost of a minor diversion, it is worth pointing out that Martin Libicki, among others, have also made a similar point:

*... even with stealth, everything ultimately can be found. All objects have mass and thus gravity. Every object moving in a medium creates vortices and must expend energy to do so. If nothing else, objects of a certain size have to occupy some space for some time. A set of sensors placed sufficiently close together can, in theory, eventually trap everything by getting close enough. A line of sensitive receivers placed close together will find its line-of-sight to a beaming object cut if a bomber – no matter how stealthy—rolls past . . . sensors of certain minimum discrimination placed close enough together can, at some epsilon, catch anything.<sup>22</sup>*

As is evident, when cast within a "grid of intelligibility," the ideal of attaining complete knowledge is an easy trap into which to fall. However, is the casting of such a grid of intelligibility possible? Confining ourselves to the strategic-military context, such a possibility would mean the solution of the fog-of-war problem that Carl von Clausewitz had identified, which remains the holy grail for military theorists and strategists. Currently, even with the considerable advances that we have made in the computational and data sciences and in the field of artificial intelligence and sensor-technology, this remains beyond our reach. Former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld recognized this when he noted that the intractable problem afflicting strategic-military affairs is the problem of the "unknown unknowns."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the case of the unknown unknowns is the extreme. As Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek has astutely pointed out, we even have problems with "the unknown knowns;" that is, often we are ignorant of what we know!<sup>24</sup> Thus, while there is no denying the fact that strategy and military operations are knowledge- and information-based activities, striving for, in Ullman's terms, "complete knowledge and full understanding of all aspects of the problem set and solutions" is untenable. Indeed, such a pursuit would be dangerous for, in the first instance, it will require us to become overly dependent on technology, which is a state of affairs that he himself critiques. Moreover, we would run the danger of taking for granted that the grid of intelligibility constitutes the world-as-such; thereby, exposing ourselves to the trials and tribulations when we are confronted by the unknown unknowns.

As we have seen, Ullman's brains-based approach also includes that curious call to adopt a twenty-first century mind-set, meaning not to be held hostage to the past. This does not mean jettisoning a sense of history and being insensitive to the lessons that history teaches us. What it does mean, however, is the ability to create new concepts and constructs that are more attuned to the time. Take, for example, the German operations during the Battle for France in 1940 and in the early stages of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. During those operations, German military theorists and planners were able to mate three distinct technologies—the tank, the radio, and short-ranged aircraft deployed as flying artillery—coupled with an expanded understanding of their *Stoßtrupp* tactics, to create conditions that threw their adversaries off balance.<sup>25</sup> Particularly in the case of the Battle for France, in addition to the unexpected thrust through the Ardennes, this combination undermined the Allied war-waging ability to the extent that France had to sue for peace. It is important to note that in addition to these German initiatives, another crucial element that marked the Battle for France was the rigidity that the Allied High Command displayed both in terms of preparing for war and when confronting the German military juggernaut. The evidence for this lies in the French reliance on the Maginot Line and their expectation that any German offensive would take the shape and form of the great offensives of World War I, marked by massive artillery barrages and frontal infantry assaults. This expectation was rudely disrupted as the Germans bypassed the fixed defenses of the Maginot Line and struck deep into the Allied interior, which resulted in, first, a command paralysis and, shortly thereafter, into a collapse of the Allied war effort on the European continent. What this example serves to highlight is how the Allied insistence on following the doctrinal lessons of the past (of World War I) led them to face a military disaster.

We can point to the recent Chinese efforts to construct an antiship ballistic missile defense system to protect their eastern seaboard from the powerful US carrier battlegroups as another case in point. Again, in this instance, Chinese military theorists and scientists have been able to mate three “old” technologies—namely, an over-the-horizon radar, a ballistic missile, and a maneuverable warhead—to create a “system” that, even if not tested under battle conditions, has given enough concern to the US Navy reason to pause.<sup>26</sup> Here again we find Chinese military strategists—operating within the confines of an age-old concept, namely, the antiaccess/area-denial concept—creating a concept of operations that is “new.” A last example will serve to reiterate the point. Recently, the Armed Forces of the United States,

specifically the US Army, has been at the forefront of the development of what has been referred to as the concept of Multi-Domain Battle/Operations (MDB/O). It is interesting to note the reasoning offered for this initiative. Advocates have argued, “Potential adversaries are closing the technology gap with the United States and developing strategies to keep U.S. forces at bay.”<sup>27</sup> Further, it has been assessed that “separatist forces [are] able to gain air superiority via the land, without even an air force . . . they are] able to take down large land forces with a combination of electronic warfare, cyber, autonomous systems, drones, et cetera—not with a close-in battle.”<sup>28</sup> In short, the conclusion is that the US strategic-military establishment requires “urgently”—depending on who is asked—“a very difficult-to-fracture concept.”<sup>29</sup> The MDB/O concept is, perhaps, the most powerful example that serves to reiterate Ullman’s point. Noting that the use of emergent weapons systems and capabilities transcend the traditional domains in which they have been hitherto used, the US military is increasingly cognizant of the fact that when employed creatively in a cross-domain manner, such capabilities can effectively erode the combat worthiness of First-World militaries. Thus, to respond to such challenges, which are notionally twenty-first-century in character, the Armed Forces of the United States have determined that they are in need of a battle concept that can not only address such challenges but which can also present potential adversaries with a concept of battle that is difficult to contend. In this way, it could be argued that the Armed Forces of the United States are slowly but surely breaking away from the past and becoming responsive to the problems and prospects of twenty-first century (or, more modestly, *newer*) models of warfare.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, when Ullman calls for adopting a twenty-first-century mind-set, what he is cautioning us about is not to *always* fall back onto the comfort of resorting to the tried-and-tested means of operating that, while effective in the past, are also predictable and thus “fracture-able” by potential adversaries. The key word here is *always*. It is true that some of the future wars of the twenty-first century will continue to be fought using the ways and means of the last century. However, that is not—or, should not be—the rationale for abandoning efforts to design newer strategic, operational, and tactical models. This is good advice and one that all militaries, including the Armed Forces of the United States, will be required to internalize if they are to succeed in addressing the strategic-military concerns of the future. We should also note that as the process of such research and development gets underway, there should also be a concomitant transformation in the institutions tasked with managing the American strategic-military capability. An early start to



this was proposed with the theory of network-centric warfare and the force transformation project, wherein it was suggested that if the critical need for a military force is to be agile and responsive, then, among other things, the stovepiped command-and-control institutions should be flattened to reduce the long chain of command.<sup>31</sup> Of course, this is easier said than done. All military institutions are built on a foundation of trust, reliability, and the tried-and-tested means by which military force is employed. Thus, to transform radically the design of such organization would be fraught with danger. Ideally, transformation in the strategic-military context, while being revolutionary in nature, should be evolutionary in character. In other words, the way to transform is in incremental stages.<sup>32</sup> Equally, it should be noted that *transformation* is a process and not a goal. Thus, to expect a finite outcome of the transformation process is futile, and insisting on such outcomes can only prove to be counterproductive. Ullman, it appears, is not convinced by this. Indeed, he appears to be sharply critical of the force transformation initiative. (p. 147) His observations on this matter suggest that, like many others, he considers the transformation project as being teleologically driven, which only serves to, in the first instance, highlight his underestimation of the nuances of transformation as a process.

With the exception of his (misguided) ideas about force transformation, Ullman's call for the cultivation and adoption of a twenty-first-century mind-set cannot be faulted. If there is a shortcoming, then it lies in the fact that he does not engage with these ideas in a sustained and consistent manner. However, there is an aspect of the twenty-first-century mind-set theme that Ullman completely elides. While he flags the increasing informationalization of the world that is currently under way, he remains silent about the sociotechnical ramifications of this process. Thus, for example, he does not account for the ways by which the human condition is segueing from pyramidal to more distributed forms of organizing and from the platform-centric model to the more network-centric model of cognizing things and objects. These transformations in our practice of everyday life are having a subtle, but undeniable, impact on strategic-military affairs. Thus, what we see emerging are ensembles of information and communication networks *with lethal capabilities*.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, such ensembles include the Soldier, who is increasingly transforming into what can best be referred to as a *weaponized cyborg*. Note that here I am not simply referring to computationally underwritten and protocologically organized entities. Rather, the reference is to what the philosopher Luciano Floridi refers to as informationally embodied organism or "inforgs," which, he

contends, is an emergent consequence as the “threshold between here (analogue, carbon-based, offline) and there (digital, silicon-based, online) is fast becoming blurred.”<sup>34</sup> These are considerations that not only distort the existing cognitive frameworks by means of which we understand and render the concept of war and of combat but are also emergent indicators that the very design of our current strategic-military systems are fast becoming outdated and outmoded. “This is not because such systems do not and are not employing cutting edge technology. Rather, it is because the organizing principle of the military *per se* is now [increasingly becoming] defunct.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, if we are to truly take Ullman’s call for adopting a twenty-first-century mind-set seriously, then it is not enough to merely call for superficial transformations in our strategic-military practices and institutions. Instead, what is required is an intensive effort from the ground up that will take into account some of the subtler and deeply transformative sociotechnical processes that are currently underway. However, to do this would challenge the geocentric model of strategic-military affairs to which Ullman appears to remain beholden. In this sense, he again falls short of standing true to his own call to question the fundamental assumptions that underlie his recommendations. In short, the matter—conceptually speaking—is not as simple as he may make it out to be.

The third constituent of Ullman’s brains-based approach involves, as we have seen, focusing “on affecting, influencing, and controlling the wills and perceptions of real and potential enemies.” It should come as no surprise that influencing the will and perception of an adversary is critically important, especially under battle conditions. Indeed, as Ullman and Wade point out in their collaborative work, the imposition of shock and awe is an age-old military practice as is evidenced by ancient works on war such as Sun Tzu’s classic *The Art of War*, wherein a general’s strategic and operational acumen was determined by his ability to compel an adversary to capitulate before battle is joined. Numerous such examples abound in history, where, when faced with the weight of firepower, coupled with the art of maneuver, armies have been out thought and compelled to capitulate. This has resulted in the identification of what is often referred to as the *cognitive battlespace*, wherein the aim is to do precisely what Ullman mentions.<sup>36</sup> However, he, again, does not engage with this topic with the seriousness that it warrants. His recommendations are desultory and superficial, and his skimming over the issue undermines his assertions regarding the development and cultivation of a twenty-first-century mind-set. However, the matter is not one to be taken lightly. Thus, as Alexander Kott, chief scientist of the US Army Research Laboratory observes,

“What if the true weak link of the information age force is not the hardware of machines, but the software of the human mind? And if so, could it be that the entire conceptual structure of the information revolution, at least as it applies to military affairs, is built on sand, on the notorious fickleness of human cognition?”<sup>37</sup> Such matters cannot be passed over by glib suggestions that include the setting up of a “twenty-first-century equivalent of Bletchley Park” or to reiterate the importance of “data mining” to derive information and knowledge on potential enemies.” (p. 233) Leaving aside the complexities of the cognitive sciences and associated technologies involved, influencing the will and perception of an adversary requires, among other things, an empathy with the adversary—of his culture, of his cognitive frameworks. While this is true in the close confines of the battlespace, it is even more relevant when applied in the context of the wider strategic landscape. Ullman is correct when he points out that purely military means are not enough to influence an adversary, though it is instrumental in instilling a sense of “awe” in him. Nonmilitary means that necessarily involve diplomacy (including cultural diplomacy), geo-economics, and such, are equally critical constituents when developing a strategic posture that aims to engage in a battle of cognition. One must also contend with the fact that as this process gets underway, the concept of the battlespace will also expand. In this context, Ullman refers to the Russian “active measures” involving “interference in the domestic politics of many democracies,” (p. 238) most recently, as alleged, in the United States. However, it worth pointing out that as far back as in 1999, two Chinese People’s Liberation Army colonels had (unofficially) invoked the concept of unrestricted warfare, which referred precisely to the expansion of the battlespace. Indeed, the two Chinese military officers had even gone to the extent of observing,

*If we acknowledge that the new principles of war are no longer “using armed force to compel the enemy to submit to one’s will,” but rather are “using all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one’s interests.” This represents a change. A change in war and a change in the mode of war occasioned by this. So, just what has led to the change? What kind of changes are they? Where are the changes headed? How does one face these changes?*<sup>38</sup>

This highlights not only the depth and intricacies involved when considering the prospect of influencing and affecting the will and perception of an adversary; it also suggests the ways by which a near-peer competitor is thinking about such matters. Measured against this, Ullman’s rumination on the subject fall short.

## Conclusion

As we have seen, Ullman correctly identifies a number of themes and issues that afflict the current and prevailing US strategic-military establishment and posture. In fact, it cannot be denied that the call that he issues is a valid, indeed, an urgent one. While his presentation of his ideas detracts from the force of the material he presents, that is not a good enough reason to dismiss his latest effort for, in addition to some of the points that we have occasion to engage with above, Ullman also pays attention to some other critical issues that we have not examined—namely, the budgetary issues that he foresees will impact the American strategic-military posture, the problems associated with what he refers to as the “hollow force” issue, and so forth. These are important considerations, and ignoring them will serve the US strategic-military establishment poorly.

Ullman deserves credit for highlighting these and other issues boldly and without reserve, though some of his more offhanded and scathing remarks, which are littered throughout the book, are somewhat in poor taste. Nevertheless, as I have mentioned from the outset, while the book is a challenging read, it deserves our close attention—if not for any other reason but for the fact that it invites us to re-interrogate the metastrategic armature that underwrites the US strategic-military posture. In this sense, it represents a sincere call to reshape the US strategic-military establishment in a manner that will best serve the interests of the country in the twenty-first century. **JIPA**

### Notes

1. Michael Rosen, “Non-Religious Ethics? A Critical Notice of Derek Parfait, On What Matters,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 21, no. 5 (2013): 755–72, <https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/12967839/On%20What%20Matters%207%20November%202013.pdf?sequence=1>. Contrast this with the position taken by Thomas S. Nichols with reference to “peer review” in the context of “expertise.” Clearly, Nichols understands the “gate-keeping” function that Rosen draws our attention to in a positive sense, since he argues that one of the mechanisms by means of which “being an expert” is validated and confirmed is by peer review. See Thomas S. Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters* (London: Oxford University Press, 2017), 35.

2. *Ibid.* This reviewer was struck by how his own experience resulting from multiple readings of Ullman’s book paralleled what Rosen documented in his “critical notice” of Parfait’s work, though, it must be added, the two works are from different domains and they operate within and across different registers. Parfait’s work is, by some accounts (including Rosen’s), one of the greatest modern works of moral philosophy, while Ullman’s book is focused on strategic, military, and political affairs.

3. *Ibid.*

4. I use the word *armature* here to mean “a framework.” An alternate but perhaps more archaic word would be “architectonic,” which was famously used by Immanuel Kant.

5. Rufus Phillips, *Why Vietnam Matters: An Eyewitness Account of Lessons Not Learned*, Reprint Edition, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017).

6. This is reminiscent of the famous phrase “lions led by donkeys,” which was “used to describe the British infantry of the First World War and to blame the generals who led them. The contention is that the brave soldiers (lions) were

sent to their deaths by incompetent and indifferent leaders (donkeys)." See Nigel Rees, *Brewer's Famous Quotations*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006), 23.

7. Donald Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (May/June 2002), 29.

8. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

9. Of course, there are a variety of values and morals involved in such instances, but for the purposes of this essay, I will set those aside without minimizing their importance.

10. In this context, it is instructive to read Graham Allison's and Phillip Zelikow's analysis of the Cuban missile crisis, which dissects how various constituencies within the American strategic-political-military establishment perceived and responded to the strategic problem posed by the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. See Graham Allison and Phillip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd, ed. (New York: Longman, 1999).

11. This could also include, particularly in democratic political systems, what is often referred to as condition of "constitutional dictatorship," which is declared when a state of emergency is invoked. It is also worth noting that such conditions rarely last for very long and often have negative consequences for those who invoke such conditions. A case in point was the state of emergency that was invoked by the then Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi., which lasted 21 months (from 1975–1977). The political consequences for Mrs. Gandhi, when free elections were called, were disastrous. See, for example, Kuldeep Nayar, *The Judgement: Inside Story of the Emergency in India* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977). On constitutional dictatorships, see Clinton Rossitor, *Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in Modern Democracies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1948).

12. Ullman has what is evidently a strong opinion on the matter of checks and balances, which we will have occasion to revisit in due course.

13. Interestingly, Ullman leaves unsaid how and why Reagan's presidency of the Screen Actors' Guild prepared him for assuming the role of the President of the United States of America.

14. On dominant battlespace knowledge, see Martin C. Libicki and Stuart E. Johnson, eds., *Dominant Battlespace Knowledge* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, October 1995). *Full-spectrum dominance*, officially known as *full-spectrum superiority*, was defined, "The cumulative effect of dominance in the air, land, maritime, and space domains and information environment that permits the conduct of joint operations without effective opposition or prohibitive interference." See Joint Publication 1-02, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010. This has come under sustained criticism from various quarters. See, for example, Jason Vest, "Missed Perceptions," *Government Executive*, 1 December 2005, <https://www.govexec.com/magazine/features/2005/12/missed-perceptions/20710/>. See also William F. Engdahl, *Full Spectrum Dominance: Totalitarian Democracy in the New World Order* (Boxborough, MA: Third Millennium Press, 2009).

15. Gernot Böhme, *Invasive Technification: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Technology*, trans. Cameron Shingleton, (London: Continuum Press, 2012).

16. On "the borderless world," see Kenichi Ohmae, *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1999). On the challenges faced by the concept of the nation-state, see, for example, Gurutz Jáuregui Bereciartu, *Decline of the Nation-State*, trans. William A. Douglass (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1994); and Michael Mann, ed., *The Rise and Decline of the Nation State* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

17. Harlan K. Ullman, James P. Wade, et al, *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*, (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 1996).

18. Note: The doctrine of shock and awe is related to the concept of "decisive force," though Ullman and Wade do draw some distinctions between the two in terms of intent, design, manner in which force is applied, and so forth.

19. Harlan Ullman, interview by Sue Chan, *CBS Evening News*, 24 January 2003, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iraq-faces-massive-us-missile-barrage/>.

20. James William Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000), 34.

21. Interestingly, Ullman betrays this sentiment when he asserts, "What is missing today in our search for an effective national-security strategy is the geostrategic equivalent of  $E = mc^2$ ." (p. 229)

22. Martin C. Libicki, *The Mesh and the Net: Speculations on Armed Conflict in a Time of Free Silicon* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 1995), 30–31.

23. SecDef Donald H. Rumsfeld and CJCS Gen Richard Myers, "DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers" (transcript, 12 February 2002), <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636>.

24. Slavoj Žižek, "Rumsfeld and the Bees," *Guardian*, 28 Jun 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2008/jun/28/wildlife.conservation>.

25. An excellent account of how this came about is available in Mary Habeck, *Storm of Steel: The Development of Armor Doctrine in Germany and the Soviet Union, 1919–1939*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2014).

26. See, for example, Zachary Keck, "China's DF-26 'Carrier-Killer' Missile Could Stop the Navy in Its Track (without Firing a Shot)," *National Interest*, 20 April 2018, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/chinas-df-26-carrier-killer-missile-could-stop-the-navy-its-25493>; Terrence Kelly, Anthony Adler, et al, *Employing Land-Based Anti-Ship Missiles in the Western Pacific* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2013), [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical\\_reports/TR1300/TR1321/RAND\\_TR1321.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/TR1300/TR1321/RAND_TR1321.pdf); and Andrew S. Erickson, *Chinese Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM) Development: Drivers, Trajectories, and Strategic Implications* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013).

27. Jon Harper, "Pentagon Pushing 'Multi-Domain Battle' Concept," *National Defense* (website), 4 October 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20161117220422/http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=2319>.

28. Megan Eckstein, "'Multi-Domain Battle' Concept to Increase Integration across Services, Domains," *USNI News*, 4 October 2016, <https://news.usni.org/2016/10/04/multi-domain-battle-concept-increase-integration-across-services-domains>. The comment is attributed to Gen David Perkins, commanding general of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command.

29. Sean D. Carberry, "Officials: DOD Must Adapt to Multi-domain Warfare Model," *Federal Computer Week*, 4 October 2016, <https://fcw.com/articles/2016/10/04/multi-domain-warfare.aspx>.

30. For an extended discussion of the MDB/O concept, see Manabrata Guha and David Galbreath, *The Multi-Domain Battle Concept: A Preliminary Assessment*, (New Delhi: Center for Joint Warfare Studies (MoD), 2018), *forthcoming*.

31. See, for example, David S. Alberts, John J. Gartska, and Frederick P. Stein, *Network-Centric Warfare: Developing and Leveraging Information Superiority* (Washington: CCRP, DOD, 2003), <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a406255.pdf>.

32. See, for example, Manabrata Guha, *Indian Strategic-Military Transformation: Revolutionary in Nature, Evolutionary in Character*, MacArthur Foundation-RSIS Policy Brief (Singapore: Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technical University, December 2013), [https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PB131201\\_Indian\\_Strategic\\_Military\\_Transformation.pdf](https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PB131201_Indian_Strategic_Military_Transformation.pdf).

33. Manabrata Guha, "Networked Nightmares," in *The Digital Dionysus: Nietzsche and the Networked Condition*, ed. Dan Mellamphy and Nandita Biswas Mellamphy (New York: Punctum Books, 2016), 54.

34. Luciano Floridi, "A Look into the Future Impact of ICT on Our Lives," *Information Society* 23, no. 1 (2007) : 59–64.

35. Guha, "Networked Nightmares," 65.

36. See, for example, Alexander Kott, ed., *Battle of Cognition: The Future Information-Rich Warfare and the Mind of the Commander: The Future of Information-rich Warfare and the Mind of the Commander* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008).

37. *Ibid.*, 2.

38. Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: Assumptions on War and Tactics in the Age of Globalization*, [*Chaoxianzhan - dui quanqiuhua shidai zhanzheng yu zhanfa de xiangding*], (Beijing: People's Liberation Army Arts Publishing House, February 1999), 7, <https://www.c4i.org/unrestricted.pdf>.



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**Asia-Pacific Security: An Introduction** by Joanne Wallis and Andrew Carr, eds., Georgetown University Press, 2016, 298 pages.

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Joanne Wallis and Andrew Carr, along with their contributors, wrote this book primarily to serve as a textbook for university students who major in international relations and for those interested in the Asia-Pacific region. Published in 2016, the cases and data cited are comparatively up to date. The book is divided into 12 chapters that cover three themes concerning Asia-Pacific security studies.

The book starts with the editors elucidating on how the Asia-Pacific has been getting attention because of US policy and rising powers in the region. Then they present what are the major security concerns and how to use security studies theories to understand those issues.

In chapter 1, Brad Glosserman writes about an important topic: how the United States is facing China's rising. The United States will remain significant in the Indo-Pacific for several reasons: mobilization of military power, massive economic capability, participation in the regional institutions, and its liberalism and democracy. Despite interaction on economic issues, China and the United States share limited trust and ideologies. The author concludes that until China presents a threat, the United States could share the power. In chapter 2, Lowell Dittmer acknowledges Glosserman's idea and adds that China now is engaging in multiple territorial disputes that involve US interests as well. Indeed, the bilateral relations are so far positive; however, whether China is a threat or not depends on the interpretation of the United States.

The following three chapters in part 1 discuss other relatively small states in the Asia-Pacific. In chapter 3, H. D. P. Envall and Ian Hall discuss whether India and Japan will be the next China—potential great powers. They conclude that despite both countries acquiring a certain level of economic and military capability, neither is likely to emerge as a great power anytime soon, because India is now focusing on alleviating domestic poverty and Japan has always considered its triangle relations with the United States and China as vital.

In chapter 4, Andrew Carr analyses the middle powers of the Asia-Pacific and whether they can be builders or breakers of the regional power dynamics. As builders, they can establish regional institutions to coordinate and resolve the collective challenges; as breakers, these middle powers might drag their allies into difficult situations in which the greater powers are unwilling to get involved, or the middle powers are capable of starting conflicts among themselves due to focusing of self-interests. Examining the region's small states, Joanne Wallis, in chapter 5, applies several security theories—neorealism, neoliberalism, constructivism, and critical theories—to explain the behaviors and actions of these actors.

Part 2 consists five security issues. Tim Huxley and Taylor Brendan, in chapter 6, argue that it is very hard to have a consistency on whether there is or is not an arms race in the Asia-Pacific region due to the different levels of military development, the reasons for acquisition, and other factors. From this reader's perspective, the situation looks far more pessimistic in Northeast Asia than in the South due to the Northeast having more potential triggers of conflicts and lacking a communication mechanism. In chapter 7, James Manicom scrutinizes maritime issues, concluding that these matters are not limited only to the economic benefits and constructivist theme but also to security, which includes food, energy, climate catastrophes, and humanitarian disasters. Among all the listed disputes, the author points out that the South China Sea issue is the most dangerous due to its complexity and the lack of constructive dialogue in resolving the issues. Indeed, the several flashpoints that engage China will be hard to solve due to Beijing's rapid emergence and its assertive and aggressive position toward dispute resolution. Christopher Paul and Nick Nelson, in chapter 8, describe the threats posed by terrorism and insurgency in the Asia-Pacific, including their history and current situation. The authors demonstrate different ways for the government to solve the is-

sues; however, it is extremely risky for other societal factors to form other unrest. Most Asia-Pacific states are facing severe domestic problems; so, internal security issues should be on their priority list. Besides the internal cause of security concerns, external threats come from connection and globalization, which causes nontraditional security issues, such as those analysed by Alistair D. B. Cook in chapter 9. Rex B. Hughes, in chapter 10, turns our attention to a modern security concern: cybersecurity. Since the 1970s, cyberspace has developed rapidly; however, it was arguably not until 2007 that regional governments began to give adequate concern to the matter of cybersecurity—lagging behind many others who had already begun to understand the matter. Meanwhile, cyberspace has been a growing environment for competition between the United States and China.

Part 3 of the book provides potential solutions for Asia-Pacific security issues. In chapter 11, Mathew Davies discusses the roles and functions of multilateralism and security institutions in the Asia-Pacific. Sarah Teitt, in chapter 12, prioritizes human beings' lives as the primary security concern. With the growth of economic development, gradually more people are moving out of poverty. However, such economic advancement does not necessarily lead to an equitable degree of human security. However, the author does not clearly answer whether shifting the focus in such a manner can provide a solution for traditional security issues in the region.

The Asia-Pacific region is increasingly of interest to researchers and those interested in global and regional security. This edited book covers several poignant topics from theoretical discussions of regional order that draws a sketch of security in the Asia-Pacific to concrete security issues that governments should be concerned about to possible solutions to address those issues and concerns. This is a well-organized book with both empirical case studies and relevant security theories. Additionally, at the end of each chapter, the authors provide key points and questions—as well as further readings—for readers to review, discuss, and develop. The editors and authors can improve future versions of this book by updating the data and considering ongoing instability of US-China relations as the background, as these two are the most important players in the region.

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