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APPLYING NATO CONCEPTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

TO

THE U.S. REBALANCE TOWARDS THE ASIA-PACIFIC

by

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Biography

Lieutenant Colonel Laurel "Buff" Burkel is currently a student in the Grand Strategy Program at the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. She holds an MA, with distinction, in National Security Affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School, an MS in Human Resource Management from Chapman University, a BS in biology from the University of Michigan, and is a distinguished graduate of the University of Michigan Air Force Reserve Officer Training Program. Lieutenant Colonel Burkel has served in a variety of assignments, including Headquarters Air Force and Major Command staff tours, and as an executive officer in the United Nations Command in South Korea. She is a U.S. Air Force navigator, accumulating more than 2,100 flight hours in the C-130E, C-130H, C-141B, T-37, and T-43 aircraft. She has commanded both an operational and an expeditionary C-130H squadron.

Abstract

President Obama, former Secretary of State Clinton and the Department of Defense have clearly communicated the intent to execute a strategic rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. What has not been as clearly delineated is how the U.S. might execute this rebalance. This paper examines three examples from the NATO alliance construct that may serve as potential avenues to pursue to successfully meet security challenges worldwide.

NATO's Smart Defence initiative points to resource pooling amongst partner nations. While there is no NATO-like construct in Asia, the common bond of bilateral alliances and relationships with the U.S. and the capabilities it brings to the table can link Asian allies together in a way that could more efficiently leverage the unique resources and capabilities of each. Doing this could allow the U.S. to identify and allot those resources it has that its Asian allies do not and shift those to more efficiently and effectively globally align its force structure. NATO's operation in Libya put resource pooling into operational practice. The campaign was by no means perfect, but it did show that working together in times of calm and peace leads to more efficient and effective operations in times of crisis. While a kinetic combat operation such as Libya is likely a bridge too far in Asia, a similar construct could certainly be employed for humanitarian relief, disaster response, counter-terrorism, and other similar types of operations.

However the U.S. may go forward in a strategic rebalance to Asia, fully engaging China is a key component. Applying the best examples from the NATO-Russia Council, while learning from the less-successful efforts can provide the framework to build a cooperative relationship. Inviting China to partake in military exercises and logistical cooperation builds opportunities to combine resources and train together that can lead to resource pooling and may also illuminate ways to effectively engage in activities that serve the mutual interests of both China and the U.S.

Introduction

As President, I have, therefore, made a deliberate and strategic decision – as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future, by upholding core principles and in close partnership with our allies and friends...This is the future we seek in the Asia Pacific – security, prosperity and dignity for all. That's what we stand for. That's who we are. That's the future we will pursue, in partnership with allies and friends, and with every element of American power. So let there be no doubt. In the Asia Pacific in the 21st Century, the United States of America is all in.

– *Barack Obama*

With these words to the Australian Parliament in November 2011, President Obama launched the United States' rebalance to Asia.[1] Shortly following the President's remarks, Secretary of State Clinton published an article in *Foreign Policy* further elucidating the shift in focus to the Asia-Pacific and outlining an Asian regional strategy based on six key lines of action: strengthening bilateral security alliances; deepening our working relationships with emerging powers, including China; engaging with regional multilateral institutions; expanding trade and investment; forging a broad-based military presence; and advancing democracy and human rights."[2] Also, in January 2012, the Department of Defense published its *Priorities for 21st Century Defense* that clearly communicated the intent to rebalance defense resources to the Asia-Pacific region.[3] But clear intent does not necessarily illuminate ways to successfully execute a resource rebalance. This paper will examine three examples from the NATO alliance construct that may serve as potential options to engage with Pacific partners, rebalance defense resources and successfully meet global security challenges.

Why the emphasis now on a pivot to Asia? Both President Obama and Secretary Clinton highlighted the ending of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as a moment of opportunity to refocus strategic priorities and defense resources: "As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the United States stands at a pivot point."[4] The U.S. rebalance to Asia is not simply a matter of generating additional resources to meet the objective, or of wholesale moving of resources from one region of the globe to the Pacific. Decreasing defense requirements in both Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with likely defense budget cuts provide a unique and historic opportunity to assess where to possibly shift and place defense resources to support the President's rebalance to Asia yet still maintain a Middle Eastern presence.

How best to do this? Secretary Clinton points to the answer with the first of her six key lines of action – alliances and partnerships. In her *Foreign Policy* article, she calls for more than a mere sustainment of U.S. alliances in the Asia-Pacific region, outlining three core principles for updating them: maintaining consensus on core political objectives, ensuring nimble and adaptive alliances that can successfully meet new challenges and opportunities, and guaranteeing "that the defense capabilities and communications infrastructure of our alliances are operationally and materially capable of deterring provocation from the full spectrum of state and nonstate actors."[5]

Executing these three principles in the alliance construct does not have to be a case of reinventing the wheel. The U.S. has ready examples from other alliance partnerships to draw on as examples. "By virtue of our unique geography, the United States is both an Atlantic and a Pacific power. We are proud of our European partnerships and all that they deliver. Our challenge now is to build a web of partnerships and institutions across the Pacific that is as

durable and as consistent with American interests and values as the web we have built across the Atlantic. That is the touchstone of our efforts in all these areas."[6] The cornerstone in our European alliance web is NATO.

Potential Examples From the NATO Construct

At first blush, NATO may not seem like an applicable institution to look to for examples or a template on how best to implement the Asian rebalance. Arguably the most successful alliance in modern history, NATO is a large, multilateral, 28-member strong, supranational organization, vice the mostly bilateral alliance relationships that the United States has built throughout the Asia-Pacific region. It was created 60 years ago to counter the Soviet and Communist threat. There is no such clear-cut, specific ideological threat to balance against in today's world. With the end of the Cold War, NATO itself has grappled with redefining its purpose and mission sets. While a full-scale implementation of the NATO construct is not feasible or applicable, there are aspects and programs within NATO that may be relevant to executing the Asian pivot. This paper will review NATO's Smart Defence initiative, alliance operations in Libya, as well as the alliance's NATO-Russia Council, and how all three may serve as valuable examples of how the U.S. could shift and pool resources, both internally and in cooperation with Pacific partners and allies, to effectively implement a rebalance to Asia and still meet global national security objectives.

One of the main challenges (and perhaps an opportunity as well) facing the U.S. and its allies around the globe is constrained resources brought about by the global economic crisis of the past several years. In a relative sense, given that U.S. defense spending currently outpaces most of the rest of the world, the U.S. has more assets available for use in supporting national security objectives. But, this does not imply an infinite amount of resources that can be applied

in executing the Asian pivot. While the drawdowns in both Iraq and Afghanistan mean some amount of defense resources that had been supporting those operations will now be available to support other global security objectives, the impact of the global economic turmoil of the past several years and potentially far-reaching federal budget and defense cuts could offset and perhaps outpace this availability.

Smart Defence

NATO is no exception in this regard. It is also facing many similar budgetary constraints and other national security concerns that compete for the finite defense resources of its members. The Smart Defence initiative is an effort to leverage limited resources to provide maximal security impact for NATO's members. Pooling of resources is nothing new for NATO's members. It is one of the reasons the alliance was created, and it has been a source of strength, deterrence and contention over the succeeding 60-plus years.

Smart Defence represents a continuing reform and adaptation of NATO in light of changes to the international landscape. The Alliance's three essential 'core tasks – collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security – require the continued adaptation of the organization. Military budget cuts in an age of austerity require that the Alliance do more with less, while not sacrificing its capabilities. In 2011, NATO began pursuing a new way of acquiring and maintaining capabilities, captured by the term "smart defence." The way forward lies in prioritizing the capabilities needed the most, specializing in what allies do best, and seeking multinational solutions to common challenges where it is efficient and cost-effective."[7]

There are three elements to Smart Defence:

- Prioritization – Aligning national capability priorities with those of NATO has been a challenge for some years. Smart defence is the opportunity for a transparent, cooperative and cost-effective approach to meet essential capability requirements.

- Specialization – With budgets under pressure, nations make unilateral decisions to abandon certain capabilities. When that happens the other nations fall under an increased obligation to maintain those capabilities. Such specialization "by default" is the inevitable result of uncoordinated budget cuts. NATO should encourage specialization "by design" so that members concentrate on their national strengths and agree to coordinate planned defence budget cuts with the Allies, while maintaining national sovereignty for their final decision.

- Cooperation – acting together, the nations can have access to capabilities which they could not afford individually, and achieve economies of scale. Cooperation may take different forms, such as a small group of nations led by a framework nation, or strategic sharing by those who are close in terms of geography, culture or common equipment.[8]

Smart Defence includes "projects related to use of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets, and it also looks toward improving joint logistics and maintenance. Other projects stress better force protection and better training."[9]

NATO can build a security framework greater than the sum of its members' parts by coordinating resource prioritization and decisions to specialize (or no longer specialize) in certain capabilities and looking for innovative ways to cooperate and leverage member nations' strengths and capabilities. That security framework can provide a foundation, as it has for the past 63 years that enables stability and economic growth. "Security and economic wellbeing are indivisible. Investing in defence protects critical infrastructure and economic lifelines of commerce, trade and investment. It assures the passage of vital energy and other resources, as well as indispensable economic and strategic communications. It is therefore crucial that Europe, together with the United States and Canada, continue to invest in the hard security that will ensure stability and growth in the future."[10]

Where Smart Defence seeks to build capabilities together, NATO's Connected Forces Initiative is about being able to operate those capabilities together and is "focused on developing the operational effectiveness of forces by further promoting multinational approaches to training, education and exercises."[11] Connected Forces Initiative links the human side of the resource-

pooling equation to Smart Defence's hardware, weapon systems and equipment. It also seeks to preserve and leverage the lessons learned and synergies demonstrated during the Alliance's operations in both Afghanistan and Libya. Smart Defence and Connected the Connected Forces Initiative are the foundation for NATO Forces 2020, NATO's strategic vision. In May, NATO leaders met in Chicago and Smart Defence was a top agenda item at the Summit. "At our Summit in Chicago in May, we set ourselves the goal of 'NATO Forces 2020' – forces that are more capable, more compatible, and more complementary. And we can get there through Smart Defence and the Connected Forces Initiative – if we back them up with the necessary political willpower," said NATO's Secretary General.[12]

Follow-on discussions among NATO defense ministers in Brussels in October illuminated the continued emphasis on Smart Defence initiatives and go beyond the flowery declarations at the Chicago Summit. "[T]he summit yielded a list of more than 20 multinational projects 'that will give allies more capabilities, more effectively,' Rasmussen said…Since the Chicago summit, Rasmussen said, NATO has kept up the Smart Defence momentum, agreeing to two more projects. 'Over the coming months, I would expect us to agree to around 10 more, and dozens more ideas are under consideration,' he added."[13]

None of these ideas or projects within the Smart Defence construct will have much of a chance for success unless they are linked to industry and business. A week after the defense ministers met in Brussels, NATO held its Industry Day 2012. "I (NATO Secretary General Rasmussen) see Smart Defence as an opportunity for industry – at both sides of the Atlantic. Smart Defence is not just a slogan. It is the only way to ensure we have the necessary capabilities for our Alliance to do its job. And for us to do that job properly we need better cooperation WITH defence industry – and we need better cooperation WITHIN defence

industry…A strong, enduring engagement between NATO and our defence and security industry will be key in addressing this challenge (getting the most out of defence dollars and Euros to sustain security so we can sustain prosperity)."[14]

The idea of pooling resources from Alliance members is nothing new in the history of NATO. What is new is the current political, economic and security climate within which the concept is evolving. The reality of redefining global security priorities since the end of the Cold War, declining defense spending and national budgetary constraints and the economic crisis have collectively combined to perhaps be the forcing function that pushes Smart Defence further along to fruition than other NATO resource-pooling initiatives have in the past. The recent failure of the BAE-EADS merger illustrates the difficulties in attempting to gain political cooperation across national lines to blend financial objectives. Time will tell over the next few years. The key will be the political willpower and creativity to find ways to balance the domestic needs and security objectives of each NATO partner with that of the alliance as a whole.

While the long-term success of Smart Defence and the Connected Forces Initiative is yet to be determined with respect to NATO and its 28 members, the concept is still worthy of consideration for application in the Asia-Pacific region. Similar challenges of economic constraints, operational concerns and an uncertain security environment face the U.S. and its alliance partners in the region. One area of difference in Asia as compared to Europe is defense spending. Most Asian nations are not drastically cutting their defense budgets, as most European/NATO nations are. Many of them are either holding steady or increasing their defense spending. Instead of reacting to decreasing budgets and using that as an impetus to pool resources as is the case with NATO, the U.S. could leverage a Smart Defence type of concept to

work with its Asian allies to focus their defense spending. Knowing what Pacific allies can bring to the table can help inform U.S. defense resource rebalancing efforts.

An additional challenge to an Asian-Pacific Smart Defence-like initiative is the alliance construct. There is no commensurate multinational alliance organization comparable to that of NATO in the region. Admiral Locklear, PACOM Commander points out: "[W]e have historically had a hub-and-spoke bilateral relationship strategy in this part of the world."[15] As such, the benefits derived from the concerted efforts, considerable resources of NATO's 28 members and the overarching framework of the treaty organization that underpins NATO are not possible. But, there is a common bond in all of the Pacific nation alliances and that is the U.S. itself. This puts the U.S. in the position to set up an alliance network and work towards constructing a Smart Alliance-type burden sharing, pooling of asset construct with its Asia-Pacific allies. "[A]nd now we are seeing the need for more multilateral organization. So inherent in multilateralism are the discussions about these type of collective security type of initiatives that you might pursue, using the technologies that you are able to buy and be able to operate."[16] Approaching this multilateral construct Admiral Locklear envisions from a Smart Defence and Connected Forces Initiative perspective can leverage the U.S. and its resources as the framework on which to build partnerships with Asia-Pacific allies that capitalizes on the resources, capabilities and talents each can bring to the collective security table.

While the security relationships with Asia-Pacific allies and nations may not be as broad or deeply inculcated as among NATO partners, working to pool resources and capabilities in the areas of maritime patrol and surveillance, piracy suppression, humanitarian aid/disaster relief, and thwarting the activity of violent extremists should not be contentious nor seen as threats to sovereignty or individual national security concerns. Engaging China in this effort is critical.

Also, applying the concepts of the Connected Forces Initiative to build joint and collective training and exercise opportunities can enable the U.S. and its Asia-Pacific partners "to make full use of the formidable array of national educational and training assets."[17] The U.S. can look for ways to incorporate more Asia-Pacific partners, to include China, into its existing exercise construct, in arenas where it makes sense and has the best chance of succeeding and establishing relationships and opportunities for resource pooling in mission areas that do not impinge on individual national security interests. Alternatively, the U.S. can look to build exercise and training opportunities that did not previously exist to build cooperative capabilities. Applying lessons learned from recent operations like the tsunami and nuclear disaster relief efforts in Japan and recent flooding and earthquake relief in Pakistan to craft similar scenarios in the Pacific can build multilateral relationships and trust before a natural disaster that enable a rapid, coordinated and pooled response to future natural disasters in the Pacific.

As Secretary General Rasmussen pointed out, successful defense resource pooling and sharing cannot be built on assets and relationships alone. Industry and business must be involved in the process as well, either within NATO or in the Asia-Pacific region. The Trans Pacific Partnership and President Obama's participation in the recent ASEAN talks and East Asia Summit point to an emphasis on strengthening business, economic and industry ties in the Asia-Pacific region. Linking these efforts to building a Smart Defence-like framework in the region provide an opportunity to leverage resources to build a greater security network than each separate alliance or national relationship could on its own. This would require creating new and further developing and linking specific agreements between U.S. and Asian-Pacific industry partners, a good existing example being the U.S. – Republic of Korea Defense Industry Consultative Committee. Formed in 1993 by the National Defense Industrial Association and

the Korean Defense Industry Association, the Committee serves as a forum for developing and sustaining dialogue on defense technological and industrial cooperation.[18] Growing more organizations and cooperative frameworks like this, in concert with Smart Defence and Connected Forces Initiative approaches to resource pooling, would afford the U.S. the opportunity to more effectively rebalance limited national defense resources to meet global security challenges.

Libya Operations

NATO's operations in Libya in 2011 provide a good example of how the resource-pooling framework can play out in actuality. NATO allies quickly shifted into action to implement all military aspects of UN Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973. They enforced the arms embargo and the no-fly zone and protected civilians and civilian-populated areas under attack or threat of attack.[19] While France, the UK, and the U.S. led initial efforts, NATO took over the command and control of the operation and worked to effectively integrate allies and partners. The U.S. then shifted to a supporting role, supplying capabilities other contributors could not such as gathering and analyzing intelligence, refueling NATO and partner aircraft, and other high-end military capabilities such as electronic jamming.[20] While not every NATO member contributed to the operation, nor was the command and control and all aspects of interoperability perfectly smooth, Unified Protector was a success.

One of the successes in the operation is that it was not NATO nations alone who participated. Four Arab states contributed to the operation – Morocco, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Qatar.[21] This participation and willingness to work under a NATO construct is attributable to partnerships and relations built in times of peace. NATO's campaign in Libya "demonstrated the important role NATO's peacetime partnerships can play in in integrating non-

member states during a time of hostilities," since the Arab "partners chose to participate in the operation only if it was led by NATO because they were familiar with how to operate and communicate with the Alliance through prior training and military exercises."[22] Working to further concepts like Smart Defence and the Connected Forces Initiative can lay the relational groundwork that can pay big political and operational dividends in times of crisis.

While a complex and comprehensive operation like the one that NATO oversaw in Libya may not be currently possible in the Asia-Pacific region due to the lack of a multilateral and formal alliance framework built on many years of cooperation, this does not mean that the lessons learned from Libya are not of value. Alliance framework and relations built and maintained in times of peace are more apt to respond efficiently and effectively to a crisis. Ad hoc, as-needed coalitions do not have a common operating basis, be it doctrine, command structures, decision-making processes, capabilities, or operating methodologies because they are thrown together as the crisis unfolds. It would be like mixing soccer players from all levels and all countries together to play a World Cup match, without practicing or laying out a team strategy until the actual match begins. Ad hoc coalitions generally do not equally share the burdens; more often than not, one nation ends up shouldering the lion's share of the security load.[23] While the U.S. provided key capabilities to the Libya operation, it was not the lead, NATO was.

NATO operations in Libya thus provide a great example of the impact and value of efforts like Smart Defence and the Connected Forces Initiative when it comes time to leverage the resources and capabilities of alliance members. By working together to pool resources and capabilities for the good of common security, allies can more effectively rise together to meet the challenges of crises of varying types. In the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. can leverage its

relationships with its various allies to link them and build new combined partnerships to lay the groundwork for a Smart Defence type of resource pooling that can provide a wide-range of crisis response, not necessarily visibly or materially led by the U.S. itself. Relationships built in times of calm and peace can provide both a resource and operational framework that can be smoothly, seamlessly and effectively tapped into when a crisis arises. While a kinetic regime change scenario such as that in Libya may be a bit of a stretch at the present time in the Asia-Pacific, this type of construct is more applicable and likely to succeed in humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and other such situations. The Libya operation also illustrates that the U.S. does not need to be the out-front leader of an operation. Rather its greater value may lie in providing the underlying critical support resources, and enabling partners and allies to take the lead role in their own backyard.

NATO-Russian Council

The U.S. pivot is often mistakenly seen as an effort to counter a rising China. Approaching the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region in this manner runs counter to the President's intent and could become a dangerous self-fulfilling prophecy. "[T]he United States will continue our effort to build a cooperative relationship China…all of our nations have a profound interest in the rise of a peaceful and prosperous China. That's why the United States welcomes it…we'll seek more opportunities for cooperation with Beijing, including greater communication between our militaries to promote understanding and avoid miscalculation."[24] How NATO has built relations with Russia since the end of the Cold War can provide an example on how the U.S. can engage and involve China in efforts to build Asia-Pacific strategic cooperation. While NATO's relationship and dialogue with Russia has not always been smooth

and inculcated trust, both the positive lessons learned as well as the more tenuous ones can inform a similar approach to U.S. interaction with China.

Russia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and the Partnership for Peace in 1994. In 2002, NATO and Russia formed the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). Like NATO itself, NRC is an organization built on member equality and consensus. "While differences between the Allies and Russia remain on some issues, the driving force behind the NRC's pragmatic spirit of cooperation is the realization that NRC members share common challenges, including Afghanistan, terrorism, piracy, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and natural and man-made disasters."[25] While the NRC's goal may be a modern and strategic partnership, the current reality falls short of that. Russia's actions in Georgia in 2008, the U.S. interest in a ballistic missile defense system in Europe ostensibly to counter the threat from Iran, and the two countries' complex and intertwined relationships with the Middle East make for roadblocks to building partnerships. Despite these differences, the effort in partnership building has brought some degree of progress.

An example of shared NRC member interests put into action includes the Cooperative Airspace Initiative (CAI). CAI's "purpose is to foster cooperation on airspace surveillance and air traffic coordination against terrorist attacks using civilian aircraft, helping to enhance transparency, confidence and trust and to strengthen the capabilities required for the handling of security incidents."[26] Vigilant Skies 2012, the exercise conducted in mid-November tested and consolidated CAI Information Exchange System (IES) processes, procedures and capabilities, with the goal of Vigilant Skies 2013 unfolding as a live-fire exercise over the Black Sea area.[27] From the perspective of both NATO and Russia, the exercise objectives were met and IES efficiencies confirmed.[28]

While the U.S. may not be engaging China under the auspices of a formal format like NRC, it is working to build the mil-to-mil relationship. Specific efforts to work with China in a military capacity include a future HA/DR exercise and the invitation to China to participate in the 2014 Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise.[29] Additionally, Pacific Command is exploring ways to foster logistical resource sharing with China following the Pacific Area Senior Officer Logistics Seminar (PASOLS) held in Australia in September. "Officials from the United States and China plan to discuss sharing logistical resources, including fuel, as they operate together during counter piracy and humanitarian assistance and disaster response missions. The United States has officially extended the invitation for a team of senior Chinese logisticians to visit Washington in early 2013 to discuss the possibility of a first-ever logistics cooperation agreement between the two countries…[i]f adopted, the arrangement would enable the United States and China to share fuel, food, supplies, and even vessel parts to support their joint operations."[30] Building these encouraging bilateral efforts into a framework like the NRC can bring other members of the Asian-Pacific region into the discussion, lead to further areas for cooperation and perhaps provide a future forum for dialogue on more-contentious issues like territorial disputes.

Another relationship worth examining within the NATO construct that is perhaps comparable to that of China and the U.S. is that of France and the U.S. France's qualified and aloof cooperation towards NATO, the primacy of its sovereignty, its desire to remain independent in matters of foreign policy and to serve as lead for the European Union, especially in matters of European security and defense, are not unlike China's apparent aspirations and diplomatic approach, albeit outside a formal alliance construct. The U.S. has had some success in understanding and leveraging these French characteristics for the good of the Alliance;

entertaining a similar approach to China may be worthy of consideration. Looking at how the U.S. has engaged with France and vice versa during the current Mali crisis may be informative for future opportunities and situations with China. While there are glaring differences in defense resources between France and China, there might be a scenario, such as disaster relief or countering the activity of violent extremists, in which China and the U.S. could cooperate to pool resources and capabilities.

Recommendations

In review, this paper examined three ideas from NATO – the Smart Defence initiative, alliance operations in Libya and the alliance's NATO-Russia Council as potential examples of how the U.S. could successfully conduct, at least in part, its rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. Smart Defence and the Connected Forces Initiative point to resource pooling and sharing amongst partner nations. While the alliance construct is not a factor in Asia, the common bond of bilateral alliances and relationships with the U.S. and the capabilities it brings to the table can link Asia allies together in a way that can more efficiently leverage the unique resources and capabilities of each. Doing this can allow the U.S. to identify and allot those resources it has that its Asian allies do not and shift those to the Pacific, aligning its global force structure to reflect the deficits of regional partners. NATO's operation in Libya put resource pooling into operational practice. It was by no means perfect, but it did show that working together to pool resources and capabilities in times of calm and peace leads to more efficient and effective operations in times of crisis. While a kinetic combat operation such as the Libyan regime change is likely a bridge too far in Asia, a similar construct could certainly be employed for humanitarian relief, disaster response, counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, and other similar types of operations. Also, with the primacy of face prevalent in Asian culture, exploring ways that the

U.S. can act in a supporting role in a resource-pooling construct as it did in Libya and as it currently is with France's operations in Mali would likely bear more fruit.

Regardless of whether or not the future of U.S. relations in Asia moves towards a NATO-like multilateral alliance or remains an association of smaller alliances linked by common ties to the U.S., fully engaging China is a key component. Applying the best examples of cooperation from the NATO-Russia Council, such as the Vigilant Skies exercises, while learning from the less-successful engagements and the reasons for them can provide the framework to build a cooperative relationship, be it bilateral or multilateral. Also, engaging China in humanitarian relief and disaster response exercises and logistical cooperation opportunities, along with other exercises to combine resources and train together can lead to more resource pooling and more effective use of both nation's capabilities in a time of crisis.

Conclusion

Priorities for 21st Century Defense, published in January 2012, provides a clear picture of the goals of the U.S. rebalance to Asia: "Our relationships with Asian allies and key partners are critical to the future stability and growth of the region. We will emphasize our existing alliances, which provide a vital foundation for Asia-Pacific security. We will also expand our networks of cooperation with emerging partners throughout the Asia-Pacific to ensure collective capability and capacity for securing common interests."[31] Leveraging examples from one of the most-successful alliances in history may be the key in how to go about most effectively placing U.S. resources globally to secure those common interests.

Notes

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