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Security Cooperation in a Strategic Competition



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About This Report

This report summarizes the findings of a RAND Corporation study on the role of security cooperation in the emerging era of international competition. The research reported here was commissioned by the Office of the Director of Strategy, Concepts, and Assessments, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Requirements, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, and conducted within the Strategy and Doctrine Program of RAND Project AIR FORCE as part of a fiscal year 2019 project, “Security Cooperation in the Strategic Competition in the 21st Century.” This report should be of value to the national security community and interested members of the general public, especially those with an interest in the future of the international system and the United States’ role in dealing with rising competition.

Human Subject Protections (HSP) protocols have been used in this report in accordance with the appropriate statutes and U.S. Department of Defense regulations governing HSP.

The views of the sources included in this report (including those sources rendered anonymous by HSP) are solely their own and do not represent the official policy or position of the Defense Department, the Department of the Air Force, or the U.S. government. Research for this report was completed in late 2019, and the analysis is supported by the data available at that time.

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Summary

Issue

For this project, RAND Corporation researchers examined the current role of security cooperation efforts as a tool in the emerging strategic competition among the United States, the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China. The team did not assess the effectiveness or measure outcomes of security cooperation efforts but rather sought to identify how, where, and to what degree the three major competitors—plus Australia, Japan, India, and several countries in Europe—are using security cooperation.

Approach

The project team reviewed all available sources of information—including media reporting; professional journal articles; and official government statements in English, Russian, Chinese, and other languages—to develop the best-possible open-source portrait of the security cooperation activities of the countries that lead and usually fund such activities. The team also examined third-party analyses and, where publicly available, official national security strategies and documents to understand how each country viewed the goals of its security cooperation efforts. Finally, members of the project team traveled to six countries that are generally the junior partner in security cooperation activities (and assessed two other such countries in depth) to understand how the security cooperation competition is playing out on the ground. Research for this report was completed in late 2019, and the analysis is supported by the data available at that time.

Conclusions

These research methods produced multiple findings about the character of the emerging competition as it relates to security cooperation. Several of the most important findings are as follows:

- *Russia and China enjoy some comparative advantages over the United States with some clients.* For example, neither state typically sets any political or ethical preconditions on cooperation—meaning their security cooperation efforts face fewer constraints than those of the United States. In addition, those countries can offer cheaper (but still decent quality) products and competent military training and engagement.
- *Nonetheless, the United States and its partners and allies play the dominant role in global security cooperation.* Security cooperation remains a U.S. strategic advantage in scope, quality, and multilateral alignment.
- *Persistent commitments leave the U.S. security cooperation portfolio somewhat misaligned to the demands of the strategic competition, even if legacy commitments serve important U.S. interests.* Many U.S. security cooperation activities are still overwhelmingly directed at the Middle East and South Asia.
- *The strategic competition is playing out primarily in day-to-day contests in the space below the level of armed conflict.* U.S. security cooperation programs must address this space and support the United States' broader geopolitical goals of reassurance, capacity-building, relationship maintenance, and partner engagement.

- *U.S. partners and allies are major players in security cooperation.* Australia, Japan, India, and especially leading allies in Europe each conduct significant and growing security cooperation efforts targeted to the strategic competition, and those efforts in turn offer opportunities for synergy with U.S. efforts.
- *Many critical countries are determined to avoid taking sides in the emerging strategic competition; U.S. security cooperation strategies will have to respect this fact.* The prevalence of strategic hedging and the existence of strongly established doctrines of nonalignment were among the most-consistent findings from the focus countries. This preference for hedging creates strict limits on what many countries will agree to do in explicitly laying the groundwork for high-end conflict; as a result, security cooperation collaboration in many lower-end areas is far more feasible.
- *The countries using security cooperation as a tool in strategic competition have not made their efforts generalized or global but, for the time being, are focused on a handful of countries.* These include Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, and the Pacific Island states.

Recommendations

Using their findings as a basis, the researchers offer the following recommendations—for the United States and the U.S. Air Force in particular—to preserve and enhance the United States’ competitive advantage in security cooperation:

- Develop targeted programs for the priority countries in the competition over security cooperation.
- Develop expanded programs for security cooperation in nonmilitary areas. The United States often will have more success in security cooperation areas that do not imply direct coordination for possible conflict, such as the following:
 - continued and more-frequent senior-level visits, official exchanges, and other symbolically important hallmarks of deepening security relationships
 - humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as exercises focused on this area
 - support for maintenance, operations, upgrades, technical training related to transport aircraft, and mobility assets (e.g., Thai, Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian C-130 aircraft)
 - domain awareness capabilities, especially for the maritime regions of Asia
 - education and training relationships, including English-language programs
 - development of Air National Guard elements of State Partnership Programs.
- Research new ways to streamline U.S. policy for security cooperation activities. Arms transfers are the basis for larger relationships and can create operational ecosystems that cement partners in security cooperation. Continued difficulty caused by U.S. arms transfer policies could become a much bigger strategic danger as Chinese systems become more competitive.
- Combine security cooperation activities with engagement strategies. Because the security cooperation competition is part of a larger competition for influence in target states, security cooperation activities must be nested in broader U.S. competitive strategies.

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Introduction

The current focus of U.S. defense policy and military strategy is the strategic competition with peer or near-peer rivals. Within that context, the leading global competitors—the United States, the Russian Federation, and the People’s Republic of China, as well as Japan and the major security actors of the European Union, to some degree—are using security cooperation as a tool to gain strategic advantage. In this study, we sought to examine this emerging arena of competition—how the competitors are using security cooperation, what the best unclassified data show about their current practices, and what lessons this analysis suggests for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the U.S. Air Force (USAF).¹

Study Objectives and Limitations

The objectives of this study were to define the existing U.S. and specifically USAF security cooperation and engagement practices, survey Russia’s and China’s employment of security cooperation and related engagement practices for strategic advantage, and offer options for enhanced U.S. policies and activities.

More generally, we sought to assess the emerging strategic context of security cooperation and the use of security cooperation as a tool in the larger competition. We did not seek to offer a comprehensive portrait of security cooperation activities, by the United States or others, and we faced some limitations in our data-gathering efforts. Because this report is unclassified, for instance, we are able to refer only to data obtainable in the publicly available literature. In our research methodology, we emphasized obtaining the best available data on security cooperation programs, Russia’s and China’s intentions and strategies in using security cooperation, and the way the competition is playing out in certain countries. We are confident that the data we were able to use provide a solid baseline of the security cooperation competition, including the orders of magnitude of the programs and initiatives underway; the main partners of the countries leading security cooperation activities; the security cooperation strategies that seem apparent from public activities; and the resulting lessons at the strategic level.

This approach can offer important insight into the emerging competition in security cooperation. It also has clear limitations, however, which must be understood to place the analysis in this report into the proper context. In particular, in this study, we did not attempt to generate a comprehensive theory of competition and fit security cooperation into such a theory. We did not address questions of the effectiveness of security cooperation activities or try to assess the degree to which security cooperation measurably enhances power of influence in a strategic competition. Equally important, our effort was limited by the available data related to Russia’s and China’s activities. As we will make clear in later chapters, neither of those two countries issues anything like a comprehensive accounting of its security cooperation activities. In both cases, we had to assemble the best possible portrait from a variety of partly measurable, partly anecdotal evidence.

¹ Research for this report was completed in late 2019, and the analysis is supported by the data available at that time.

Even with these limitations, we fulfilled the basic purpose of the study—to establish an initial snapshot of the security cooperation activities underway by the United States, Russia, China, and selected other players in the security cooperation environment, especially European countries. In the case of non-U.S. actors, we were able to identify some general strategic purposes and guidelines that help shape each country’s security cooperation activities. However, this report also demonstrates that, in many cases, this strategic guidance remains incomplete, and many security cooperation portfolios betray a significant degree of ad hoc improvisation. As Chapter Seven suggests, our tentative conclusions can provide insight into possible subjects for further research and analysis.

In this study, we did not focus strictly on air service programs or USAF security cooperation programs. Instead, we sought to portray the broader set of security cooperation activities across many categories (see the list later in this chapter) to provide a holistic sense of the emerging competition. Air force security cooperation represents an important component of this overall competition but is only one element. In our deep dives into various countries, we did place special emphasis on air service engagements, and in the concluding chapter, we offer recommendations specific to the USAF.

To achieve our study objective, we pursued four lines of analysis. First, we gathered available unclassified information to sketch out current patterns of U.S. security cooperation activities. Second, we did the same for China’s and Russia’s security cooperation programs. Third, we evaluated the equivalent programs for Australia, Japan, India, and key countries in Europe, all of which are major or emerging security cooperation providers.² Fourth, we assessed how the security cooperation competition is playing out in several focus countries. Using the results from these analytical efforts, we offer overarching findings and recommendations.

The outline of this report follows that study design. Chapter Two describes U.S. programs; Chapters Three and Four cover Russia’s and China’s programs, respectively; and Chapter Five offers information on other security cooperation providers. Chapter Six summarizes the in-depth case studies, and Chapter Seven offers general findings and recommendations.

Definitions and Scope

To pursue this analysis, we first had to define the bounds of what we would assess. Official U.S. government definitions of *security cooperation* are very broad. One definition from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency states that security cooperation

comprises all activities undertaken by the Department of Defense (DoD) to encourage and enable international partners to work with the United States to achieve strategic objectives. It includes all DoD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments, including all DoD-administered Security Assistance (SA) programs, that build defense and security relationships; promote specific U.S. security interests, including all international armaments cooperation activities and SA activities; develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations; and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to host nations.³

² In this report, we use the terms security cooperation *provider* and *recipient*. We recognize that *cooperation* inherently involves a joint endeavor and common effort; however, in these relationships, one country usually originates, funds, and leads the effort, while the other country is the focus or beneficiary of the effort. Thus, we refer to the countries that lead security cooperation activities as *providers* and the countries on the receiving end of the efforts as *recipients*.

³ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Security Assistance Management Manual*, Washington, D.C., DSCA 5105.38-M, last updated 2021.

Such definitions clearly include almost any security-related activity for any purpose. To scope the focus of the study, we reviewed official state documents and strategies and the literature on security cooperation to identify 11 types of activities:

1. military aid, which includes funding through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program, the Excess Defense Articles program, and other grants and loans
2. arms sales and transfers,⁴ such as U.S. arms sales through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) programs
3. military capacity-building, such as U.S. activities under Section 1206 of the annual National Defense Authorization Act and Sections and 2282 and 333 of U.S. Code, Title 10 (the train and equip authority)
4. education and training, including international military education and training (IMET), professional military education (PME), and regional centers
5. personnel exchanges, such as U.S. activities under the Military Personnel Exchange Program and the State Partnership Program
6. military exercises, both bilateral and multilateral and those that involve foreign partners
7. access-related agreements, such as status of forces agreements (SOFAs) and agreements related to base access and information-sharing
8. armament-related agreements, such as those for co-development of systems and for research, development, test, and evaluation activities
9. sustainment of donor-nation equipment by the donor, the partner, or third parties
10. institutional capacity-building to strengthen the partner institutions that support security services
11. humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), which offers support for efforts to relieve suffering.

These categories offered a consistent template for gathering data across our various study components. A major challenge was that reliable and consistent data on each of the 11 categories were not available for all the competitors—not even for the United States. Especially at the unclassified level, there is simply no comprehensive roster of security cooperation activities by the United States, and neither China nor Russia publishes inclusive data sets of its programs. An additional challenge was that, in some cases, the different countries define the categories somewhat differently, so we could not develop data on entirely comparable sets of security cooperation activities.

However, we believe that the data we did acquire provide a solid basis for some high-level findings. In some cases—such as for arms transfers, exercises,⁵ base access agreements, and defense cooperation agreements—data were reasonably robust and comparable. In other cases—such as for military aid and institution-building—the numbers were fuzzier and less comparable, but the relative amounts were so vastly different that fine gradations in the measurements did not affect the ultimate findings. Finally, the data did allow us to identify the primary security cooperation partners of each major competitor (as well as the secondary security cooperation providers) and to isolate places where the security cooperation competition appears to be most intense. We are specific throughout the report about areas where the data on specific points have significant limitations.

⁴ Some organizations use *sales* to refer to transactions in which one entity pays another entity for weapons or equipment, and some organizations use *transfers* to refer to the same thing. However, the term *transfers* might also include gifts; that is, no money was exchanged. Different data sources vary in which term they use and how they define it. In figures and text in this report, we generally try to use the term that a given data source used.

⁵ This is true at least in terms of the total number of exercises. Data on their size, composition, and quality are still lacking and prevent a totally comprehensive comparison.

U.S. Security Cooperation Activities

Congress authorizes DoD and the U.S. Department of State to work with foreign nations to conduct multiple types of activities that fall under the auspices of security cooperation. These activities range from arms sales and military exercises to educational courses and personnel exchanges. Each year, the United States spends billions of dollars and partners with thousands of foreign students and trainees on U.S. security cooperation efforts, which involve large numbers of active-duty and reserve military members, U.S. government civilians, and contractors who plan, execute, monitor, and evaluate these efforts. In some cases, partner nations fund the activities, and in other cases, the United States funds them in the form of loans and grants.

As noted earlier, we compiled data on the types of security cooperation activities described in Chapter One. Appendix A contains seven figures that present some of those findings, focusing primarily on data from 2013 through 2018. In particular, the figures provide detail on the amount of funding or numbers of foreign personnel involved in overall U.S. military aid, military capacity-building programs, arms sales and transfers, education and training programs, HA/DR activities, institutional capacity-building programs, and access-related agreements (Figures A.1–A.7). This chapter relies on those data to describe trends and notable activities across regions and countries.

However, it is important to recognize that DoD does not collect data on or analyze U.S. security cooperation engagement in a comprehensive way. As previously noted, there is no centralized database of activities or a common means of tracking funding or participation across programs.¹ Most information related to security cooperation is tracked in bits and pieces across offices and services, each using different methods of measurement at different levels.² Sometimes, different offices or commands issue numbers for the same category of security cooperation activity—such as military exercises—that are based on different definitions or assumptions and thus do not match. Therefore, to estimate security cooperation activities of even the United States, for which abundant unclassified data are available, we face a limitation of imperfect information.

The challenge in collecting and analyzing U.S. government information about security cooperation efforts is magnified in the case of the USAF. In DoD and the Department of State, there are organizations (such as the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency) that piece together information for management, oversight, and reporting purposes. But there is no centralized repository of USAF information across the security cooperation enterprise, and it is extraordinarily difficult to find data on USAF security cooperation activities. Security cooperation is rarely tracked on a service level, and the USAF in particular tends not to keep records of its engagements. Any collection effort must refer to individual units or organizations, and sometimes specific people, to ask for data on their security cooperation

¹ Attempts to develop a global database for tracking activities through the Global-Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System have not succeeded in capturing all types of engagement or in linking activities to funding.

² To date, some programs are tracked globally and some on a country level. Some data are collected centrally by DoD, some by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, some by service branch headquarters, and some by implementing agencies. The data might report number of participants or money spent, which can include various funding sources for each event. Moreover, some organizations consider obligated funds, and others use funds expended.

activities. These organizations do not necessarily collect the same data or track them across years, so there are problems with comparing data across similar organizations.

Despite the limited data available, several broad trends and themes can be observed. In the case of the United States, these themes are not global, but regional. The main goals and ongoing trends in U.S. security cooperation activities must therefore be understood in their regional context. Most security aid is directed to the Middle East and Afghanistan, for example, while arms sales and transfers are concentrated in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states—where the USAF focuses much of its technical training efforts—and in more-advanced allies in Europe and Asia. In Europe, where the USAF dedicates a major proportion of its flying training and military personnel exchanges, there is an emphasis on engaging in exercises and building conventional capabilities to deter Russia. In the Pacific, posture and presence are important, and there is more emphasis on technology transfer and co-development with close allies to compete against China. Security cooperation efforts in Africa focus on improving institutional capacity and providing education and training for peacekeeping missions. By looking at security cooperation from a regional perspective, it is possible to formulate a better idea of the breadth and scope of U.S. activities and the different ways that the United States engages with foreign partners, all of which are not always evident in the overall numbers.

U.S. Security Cooperation in Central Asia and the Middle East Focuses on Ongoing Military Operations and Traditional Diplomatic Goals

During the time frame of this study, support for Operations Resolute Support and Inherent Resolve remained a major focus of U.S. security cooperation activity. Countries in U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)'s area of responsibility (AOR) received 60 percent of all U.S. security aid, much of which consisted of ongoing aid to Afghanistan (\$4 billion per year) and aid to Iraqi and Syrian opposition forces engaged in the campaign to defeat the Islamic State (\$1.4 billion per year).³ U.S. efforts to train and equip partner forces to counter terrorism and violent extremism accounted for the increase in funding over the period of study.⁴ It is also important to recognize that a significant portion of U.S. aid is committed, through the FMF program, to Egypt (\$1.3 billion per year) because of its support for the Middle East peace treaty and to Jordan (\$440 million per year), which is the third-largest recipient of FMF.⁵ Israel, which is part of U.S. European Command

³ Security Assistance Monitor, “Security Assistance Database,” web tool, undated-b; and U.S. Agency for International Development, “Congressional Budget Justification,” webpage, last updated February 10, 2020, reports from fiscal years 2015–2019.

⁴ Office of Inspector General, “Evaluation of Department of Defense Efforts to Build Counterterrorism and Stability Operations Capacity of Foreign Military Forces with Section 1206/2282 Funding,” U.S. Department of Defense, July 21, 2017; U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Counterterrorism: DOD Should Enhance Management of and Reporting on Its Global Train and Equip Program*, Washington, D.C., GAO-16-368, April 2016; U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Counterterrorism: DOD Should Fully Address Security Assistance Planning Elements in Global Train and Equip Project Proposals*, Washington, D.C., GAO-18-449, May 2018; Nina M. Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RS22855, December 8, 2014; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund: Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2016*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, March 2015; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund: Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2016; and Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year 2018: Justification for FY18 Overseas Contingency Operations—Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund*, Washington, D.C., May 2017.

⁵ Jeremy M. Sharp, *Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RL33003, March 12, 2019a; and Jeremy M. Sharp, *Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RL33546, April 9, 2019b.

(EUCOM)’s AOR, also receives \$3.6 billion per year in aid, and this large sum makes Israel an outlier. These amounts clearly weight U.S. aid toward the Middle East.

Arms and equipment sales to the Middle East are dominated by high-end acquisitions by GCC states—particularly Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Saudi Arabia alone bought more than \$12 billion in U.S. arms from 2014 to 2018.⁶ Qatar was a major purchaser of U.S. aircraft, including a \$6 billion contract for F-15QA fighter aircraft. These sales outnumber FMS program authorizations to Iraq (\$2.7 billion) and Egypt (\$1.9 billion) that were supported by U.S. funds. In terms of education and training, Afghanistan is the primary recipient; 48 percent of all personnel in the region are funded through the Afghan Security Forces Fund.⁷ However, Saudi Arabia is the primary beneficiary of FMS-funded training (11 percent of all training in the region) and receives a large percentage of USAF technical training globally. Because of ongoing contingencies, the United States does not engage heavily in exercises in the region.

Security Cooperation Priorities in the Indo-Pacific Region Center on Highly Capable Allies

Building partner capacity is not nearly as prominent in the Pacific as it is in the Middle East or Central Asia, because U.S. security cooperation efforts in the region primarily involve highly capable allies. When we analyzed the available data from 2014 to 2018, we found that the region received only 2 percent of all U.S. security aid, and that aid was provided primarily to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam.⁸ The implementation of the Asia Reassurance Initiative, which includes up to \$1.5 billion per year dedicated to building capacity in the region, likely caused the Pacific’s percentage of U.S. aid to increase somewhat starting in 2019.⁹ (The fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act subsequently established a Pacific Deterrence Initiative, dedicating \$2.2 billion for security cooperation in the region.) Still, that increase will not change the fact that the traditional focus of U.S. security cooperation activities in the Pacific is on posture and presence, as well as engagement with highly capable allies.

On the other hand, FMS and DCS are particularly strong with Pacific partners.¹⁰ In 2019, Japan had \$19.6 billion in active FMS cases and \$14.4 billion in active DCS cases, driven largely by its purchase of F-35 combat aircraft. In 2018, South Korea had \$13 billion in active FMS and \$7.9 billion in active DCS.¹¹ U.S. engagement with Japan, South Korea, and Australia also extends to technology transfer and co-development agreements, which are particularly relevant to USAF-related security cooperation with highly capable allies.

Most of the education and training support provided to countries in the Pacific region is funded through the FMS program. FMS-funded training accounted for nearly 30,000 personnel, or 59 percent of

⁶ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “Arms Transfers Database,” web tool, undated-a (estimate generated April 4, 2019).

⁷ See the Foreign Military Training Reports for fiscal years 2014–2019 (U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Military Training Report*, Vol. 1, *Joint Report to Congress*, Washington, D.C., various years).

⁸ Security Assistance Monitor, undated-b; U.S. Agency for International Development, 2020, reports from fiscal years 2015–2019.

⁹ Ankit Panda, “Trump Signs Asia Reassurance Initiative Act into Law,” *The Diplomat*, January 3, 2019a.

¹⁰ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Foreign Military Sales: Observations on DOD’s Approach to Developing Price and Availability Estimates for Foreign Customers*, Washington, D.C., GAO-19-214, February 2019; and Security Assistance Monitor, “Arms Sales Dashboard,” web tool, undated-a.

¹¹ Sandra Erwin, “Amid Tensions in Asia-Pacific, State Dept. Calls Attention to Big-Ticket Sales of U.S. Missiles, Aircraft to Japan, South Korea,” *Space News*, May 22, 2018.

all those trained from 2013 to 2018. Japan, Singapore, and Australia were the top three training recipients; for the USAF, those three plus South Korea and Indonesia rounded out the top five recipients of flying and technical training.¹²

Traditionally, the Pacific region has hosted the largest bilateral military exercises. South Korea's Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise in 2017, for example, included 50,000 South Korean and 17,500 U.S. troops.¹³ (However, that exercise was canceled in 2018.) The region is also distinctive in that the United States maintains comprehensive bilateral agreements with countries there. These include a military alliance and a SOFA with Japan; a special measures agreement with South Korea for the United States to base troops there; and security treaties with Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand. India was also designated as a major defense partner in 2016. However, the United States does not have close military ties across all countries in the region; for instance, it has established SOFAs with only one-third (12 of 36) of the Pacific nations.¹⁴

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) has also been involved in HA/DR-related activities. The AOR has received \$30 million in funding from the Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid program, and that funding has been targeted to Nepal (\$14 million) and, to a lesser extent, Cambodia (\$4 million).¹⁵ The program includes activities that build partner-nation capacity, improve DoD access, and build relationships with the partner nation's civil society. In addition, although the activities might not be specifically related to security cooperation, INDOPACOM forces can be deployed in response to natural disasters in the Pacific region. According to a 2020 study by New America, INDOPACOM forces deployed to seven major HA/DR missions from 2013 to 2018: two typhoons in the Philippines; earthquakes in Nepal, Japan, and New Zealand; floods in Sri Lanka; and a cave rescue in Thailand.¹⁶ The USAF was directly involved in at least three of these events—Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, the earthquake in Nepal in 2015, and the Kumamoto earthquake in Japan in 2016—where fixed-wing aircraft were deployed. These data, however, do not capture the broader role that the USAF has played in providing air base operations and medical support during disaster operations.¹⁷

Security Cooperation Efforts in Europe Emphasize Reassuring U.S. Allies

European partners have consistently received approximately 26 percent of all U.S. security aid, but there has been a shift since 2014 in the type of aid these partners have received. Specifically, more attention has been devoted to developing conventional capabilities to deter Russian aggression. Eastern European states that border Russia, particularly Ukraine, received \$1.1 billion from 2014 to 2019.¹⁸ Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia also received some funding through the European Deterrence Initiative. However, of the billions of dollars designated for the initiative, only a small portion supports building partner capacity. The initiative

¹² See the Foreign Military Training Reports for fiscal years 2014–2019 (DoD and U.S. Department of State, various years).

¹³ DoD, “Exercise Ulchi Freedom Guardian 2017,” August 18, 2017b.

¹⁴ Current SOFAs can be found at U.S. Department of State, “Status of Forces Agreement,” webpage, undated. See also R. Chuck Mason, *Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA): What Is It, and How Has It Been Utilized?* Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RL34531, March 15, 2012.

¹⁵ U.S. Foreign Assistance, homepage, undated.

¹⁶ Francis Gassert, Sharon Burke, and Rachel Zimmerman, *UPTempo: The United States and Natural Disasters in the Pacific*, Washington, D.C.: New America, March 31, 2020.

¹⁷ Andersen Air Force Base, “36th Contingency Response Group Provides Humanitarian Aid to Indonesian Earthquake Victims,” October 5, 2018.

¹⁸ Security Assistance Monitor, undated-b.

was designed primarily to support U.S. force presence, infrastructure, and exercises; as a result, DoD does not formally categorize European Deterrence Initiative funding as security aid.¹⁹

Over our period of study, U.S. military sales have increased for both highly capable allies and newer North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners in Europe. Among the top weapon purchasers, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany are purchasing advanced aircraft, unmanned aerial systems, and missiles through the FMS and DCS programs. Poland and Romania are acquiring Patriot air-defense systems, and Slovakia is purchasing F-16 aircraft through FMS.²⁰

The focus of U.S. education and training efforts in Europe has also been on conventional military capabilities funded by FMS. Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Romania, and Poland are the top recipients of these security cooperation activities.²¹

Furthermore, U.S.- and NATO-sponsored exercises in Europe are increasing in number and size. These exercises, which focus on improving interoperability for conventional operations, include Saber Guardian (a U.S.-sponsored exercise with 25,000 service members from 22 allied and partner nations) and Trident Juncture (a NATO-sponsored exercise with 50,000 participants from NATO and partner countries).²² NATO arrangements afford the United States a high degree of access in Europe. Of the 51 countries in the EUCOM AOR, 45 have multilateral SOFAs through NATO or the Partnership for Peace program, and there are 126 acquisition and cross-servicing agreements that apply to the region.²³ The majority of USAF armament agreements and airmen in personnel exchanges are with European countries, and most personnel exchanges through the USAF's Military Personnel Exchange Program are with the United Kingdom. Countries in EUCOM's AOR received \$27 million in Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid support, divided across several Eastern European states; Ukraine received \$4 million, the highest amount.

Security Cooperation in Africa Focuses on Peacekeeping and Counterterrorism Capabilities

Security aid to Africa between 2013 and 2018 peaked in 2016, when the United States provided \$490 million in capacity-building assistance to Somalia, Kenya, Tunisia, and Uganda through peacekeeping operations, global train and equip programs, and the FMF program.²⁴ This aid was targeted toward developing operational capabilities, particularly airlift and combat capabilities, to improve border security and intelligence to combat the Islamic State.²⁵ FMF, for example, supported African countries' acquisition of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft (specifically, C-208 utility aircraft) and combat aircraft. African countries received most of the institutional capacity-building funds available globally in 2016 (the only year

¹⁹ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *European Deterrence Initiative: Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year 2019*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2018.

²⁰ U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2019; Security Assistance Monitor, undated-a.

²¹ See the Foreign Military Training Reports for fiscal years 2014–2019 (DoD and U.S. Department of State, various years).

²² Angela Kershner, "Exercise Saber Guardian 2017 to Take Place in July," U.S. Army, June 7, 2017; and NATO, "Trident Juncture 18," webpage, October 31, 2018d.

²³ Treaty Affairs Staff, *Treaties in Force, A List of Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States in Force on January 1, 2019*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2019.

²⁴ Security Assistance Monitor, undated-b; U.S. Agency for International Development, 2020, reports from fiscal years 2015–2019.

²⁵ Office of Inspector General, 2017; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2016; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018; Serafino, 2014.

for which we found data). Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, and Uganda were the top recipients of the Defense Institution Reform Initiative program and the Combatting Terrorism Fellowship program.²⁶ The region also had the highest number of personnel attending education and training programs, primarily for peacekeeping training. Uganda received at least 25,000 training slots for personnel, while Burundi and Rwanda received 19,600 and 16,000 slots, respectively.²⁷ The USAF dedicates small numbers of training and education slots to African partners; Morocco, Tunisia, Nigeria, Algeria, and Niger are the top five recipients.

During our period of study, there were relatively limited arms sales to Africa compared with sales to other regions. Among countries in Africa, only Morocco made major FMS purchases, acquiring F-16 fighter aircraft. Algeria made major arms purchases through the DCS process.²⁸ U.S. forces have a limited force presence and few defense agreements with African countries; only six of the 54 countries across the continent have signed global SOFAs with the United States. An additional 26 countries have signed acquisition and cross-servicing agreements.²⁹ The USAF maintains no Military Personnel Exchange Program airmen in Africa and has armament memoranda of understanding with only three partners (Morocco, South Africa, and Côte d'Ivoire).

Security Cooperation Activities in North and South America Focus on Interoperability and Counter-Narcotics

Overall security aid across the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) areas of responsibility totaled just more than \$4 billion from 2013 to 2018, or 4 percent of U.S. aid globally. Most of this aid was provided through the Title 22 International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) program (administered by the State Department) and the Title 10, Sections 1004 and 1033, counter-drug authorities (which are now incorporated into Section 333). Colombia, the primary aid recipient in the region, received \$1.37 billion in aid in five years.³⁰ More than 81 percent of this aid came from INCLE, Section 1004, and Section 1033 funding. Mexico received \$1 billion in aid, of which 89 percent was provided by INCLE and Section 1004 funds. Other countries received far less aid overall—for example, Peru received \$278 million, and Guatemala received \$115 million—and such aid was also targeted toward counter-drug activity.

Education and training programs followed a similar pattern, and Colombia received most of the education and training support during our study period. We found that 24,000 personnel were trained through FMF, FMS, IMET, Section 1004, and INCLE programs, including some 3,000 in USAF education and training programs during the five-year span. Mexico received training for 16,000 personnel (more than 13,000 of whom were funded through Section 1004 programs). Combined, these two countries accounted for most participants in counter-drug training programs.³¹

²⁶ Stephen Watts, Trevor Johnston, Matthew Lane, Sean Mann, Michael J. McNerney, and Andrew Brooks, *Building Security in Africa: An Evaluation of U.S. Security Sector Assistance in Africa from the Cold War to the Present*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2447-OSD, 2018.

²⁷ See the Foreign Military Training Reports for fiscal years 2014–2019 (DoD and U.S. Department of State, various years).

²⁸ Algeria does not participate in the FMS program, largely because of its reluctance to agree to end-use monitoring, but the country has purchased U.S. weapons through the DCS process.

²⁹ Treaty Affairs Staff, 2019.

³⁰ Security Assistance Monitor, undated-b; U.S. Agency for International Development, 2020, reports from fiscal years 2015–2019.

³¹ See the Foreign Military Training Reports for fiscal years 2014–2019 (DoD and U.S. Department of State, various years).

In terms of U.S. arms sales in the Americas, both Canada and Mexico stand out as the primary purchasers. Canada's security cooperation relationship with the United States is very different from the relationship between the United States and the South American countries discussed earlier, so it is not surprising that Canada is the most prominent purchaser in the region. From 2013 to 2018, Canada received \$1.1 billion in arms deliveries. Mexico received \$686 million in arms over that span. Chile, Colombia, and Brazil each purchased much less in U.S. arms, each accounting for less than \$250 million.³²

U.S. military-to-military agreements in the region are more limited than in Europe, yet, of the 34 countries in North or South America (31 in SOUTHCOM's AOR and three in NORTHCOM's), 20 have some form of agreement with the United States. Nineteen acquisition and cross-servicing agreements have been signed across the region, in addition to 20 USAF bilateral armament agreements, mostly with Brazil and Chile. Latin American countries have not signed any SOFAs with the United States, because such agreements limit interaction with U.S. forces. Canada is the only country in this region that has a SOFA with the United States, and that agreement is covered under the provisions of the NATO SOFA. Canada has a large contingent of USAF Military Personnel Exchange Program airmen (20) and is a signatory to multiple USAF bilateral and multilateral armament agreements.³³ Notably, countries in SOUTHCOM's AOR received the most Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid funding across the combatant commands, totaling \$36 million. This HA/DR aid was targeted at Guatemala (\$12 million) and Panama (\$10 million).

Summary: A Potent Global Security Cooperation Presence with Multiple Objectives

This brief review of U.S. security cooperation activities illustrates the massive size and wide variety of types of security cooperation constituting the U.S. portfolio. The United States has by far the most significant security cooperation program of any competitor and has built deep relationships with many partners over decades of such activities. The review in this chapter suggests that, in some critical categories, the CENTCOM AOR continues to dominate the overall numbers, which reflects continuing U.S. operations and persistent interests in that region but not necessarily the emphasis of current U.S. national security strategy on strategic competition with Russia and China. Since we conducted this study, there has been some evidence of increased funding for the Asia-Pacific region (e.g., \$2.2 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative),³⁴ but there has yet to be any major shift. Over the next three chapters, we assess how Russia, China, and countries in Europe perceive U.S. security cooperation from a competitive standpoint.

³² Pieter D. Wezeman, Aude Fleurant, Alexandra Kuimova, Nan Tian, and Siemon T. Wezeman, "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018," fact sheet, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, March 2019.

³³ Treaty Affairs Staff, 2019.

³⁴ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Pacific Deterrence Initiative: Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2022*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, May 2021.

Russia's Security Cooperation Activities

Compared with the United States' security cooperation portfolio, Russia's activity set is modest. But Russia is by far the more active of the United States' two main competitors, and its tradition of international engagement in this domain is much longer than China's. Arms sales remain the core of Moscow's security cooperation activities. But Russia is also active in international military exercises, education and training, and HA/DR activities. Russia's neighbors—particularly its allies—receive the lion's share of security cooperation activities that are not in the arms sale category. Beyond its immediate environs, Russia has leveraged security cooperation as a major component of its efforts to cement key existing partnerships, such as with China and India, and to build ties with relatively new partners, including Turkey and Egypt.

As noted in Chapter One, our analysis of Russia's security cooperation activities was limited by the available information on Russia's efforts, which has significant shortcomings. The Russian Federation Ministry of Defense does not publish regular, official data on a variety of important aspects of security cooperation, such as the number of foreign students enrolled in Russia's military schools. For the most part, we relied on information that periodically appears in officials' public statements; Russian press reporting; specialized Russian military journals; or the publications of the leading Russian military think tank, the Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies. We believe that, through these sources, we were able to estimate, at least in broad order-of-magnitude terms, the scope of Russia's security cooperation portfolio and identify the key countries that represent Moscow's leading security cooperation partners.

International agreements on security cooperation are largely available through Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and several independent websites that publish Russian legal documents. Several relevant agreements are rumored to exist but are not publicly available. We used SIPRI's database for arms sales and transfers, which also has limitations.¹ For instance, the database does not include deliveries of less than \$0.5 million of equipment. Furthermore, as described in the methodology for its data, SIPRI estimates the cost of the production of systems, which is not necessarily the value of a given contract. Appendix B presents some of our data-based findings on Russian security cooperation activities, focusing primarily on arms sales and transfers, military exercise partners, and military aid.

Security Cooperation in Russian Strategy: Major Categories of Activity

Military Aid

The Russian government grants credits and *gratis* weapons to several countries if they have difficulty paying for arms. In addition, in certain cases, Russia will allow payment in kind or barter for commodities or natural resources, lines of credit, concessions, or debt relief to facilitate arms transfers. Russia engages in these alternative financing arrangements with Angola, Armenia, Indonesia, Uganda, and Venezuela, for example. Other examples of supplying military aid via arms transfers include transferring surface-to-air missile

¹ SIPRI, undated-a.

(SAM) systems to Belarus and Kazakhstan to bolster their joint air defense network; providing a *Tarantul*-class corvette with anti-ship missiles to Egypt; and supplying armored vehicles to Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Serbia, Syria, and Tajikistan.² Publicly available data on Russia's financial assistance to its security partners is not systematic or specific enough to understand the full scope. However, most of Russia's allies in post-Soviet Eurasia have received assistance, and other recipients include close partners, such as Serbia and Syria.³

No authoritative data exist to calculate Russia's total military aid, much of which, as noted, takes the form of equipment transfers rather than direct budgetary assistance. We examined several sources of data that help provide a rough estimate for Russia's aid activities, although we stress that the resulting figures are fragmentary and may not reflect all Russian efforts. First, we examined one category in the Russian defense budget that includes aid, but it also includes base construction and other international security tasks; that budget line totaled around \$160 million annually from 2013 to 2018. Second, we examined publicly available Russian data on arms provided without charge to other states (Figure B.1).⁴ We found roughly \$1.2 billion in transferred equipment (which we are considering direct aid) over those six years, or roughly \$200 million per year, using SIPRI's valuation on the cost of production of specific systems and assuming that observations recorded were in fact gifts instead of sales. (Moscow often does not definitively state that weapons were provided *gratis*.) Considering these sources, we believe that \$360 million per year in total Russian military assistance represents a reasonable estimate.

Arms Sales

Russia is a leading arms merchant, accounting for 22 percent of global arms transfers from 2013 to 2018, and was second only to the United States during that span. Russia's arms sales seem driven mostly by commercial interests, but several efforts do have important strategic considerations. For example, Russia's sale of air defense systems to Turkey has become a wedge issue in U.S.-Turkish relations.

The top five importers of Russian arms from 2013 to 2018 were India (\$11.9 billion), China (\$5.1 billion), Algeria (\$4.5 billion), Vietnam (\$3.6), and Egypt (\$2.2 billion), according to SIPRI data.⁵ In the first three countries, Russia is the dominant supplier, with market share between 61 percent and 78 percent. Both SIPRI and the Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, despite their different methodologies, estimate that the value of conventional arms deliveries from Russia were generally consistent from year to year.⁶ The top four customers (India, China, Algeria, and Vietnam) were consistent year to year as well, suggesting that the changes in Russia's ties with its neighbors and the West did not affect these relationships.⁷ According to our analysis of publicly available arms sales data from 2013 to 2018, aircraft and helicopters were the largest category of Russia's arms sales by revenue (46.6 percent).

² Author-compiled data from Russian journal *Eksport vooruzhenii*, Nos. 102–139, available at Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, “Zhurnal ‘Eksport vooruzhenii,’” webpage, undated; and SIPRI, “Trade Registers,” web tool, undated-e.

³ We use the term *post-Soviet Eurasia* to refer to the 11 non-Baltic former Soviet republics besides Russia itself.

⁴ These arms provisions also could be included in the arms transfers category. However, Russia tends to view gifts of military equipment as a form of military aid, and such transfers have that function in these relationships, so we included them here.

⁵ SIPRI, “Importer/Exporter TIV Tables,” web tool, undated-c.

⁶ Andrey Frolov, “Russian Arms Trade in 2017,” Moscow Defense Brief, No. 2, 2018. Note that SIPRI estimates the value of transfers consistently across countries and years based on the value of production, and the Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies compares its findings on individual arms deals in the open-source literature against the published reports of total deliveries by Russia's Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation and by Rosoboronexport.

⁷ In November 2020, Algeria reportedly signed a contract to purchase 14 Russian Su-57 fighters, which would make it the first country to acquire the fifth-generation stealth jets (“Algeria to Get 14 Su-57 Fighters from Russia,” Arabian Aerospace, November 25, 2020). This purchase was widely viewed as a response to the United States' decision to sell Morocco 25 F-16C/D fighters—thus demonstrating the difficulty of balancing U.S. interests in the region.

Education and Training

The Russian military has a 300-year history of higher military education, and leaders believe that providing this education to international students is an important component of security cooperation. President Vladimir Putin stated in 2013 that Moscow had trained 280,000 foreign military personnel over the previous 70 years.⁸ Although many of these personnel studied in Russia during the Soviet period, such traditions have not completely been lost. However, the Ministry of Defense does not systematically publish data on enrollment, so we can only try to piece together the current picture through the snippets of information that are provided.

International students can enroll in all Russian academies and specialized military institutes, except for those affiliated with the Strategic Rocket Forces.⁹ Russia also offers mid-career professional training (similar to PME in the United States), specialized coursework, and short-term training. Non–Ministry of Defense training programs include training for counter-narcotics police and internal security forces. In 2013, 5,550 service members from 43 countries studied at Russian military institutes.¹⁰ According to Russian law, enrollment is capped at 15,000 international students, but most of the sporadic data available indicated that annual international enrollees number about 4,000–5,000.¹¹

In 2018, Putin tasked the military to increase the number of international military students studying in Russia by 2024.¹² Shorter-term training programs include weaponeering, military topography, equipment maintenance and repair, and anti-submarine training.¹³ A ten-month intensive Russian-language training program is provided for international enrollees who need it. The Defense Ministry has reported that, of countries that have active military-technical agreements with Russia, 81 percent send students to its military institutions. More than half of the foreign military student body hails from post-Soviet Eurasia. Before relations with NATO soured in 2014, some officers from Western countries attended programs at Russian military institutes.

Military Exercises

Russia maintains an active international military exercise program, conducting more than 200 multilateral and bilateral events of various sizes and with 56 countries between 2013 and 2018.¹⁴ Some 39 percent of Russia's exercises were multilateral events, largely conducted under the aegis of organizations that bring together Russia and its neighbors: the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. If multilateral events are excluded, the top Russian bilateral partners for military exercises were Belarus (19), China (16), India (15), Serbia (11), and Egypt (8).

Russia's military-to-military engagement with the United States and Europe largely ended after Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea. Prior to that, Russia conducted numerous military exercises with European countries and some with the United States, and participation in these exercises was considered prestigious in Russia's military.

⁸ President of Russia, "Soveshchanie po voprosam razvitiya sistemy voennogo obrazovaniya," November 15, 2013.

⁹ "Postuplennye inostrannykh grazhdan v voennye vuzy Rossii," Moe obrazovanie, April 5, 2018.

¹⁰ President of Russia, 2013.

¹¹ Evgenii Lisanov, "Ucheba na eksport," *Voenna-promyshlennyyi Kur'er*, Vol. 3, No. 269, January 28, 2009.

¹² Russian Federation Ministry of Defense, "V Minoborony Rossii otmechayut rost chisla inostrannykh kursantov v voennykh vuzakh strany," press release, September 28, 2018.

¹³ Author-compiled data from Russian journal *Eksport vooruzhenii*, Nos. 102–139, available at Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, undated.

¹⁴ The details in this section come from author-compiled data from open-source Russian government publications and press reporting.

Since 2014, Russia has kept up the overall tempo of exercises by pivoting away from the West to such other regions as Asia and the Middle East. Still, Russia's neighborhood remains the overall priority: About 50 percent of exercises occur in post-Soviet Eurasia. In the 2013–2018 period, Russia held only two military exercises in South America and no military exercises in sub-Saharan Africa.

Military-to-Military Agreements

As of 2018, Russia had at least 77 active military-technical cooperation agreements.¹⁵ These serve as the legal basis for Russia's bilateral military-to-military relations with other states. At least 24 agreements were signed since 2013, and 11 of those newer agreements, approximately 50 percent, were signed between Russia and African countries. These documents tend to be more akin to memoranda of understanding that lay out broad objectives and spheres of potential activity as opposed to a concrete program of action. However, they provide a basis for military-diplomatic relations and help institutionalize ties in cases when activity follows the agreement, which is far from a universal phenomenon.

Co-Development and Sustainment

Russia's co-development programs are not particularly robust compared with U.S. analogues. Russia maintains about one dozen programs to jointly develop transport aircraft, helicopters, armored vehicles, space rocket launch technology, and satellites. One of Russia's most prominent co-development programs is the Brahmos medium-range supersonic cruise missile program with India.¹⁶ Russia and China collaborate on a few programs for wide-bodied civilian aircraft, heavy transport helicopters, and one unmanned aerial vehicle (which probably has a dual-use military role).¹⁷ Before 2014, Russia and Ukraine had several co-development and related programs (such as the Antonov company, which manufactured all of Russia's heavy strategic lift aircraft, for example). Since 2014, these ties have all been severed, and Russia is building domestic production to replace the programs.

Russia has some life-cycle contracts for repair and maintenance, mostly for aviation equipment. As of 2018, Russia had announced 12 joint-venture or licensed repair facilities abroad to service aircraft, helicopters, and armored vehicles.¹⁸

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The Russian Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergencies, and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters is the primary federal agency responsible for HA/DR, both domestically and abroad. Although its efforts do not exceed those of the United States, Russia is a significant player in HA/DR efforts globally, particularly in the number of countries assisted. The ministry provides HA/DR support for natural disaster response and recovery (including firefighting), humanitarian aid, medical evacuations, search and rescue, mine-clearing,

¹⁵ Author-compiled data from treaty databases at Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Dvustoronnyye dogovory," webpage, undated; and Konsortium Kodeks, "Elektronnyi fond pravovoi i normativno-tekhnicheskoi dokumentatsii," webpage, undated.

¹⁶ "Military Technical Cooperation of India and Russia," *Kommersant*, April 4, 2017.

¹⁷ "China Teams Up with Russia to Develop Rocket-Launched Reconnaissance Drone," TASS, March 30, 2018; "New China-Russia CR929 Plane Will Depend on Russian Technology," *Asia Times*, December 11, 2017; and "Russia, China Progress AHL Helicopter Project," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, September 18, 2017.

¹⁸ Author-compiled data from Russian journal *Eksport vooruzhenii*, Nos. 102–139, available at Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, undated.

and medical support. In 2013, Russia conducted HA/DR efforts in 48 countries, such as Belgium and Benin. The number of countries assisted fell to 17 and 19 in 2016 and 2017, respectively, perhaps reflecting the stricter fiscal environment or Russia's more complicated geopolitical realities. Surprisingly, there were NATO members among the recipients of Russian HA/DR (the Netherlands, Norway, and Turkey in 2017). Although the Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergencies, and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters provides annual reports on its activities, it does not provide monetary sums or budgetary data associated with those activities. The only quantitative indicator provided is tonnage of supplies delivered, which cannot be compared across countries.¹⁹

Syria: A Unique Case

Moscow's military ties with Syria date back to the Cold War, when Syria and the Soviet Union developed an extensive, though occasionally testy, partnership. In the post-Soviet period, Russia and Syria have maintained a diminished but nonetheless robust military-to-military relationship. Before the civil war began in Syria in 2011, Moscow was Damascus's principal supplier of arms and maintained a small naval facility at Tartus. Dozens of officers in the Syrian army studied at Russian military academies. Russia is reported to have had at least two signals intelligence facilities in Syria that predated the conflict.²⁰

Although Moscow stepped up its aid to the Bashar al-Assad regime almost as soon as Syria's civil war began, it was the Russian military's direct intervention in September 2015 that qualitatively transformed the security cooperation relationship. The Russian intervention was largely confined to the air, relying instead on the Syrian military and allied forces (including Hezbollah, Iranian ground forces, and Shia militia) to fight on the ground. (We focus only on the assistance to the official Syrian military here, given the scope of this project.) This was a major challenge, as Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, has acknowledged: "The most difficult thing during the preparation and in the initial period of the operation was organizing cooperation with the government troops and with all the various groups."²¹ The Syrian army had been severely weakened during the war and was demoralized, disorganized, and not particularly effective.

Therefore, in addition to coordinating with existing ground forces, Russia mounted a fully fledged train and equip mission, helping rebuild the Syrian military and lead it in combat. According to Gerasimov, "there is a group of [Russian] military advisors in every [Syrian] unit—battalion, brigade, regiment, or division. Essentially they plan combat operations."²² As Russian military analyst Ruslan Pukhov writes,

Syrian units were often bolstered by a small but highly capable contingent of Russian support personnel and elite Spetsnaz troops. Even more importantly, high-ranking Russian officers . . . led Syrian troops on many important stretches of the front, bringing in much-needed military experience and expertise.²³

¹⁹ Russian Federation Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergencies, and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters, "Activities of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Russian Federation," webpage, undated.

²⁰ Inna Lazareva, "Russian Spy Base in Syria Used to Monitor Rebels and Israel Seized," *The Telegraph*, October 8, 2014. The world saw evidence of Russia's intelligence presence on the ground in Syria, as well as Russia's close ties with the regime's intelligence apparatus, when one of the facilities used by Moscow was captured by the Free Syrian Army in October 2014. A YouTube video from inside the site shows that a Russian military signals intelligence group jointly operated it with the regime's intelligence services (Oryx, "Captured Russian Spy Facility Reveals the Extent of Russian Aid to the Assad Regime," Bellingcat, October 6, 2014).

²¹ Viktor Baranets, "Nachal'nik genshtaba vooruzhennykh sil Rossii general armii Valerii Gerasimov: 'My perelomili khrebet udarnym silam terrorizma,'" *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, December 26, 2017.

²² Baranets, 2017.

²³ Ruslan Pukhov, "Russia's Unexpected Military Victory in Syria," *Defense News*, December 10, 2017.

There are scant data on the Russian train and equip mission available in the public domain. From what we do know, the nature and scale of the mission are unprecedented in recent history. However, the circumstances of the security cooperation with the Assad regime are unique. A large-scale intervention along the lines of Russia's Syria operation would be almost impossible for Moscow to repeat elsewhere beyond its immediate environs.²⁴ Moreover, the peculiarities of Russia's intervention—the lack of a significant ground component—forced the Russian military to develop a closer relationship with the Syrian military.

Primary Trends and Themes in Russia's Security Cooperation Activities

Russian strategy documents state that security cooperation is an important factor in ensuring stability and reinforcing Russia's influence and great-power status in a changing world order. For example, the 2014 Military Doctrine calls for the “upgrading of political-military and military-technical cooperation with foreign states to strengthen confidence measures and lower global and regional military tension in the world.”²⁵ Russia uses military-to-military engagement to create markets for its arms exports; maintain ties with legacy partners; develop new relationships; and, increasingly, entice traditional U.S. partners (e.g., Turkey) away from the United States. Where necessary, Russian officials leverage anti-American sentiment to further their interests. Moscow's emphasis on sovereignty and what it deems traditional cultural values has appeal to some countries, particularly in the global south.

We identified four overall trends in Russia's security cooperation partnerships for the 2013–2018 period. First, Russia's top regional priority for security cooperation is post-Soviet Eurasia—its immediate neighborhood and the home to all its formal allies. Although these countries are not Russia's top arms sales customers, Moscow engages them in a variety of other security cooperation activities, including military exercises, military education and training, and donations of military equipment. Second, beyond its neighborhood, Russia is maintaining and deepening relationships with long-standing partners, such as China, Vietnam, India, and Algeria. Third, since 2014, Russia's security cooperation with Western countries has largely ceased, and instead Moscow has sought to develop new relationships in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. Finally, Russia has attempted to use security cooperation efforts to capitalize on challenges in U.S. bilateral relationships with such countries as Egypt, Turkey, and Pakistan.

In addition to those broad trends, our research pointed to the following leading themes in understanding Russian security cooperation from a competitive standpoint.

Russia Views Security Cooperation as an Essential Tool

Security cooperation is one of the pillars of Russia's efforts to cement its global influence. Russia uses security cooperation to pursue multiple policy goals, including promoting commercial interests (i.e., arms sales), gaining influence in important regions (e.g., the eastern Mediterranean), and bolstering security and stability along its borders. Post-Soviet Eurasia is clearly Russia's top regional priority, and naturally that is where Russia focuses most of its security cooperation efforts with respect to capacity-building, military exercises, training programs, and military education. Over the period of study, Russia sought to revive Soviet-era ties and expand its influence through security cooperation activities in the Indo-Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East.

²⁴ See Samuel Charap, Elina Treyger, and Edward Geist, *Understanding Russia's Intervention in Syria*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-3180-AF, 2019.

²⁵ Russian Federation Ministry of Defense, *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Moscow, December 25, 2014.

Russia Enjoys Certain Competitive Advantages

Moscow enjoys a few important competitive advantages over the United States in the security cooperation sphere. Russia's outreach is centered on its robust global arms sales, and its defense industry offers cheap, decent-quality weapons that are often easier for many governments to afford and maintain than equipment from the United States is. Russia does not typically set any political (or ethical) preconditions on security cooperation and is prepared to engage with governments that the United States considers problematic, corrupt, or rogue. In recent years, when Moscow is developing new ties with a country that may have prior arrangements with the United States or other security partners, Russian outreach typically proceeds pragmatically—avoiding litmus or loyalty tests or demands for exclusive cooperation (i.e., demanding that partners cease working with the United States).

In different ways, this aspect of Russian security cooperation has recently helped Russia build or maintain ties with Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, and several African countries. For example, human rights issues in Egypt led the United States to distance itself from that country, and the Russians have been able to leverage that situation for stronger ties to Egypt. In many areas of the world, partnering with the Russian military is still viewed as prestigious (although typically not to the same extent as partnering with the U.S. military). Unlike the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in China, the Russian military is battle-tested, and Russia is more active than China in international military exercises and military education and training. (Moscow has been in the security cooperation business for decades; Beijing is a relative newcomer.) Russia increasingly may be offering packages of state and parastatal support (such as private military contractors) to countries in crisis, such as Venezuela and the Central African Republic. (The activities of private military contractors are beyond the scope of this study.)

Russian Security Cooperation Activities Also Face Constraints

Russia faces several important constraints that limit the reach of its global security cooperation efforts. Most importantly, Russia does not provide large sums of direct financial assistance to its security cooperation partners (with the partial exception of its allies); its defense budget simply cannot support the levels of financial assistance that the United States and China offer to their partners. Instead, Moscow offers other incentives, such as debt relief, direct arms transfers, and the option to pay in kind for weapons.

Additionally, Russia's global sustainment and institutional capacity-building efforts are quite limited, and the country's co-development portfolio is modest compared with that of the United States. Finally, in contrast to U.S. allies, Russia's formal allies (the five other members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization) do not have competent militaries that Russia can count on for collective defense or for out-of-area military operations.

Conclusion

Russia has a long legacy of security cooperation dating back to the Soviet era and has sought to revive these ties in recent years. Moscow uses security cooperation to pursue multiple policy goals: furthering the commercial interests of its military-industrial complex, boosting geopolitical influence, and enhancing its own security (e.g., via cooperation with neighbors on counterterrorism efforts). Security cooperation is part of a broader package in Moscow's outreach to priority partners. The Kremlin has been relatively successful in leveraging the enhanced profile of the Russian military in recent years as an instrument of advancing Russia's interests in both its efforts to reinforce its global status and the emerging strategic competition with the United States. Although its efforts are minimal compared with those of the United States and U.S. allies, Russia remains the most formidable security cooperation partner among U.S. competitors. It has shown in

recent years that it can use security cooperation effectively as a means of drawing closer to traditional U.S. partners that have grown disenchanted with U.S. engagement. Going forward, despite significant limitations on its financial resources, Russia is likely to continue to play a significant global role as a security cooperator and competitor in this space.

China's Security Cooperation Activities

The breadth and depth of security cooperation activities undertaken by China's military continue to lag behind those of the U.S. military. Nonetheless, Chinese security cooperation activities are targeted and growing. As China's interests have become increasingly global, security cooperation has emerged as a progressively more important part of China's military strategy and a more prominent means of bolstering China's diplomatic relationships in parts of the world that China prioritizes. Under Xi Jinping, who is the President of China and the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, the PLA has expanded its engagement in a variety of areas, including port visits, military exercises, education and training, arms sales, participation in anti-piracy and HA/DR activities, and the establishment of China's first overseas military base (in Djibouti).

In compiling the research for this chapter, we drew on a variety of open sources, including Chinese government and other primary and secondary sources. For understanding China's overall strategy for security cooperation, we explored Chinese defense white papers; leadership statements; and PLA materials, such as the 2013 *Science of Military Strategy*.¹ For the details of China's security cooperation, we relied on Chinese government sources, such as the Ministry of National Defense's monthly press conferences and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' daily press conferences, as well as state-run media outlets, such as *PLA Daily* and *China Military*. We also reviewed information from China's partner countries, such as government and media statements on security cooperation. Lastly, we drew on Western sources—including U.S. government reports, such as those by DoD and the Defense Intelligence Agency—and work by Western research organizations and think tanks, such as the United States' National Defense University, SIPRI, IHS Jane's, and the Mercator Institute for China Studies.²

As in our efforts to obtain data on Russia's activities, the biggest shortcoming for our research into China's activities was the lack of a central official database or any sort of record by the Chinese government of its security cooperation endeavors. This lack of transparency by the Chinese military was offset slightly by Chinese state-run media reporting, but we ultimately relied mostly on reporting by recipient nations and Western governments and outlets. The reliance on third-party information, whether from China or recipient nations, means that our data set is inherently incomplete and perhaps even inevitably inaccurate in some respects. However, as with the Russian case, we believe that available data make it possible to understand

¹ Academy of Military Science of the People's Liberation Army, *Science of Military Strategy* [战略学], 3rd ed., Beijing: Academy of Military Science Press, 2013.

² For DoD reports, see Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, August 2020; and DoD, *Assessment on U.S. Defense Implications of China's Expanding Global Access*, Arlington, Va., December 2018b. For Defense Intelligence Agency reports, see, for example, Defense Intelligence Agency, *China Military Power: Modernizing a Force to Fight and Win*, Arlington, Va., January 2019. For sources from Western think tanks, see, for example, Kenneth Allen, Phillip C. Saunders, and John Chen, *Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003–2016: Trends and Implications*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, July 2017; SIPRI, undated-a; and Helena Legarda, *China Global Security Tracker No. 6: July–December 2019*, Mercator Institute for China Studies, February 11, 2020.

the general scope of China's growing security cooperation portfolio and, in particular, allow us to identify China's key security cooperation partners.

We organize the remainder of this chapter around three broad themes identified in our research.

Beijing Views Security Cooperation as a Key Component of PLA Strategy and an Important Means of Supporting Chinese Diplomacy

The PLA's concept of military diplomacy is somewhat analogous to but indeed narrower than that of the United States: The concept includes "military personnel exchange, military negotiations, arms control negotiations, military aid, military intelligence cooperation, military technology cooperation, international peacekeeping, [and] military alliance activities."³ According to China's 2015 defense white paper, security cooperation is one of the "strategic tasks" of China's armed forces, and the PLA will endeavor "to actively expand military and security cooperation, deepen military relations with major powers, neighboring countries and other developing countries, and promote the establishment of a regional framework for security and cooperation."⁴ The 2019 defense white paper framed China's security cooperation as one way that the military is supporting Xi's "community with a shared future for mankind" and "building a new-model security partnership."⁵ At the January 2015 All Military Foreign Work Conference, held in Beijing, Xi emphasized that the PLA's external engagements must serve China's larger foreign policy strategy, uphold China's national security, and promote the military's development.⁶ These broad guidelines allow the military to adapt Chinese security cooperation activities to its expanding ambitions, with few constraints on what the PLA can do abroad.

Beijing ultimately seeks to end U.S. alliances in Asia and to reduce or eliminate U.S. military presence and influence in the region. To this end, Chinese security cooperation efforts are often, though not necessarily exclusively, tailored to countering and minimizing existing U.S. military relationships and access throughout the Indo-Pacific. The concepts outlined in the previous paragraph are in stark, though perhaps implicit, contrast to U.S. global engagement, because the community for a shared future seeks to create an alternative international structure that excludes the United States, and the new-model security partnership is an approach to alliances that is very clearly distinct but not altogether different from the U.S. approach. Although China is not necessarily trying to establish formal alliances, it is seeking to degrade U.S. security ties and establish networks of more-informal security partnerships under its aegis. Under Xi, China has sought to formalize this exclusion of the United States, especially in the military domain. In 2014, Xi said, "In the final analysis, it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia," and in 2017, he said that China seeks "common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sus-

³ All-Military Military Terminology Administration Commission [全军军事术语管理委员会], *People's Liberation Army Military Terminology* [中国人民解放军军语], Beijing: Military Sciences Publishing House [北京: 军事科学出版社], 2011, p. 1063 (translation via Allen, Saunders, and Chen, 2017, p. 8).

⁴ State Council Information Office, *China's Military Strategy*, white paper, Beijing, May 27, 2015.

⁵ State Council Information Office, *China's National Defense in the New Era*, white paper, Beijing, July 24, 2019. For China's regional military strategy, see State Council Information Office, *China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation*, white paper, Beijing, January 11, 2017.

⁶ "Xi Jinping: Further Creating a New Situation of Military Diplomacy" ["习近平: 进一步开创军事外交新局面"], Xinhua [新华], January 29, 2015. For speeches by other senior military and civilian leaders at the conference, see "The Military Foreign Affairs Work Conference Was Held in Beijing; Fan Changlong, Chang Wanquan and Yang Jiechi Attended and Delivered Speeches; Fang Fenghui Made a Concluding Speech" ["全军外事工作会议在京召开; 范长龙常万全杨洁篪出席并讲话; 房峰辉作总结讲话"], *PLA Daily* [解放军报], February 1, 2015.

tainable security,” based around “partnerships, not alliances.”⁷ This Chinese pursuit of an alternative model is evident in the 2019 defense white paper’s hailing of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a “model for regional security cooperation” that is defined as a “constructive partnership of non-alliance and non-confrontation that targets no third-party” while also “expanding security and defense cooperation.”⁸ Much of this language reflects an implicit but clear critique of U.S. alliances, which China often derides as “Cold War thinking” and playing a “zero-sum game.”⁹

PLA Global Engagement Started Late but Has Grown as Chinese Interests Have Expanded

The PLA Navy (PLAN) conducted its first foreign port visit in 1985. More recently, the PLAN has begun to conduct port visits routinely throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, averaging 34 port calls a year between 2013 and 2016, compared with less than three per year over 2003–2006.¹⁰ The PLA conducted its first military exercise with a foreign partner in 2002. Similarly, such exercises have become increasingly commonplace in recent years, growing from an average of roughly four per year over 2003–2006 to 71 per year over 2013–2016.¹¹ Two major turning points in the PLA’s global engagement were the 2008 deployment of the PLAN Gulf of Aden anti-piracy task force and the 2017 establishment of the PLA’s first overseas military (support) base, in Djibouti. These activities facilitated enhanced military engagements along the Indian Ocean through the PLA’s permanent presence in the region.

China has a growing education and training program, but our interviews with military officers from several Southeast Asian nations suggest that the PLA may not be generating much goodwill. The PLA claims to have educated more than 4,000 foreign military officials from 160 countries.¹² The Chinese National Defense University’s International College of Defense Studies hosts the most foreign students (starting in 1956), offering a variety of programs and instructional languages, but students can also attend the National University of Defense Technology, PLA Army Engineering University, PLA Air Force Command College, and PLA Army Command College, among others. Yet Indonesian officers described time spent at these institutions as a hardship post where they learned almost nothing, and Malaysian and Thai officers similarly remarked negatively on their experiences, partly because of the PLA’s decision to segregate foreign students from Chinese counterparts.¹³

⁷ Xi Jinping, “New Asian Security Concept for New Progress in Security Cooperation,” speech at the Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, May 21, 2014; and Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era,” speech at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, October 18, 2017.

⁸ State Council Information Office, 2019.

⁹ For analysis of Chinese views of U.S. alliances, see Adam P. Liff, “China and the US Alliance System,” *China Quarterly*, Vol. 233, March 2018.

¹⁰ Allen, Saunders, and Chen, 2017, p. 18.

¹¹ Allen, Saunders, and Chen, 2017, p. 18.

¹² International College of Defence Studies, “CDS Overview,” webpage, National Defence University, China, undated. However, a 2019 article in the state-run *Global Times* claimed, “The college has trained more than 10,000 senior command officers from more than 160 countries over the past decades, including more than 300 national military heads and eight individuals who later became state presidents of their countries” (Hu Yuwei, “Decades of Training Foreign Officers Boost China’s Military Diplomacy,” *Global Times*, October 14, 2019).

¹³ Indonesian, Malaysian, and Thai officers, interviews with the authors, spring and summer 2019.

The PLA has dramatically increased participation in exercises with foreign militaries since 2002, participating in at least 350 exercises with more than 50 countries. China's most significant exercise partner is Russia; for example, the long-running multilateral and multi-service Peace Mission exercise series through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (started in 2005) is now augmented by the annual bilateral Joint Sea naval exercise series (started in 2012). Other noteworthy joint exercises have included the Aerospace Security ballistic missile defense exercises (held in 2016, 2017, and 2019), joint bomber patrols over the Tsushima Strait (July 2019, December 2020), and PLA participation in Russia's major national-level exercises (Vostok in 2018, Tsentr in 2019, and Kavkaz in 2020). After Russia, Pakistan is China's closest security cooperation partner, and activities include the PLA Army's Friendship counterterrorism exercises, the PLA Air Force's bilateral Shaheen exercise series, and many PLAN visits and drills. The PLA participates in other exercises with numerous countries, including, in order of frequency over 2003–2016, the United States, Thailand, India, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Australia, and France, among many others.¹⁴ The PLA also participates in international military competitions, such as Aviadarts and the International Army Games. Participating in exercises with U.S. allies allows the PLA to learn from and train against U.S.-taught tactics and U.S.-produced hardware, and participating in exercises with Russia allows the PLA to develop joint capabilities and operate in areas that it may not otherwise be able to, such as the Mediterranean.¹⁵

China once avoided overseas military bases, but Beijing has changed its approach as its interests have expanded. Beyond the military facilities on island features in the South China Sea (SCS) disputed by many rival territorial claimants, the PLA has so far publicly opened one overseas military base, in Djibouti in 2017.¹⁶ China is almost certain to add more bases; there are reports of a secret agreement for a naval base in Cambodia, and an Office of the Secretary of Defense report suggests that Pakistan is a strong possibility as well.¹⁷ The PLA also operates space-related ground stations in Namibia, Pakistan, and Argentina, and China utilizes facilities for broader space-related activities from as many as 14 countries; these facilities could be relevant to enhancing space capabilities for the PLA, but China does not describe them as PLA bases.¹⁸ The People's Armed Police paramilitary organization also has a base in Tajikistan and is actively patrolling Afghanistan near the Chinese border.¹⁹ So far, outside the People's Armed Police in Central Asia for counterterrorism, China's military presence abroad has all been through the PLAN and the PLAN Marine Corps. The outward growth of China's military presence has not explicitly followed Xi's grand Belt and Road Initiative, but the preexisting decades-long growth of China's economic and broader national interests along those same corridors (especially the Indian Ocean region) has paved the way for the unsurprising corollary of Chinese military presence.²⁰

¹⁴ Allen, Saunders, and Chen, 2017, p. 52.

¹⁵ DoD, 2018b.

¹⁶ "China Opens Its First Army Support Base Overseas," Xinhua, August 1, 2017.

¹⁷ Jeremy Page, Gordon Lubold, and Rob Taylor, "Deal for Naval Outpost in Cambodia Furthers China's Quest for Military Network," *Wall Street Journal*, July 22, 2019; DoD, 2018, p. 9. The Office of the Secretary of Defense's 2020 report on China's military and security developments listed the following as future bases that China "has likely considered": "Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania, Angola, and Tajikistan" (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2020, p. 128).

¹⁸ Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2020, p. 63; and Peter Wood, Alex Stone, and Taylor A. Lee, *China's Ground Segment: Building the Pillars of a Great Space Power*, Montgomery, Ala.: China Aerospace Studies Institute, March 2021, p. 66.

¹⁹ Gerry Shih, "In Central Asia's Forbidding Highlands, a Quiet Newcomer: Chinese Troops," *Washington Post*, February 18, 2019.

²⁰ For an examination of Chinese military engagement along the Belt and Road Initiative, see Nadège Rolland, ed., *Securing the Belt and Road Initiative: Prospects for Chinese Military Engagement Along the Silk Roads*, Seattle, Wash.: National Bureau of Asian Research, September 3, 2019.

China's global security cooperation efforts have been tailored to two major objectives: building familiarity with other major powers that it may eventually confront, especially the United States, and deepening cooperation with existing and potentially future security partners, such as Russia and many developing states. The PLA has clearly focused first on its immediate neighborhood, engaging most with Asia (predominantly Southeast Asia), but it has growing engagement with South America and Africa, where the PLA established a regional security dialogue in 2012 and 2018, respectively. More-robust cooperation mechanisms exist with Central Asia, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (founded in 2001) and the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (founded in 2016), which was formed by China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan and is perhaps the only operationally focused intelligence-sharing body that China leads. Such security cooperation initiatives have met some resistance. For example, during his October 2019 visit to Nepal, Xi Jinping was unable to secure a final agreement for China to assist with building Nepal's National Defense University after much bilateral discussion.²¹

These trends are likely to be accelerated by China's growing commitment to the Belt and Road Initiative, which is generating rising Chinese interests in the stability of specific investments, broader regions, and in some cases whole countries.²² If China continues its pattern of relying on host-nation security services for most security requirements related to the initiative, this will create a growing requirement for security cooperation efforts to build necessary capacity in many countries. China's deepening engagement along the Belt and Road Initiative is likely to be among the primary engines of expanding Chinese security cooperation with countries in Eurasia and even Africa.

Chinese Security Cooperation Activities Are Likely to Continue Increasing

As a result of these and other factors, the Chinese military's growing foreign engagements are rapidly reaching an inflection point for Beijing, likely forcing Xi to make several important decisions in the coming decade to chart the path forward regarding the nature and scope of the PLA's activities abroad. So far, China's approach to security cooperation has been to gradually build relationships based on transactional convenience, which is broadly consistent with China's diplomatic and economic strategies. China has not expended large amounts of military aid, especially not at the scale of the United States or even Russia, and some of its commitments appear unfulfilled. Beijing has largely eschewed developing substantial principled relationships built on shared values and very visibly has avoided any binding defense obligations, such as those underpinning the U.S. alliance system.²³ This allows China complete strategic flexibility but may complicate its growing military posture abroad.

Despite the quantitative growth of China's security cooperation activities, the intangible qualitative and personal components appear lacking. According to one review of the PLA's foreign engagements, the organization "typically emphasizes form over substance, top-down management, tight control of political mes-

²¹ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "Nepal Shelves Extradition, Border Road Plans with China," *Economic Times*, October 14, 2019; Anil Giri, "Nepal Army's Plan for Defence University Stokes Debate over Who Should Pay for It," *Kathmandu Post*, April 8, 2019; and Bhadra Sharma and Kai Schultz, "Xi Jinping Comes to Nepal Bearing Investments, and India Is Watching," *New York Times*, October 12, 2019.

²² See Richard Ghiasy and Jiayi Zhou, *The Silk Road Economic Belt: Considering Security Implications and EU-China Cooperation Prospects*, Solna: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, February 2017.

²³ China previously had a short-lived military alliance with the Soviet Union at the outset of the Cold War, from 1950 until the Sino-Soviet split of the late 1950s and early 1960s, and has a largely defunct military alliance with North Korea dating to 1961. Most analysts believe that China's approach to North Korea is best described as *strategic ambiguity* and that Beijing would not feel obligated to defend Pyongyang, especially if North Korea started the war.

sages, protection of information about PLA capabilities, and an aversion to binding security commitments . . . [and mainly] consists of formal exchanges of scripted talking points in meetings, occasional port calls, and simple scripted exercises focused on nontraditional security issues.”²⁴ For China to develop operationally relevant military capabilities and relationships abroad, it will have to be willing to allow its frontline troops greater flexibility, which runs against the bureaucratic culture of the PLA to this day. Growing pains remain for the PLA, like the rest of China’s external engagement, particularly after Chinese troops were accused of cheating at a 2019 international military competition hosted in central China.²⁵

Looking to the future, China’s overall approach to its security relationships abroad can take several trajectories depending on Beijing’s long-term political and military strategy. One key question is whether the Chinese Communist Party and the PLA truly seek a military capable of global power projection, which would be difficult to accomplish without a global network of bases that can be employed in wartime. This leads to a second question of how Beijing will approach foreign security commitments, because host nations might demand such commitment as a condition of the PLA’s permanent presence. Some have suggested that Beijing will eventually embrace military alliances as time progresses,²⁶ but so far there are no such indications from the military itself. The PLA’s first base in Djibouti was convenient because the United States and another six countries already have facilities there, so China’s presence is not unique. However, reports of a permanent Chinese presence in Cambodia and suspicions of a future presence in Pakistan—both countries without other foreign military basing—could raise the future prospects these countries look to Beijing for a more substantial security relationship. A related key question is whether Xi seeks to build a Chinese-led coalition of like-minded countries. Xi has begun positioning Beijing as an alternative governance model and security partner to Washington, but China’s willingness to empower partners with a full suite of cutting-edge capabilities and pursue joint operations remains uncertain. Another factor is how much of the PLA’s budget China will be willing to commit for foreign security cooperation when it is already committed to some very expensive high-end systems, such as an aircraft carrier fleet and stealth bomber fleet. These questions will all play a role in determining the future extent of Chinese security cooperation abroad.

China’s first option is to simply continue its current transactional approach, leveraging relationships for peacetime access on a very much one-way street of benefit for Beijing and as a zero-sum way to limit U.S. presence. However, this strategy runs the risk that the host nation would seek to deny the PLA operational access in wartime, because, without a commitment from Beijing to the host nation’s defense, the trade-off of adversary retaliation would likely be unappealing. The peacetime access will likely be sufficient if Beijing merely seeks to support a permanent military presence regionally and execute extra-regional missions occasionally or to achieve limited global effects in wartime through deniable forces, such as private military contractors. Alternatively, China could shed its recent avoidance of foreign defense commitments and agree to a more substantial relationship with some of its key security cooperation partners by making a formal commitment. This approach would depend on creating deeper political and military ties with partners in the hopes of receiving greater Chinese operational access in wartime, potentially supporting longer-range, even global, military operations while also possibly building a Chinese-led coalition. Perhaps a middle ground is most likely: substantial security ties without a formal commitment, ensuring Beijing’s strategic flexibility while generating the most political affinity and support possible for Chinese military actions in wartime. This

²⁴ Allen, Saunders, and Chen, 2017, p. 4.

²⁵ Agence France-Presse, “Chinese Orienteering Team Caught Cheating at Military World Games in Wuhan; Disqualified for Using Secret Paths and Markings,” *South China Morning Post*, October 24, 2019.

²⁶ Patricia M. Kim, “China’s Search for Allies: Is Beijing Building a Rival Alliance System?” *Foreign Affairs*, November 15, 2021.

would look much like U.S. defense relationships with non-ally partners, such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and Vietnam—although, in practice, China's reliance as a security partner would be uncertain until tested.

For the foreseeable future, China's best prospect for closer security cooperation clearly lies in Moscow, although historical legacies and latent regional rivalries somewhat dampen ties. During a June 2019 visit to Moscow, Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin further elevated their countries' overall relationship to a "comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era."²⁷ Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe echoed this idea in his comments during the visit, adding that "China and Russia will cooperate on an array of major strategic projects and increase capabilities to jointly cope with security threats and challenges," and that "cooperation between the two militaries is growing deeper and more concrete."²⁸ Although, so far, Chinese and Russian security cooperation does not appear to be coordinated or even deconflicted to optimize its impact against U.S. interests, any movement in this direction would likely create a scenario in which the whole effort is greater than the sum of its parts. Moscow is also the only partner with which Beijing appears to be training for coalition, and perhaps fully joint, operations for a regional contingency involving North Korea. Such partnership is likely based on a shared concern about U.S. military action and mutual desire to limit the spillover from a war.

Chinese military engagement abroad thus far does not appear to come with any anti-U.S. conditions, but as U.S.-China relations worsen overall, the security domain is likely to become increasingly zero-sum. This means that, ultimately, any gain in Chinese access and influence with one country may diminish U.S. access and influence. Such a trade-off for a host country does not have to include tangible Chinese access to benefit Beijing. Reducing the impact of U.S. security cooperation, without improving Chinese security cooperation results, may be a satisfactory outcome for Beijing.

China's growing economic power—specifically, its demonstrated willingness to leverage countries' asymmetric economic dependence on Beijing to limit their security cooperation with the United States—is perhaps an even bigger issue. Even the possibility of undetermined consequences across a variety of Chinese tools—especially economic ones—may be sufficient to deter countries from allowing U.S. basing access or perhaps overflight rights in a U.S.-China conflict. Although U.S. security cooperation partners will likely seek to avoid such spillover in great-power competition, countries' economic dependence on China, combined with past examples (such as the U.S. deployment of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense ballistic missile defense system to South Korea), is likely to have a chilling effect as countries prioritize the immediate and tangible benefits of economic engagement with China against the long-term and intangible benefits of security cooperation with the United States. This dilemma falls outside the scope of this report, but is worth noting.

Even short of true security partnerships, Beijing's willingness to proliferate advanced military capabilities provides one avenue of shaping the global security environment without increasing China's foreign obligations. China has become the preferred provider of unmanned combat aerial vehicles to much of the Middle East,²⁹ if only because the United States has limited its sale of these systems abroad. As China develops next-generation technology, it will be better positioned to either sell this cutting-edge hardware to states seeking cheaper arms without Washington's typical conditions or donate its older, but still adequate, equipment to friendly nations. This proliferation could undermine U.S. security indirectly and even unintentionally.

²⁷ "China, Russia Agree to Upgrade Relations for New Era," Xinhua, June 6, 2019; and Neil MacFarquhar, "Xi Jinping's Visit to Russia Accents Ties in Face of Tensions with U.S.," *New York Times*, June 5, 2019.

²⁸ "China, Russia to Increase Capabilities to Jointly Deal with Security Threats: Chinese Defense Minister," Xinhua, April 26, 2019.

²⁹ Bradley Bowman, Jared Thompson, and Ryan Brobst, "China's Surprising Drone Sales in the Middle East," *Defense News*, April 23, 2021.

The Activities of Other Security Cooperation Providers

To offer a more comprehensive portrait of global security cooperation activities and of the context in which the United States' competition with China and Russia is unfolding, we also reviewed the programs and activities of three other prominent or emerging security cooperation providers—Australia, Japan, and India—as well as leading European security cooperation actors (both institutional and country-specific).¹

The level of activities of these countries and groups is vastly different, as are the available data about those activities. Therefore, in this chapter, we divide our treatment of these secondary security cooperators into two major sections. One covers the newer players: Australia, Japan, and India. The other section surveys the activities of major European security cooperators, whose collective activities constitute by far the second-largest security cooperation program behind the United States.

To assess the activities of these providers, we undertook research approaches similar to those used for our reviews of U.S., Russian, and Chinese activities. In each case, we reviewed any relevant official statements or data summaries from government sources. We examined nongovernmental reporting on arms sales and transfers. We looked for open-source reporting of security cooperation relationships and activities. We or other RAND analysts also conducted field research in most of these countries (as well as email and telephone communications in some cases) to gather additional publicly releasable data and perspectives on the security cooperation programs of these countries. As in the cases of Russia and China, the data that were available were incomplete and sometimes anecdotal for many of these actors.

Newer and More-Modest Security Cooperators: Australia, Japan, and India

Australia, Japan, and India are increasingly significant players in the security cooperation realm, partly because each has made the decision to compete with China's influence-seeking efforts. The total numbers and scope of the three countries' security cooperation programs remain far smaller than even the largest European providers, so we survey their activities relatively briefly in this section. But the United States should be aware of their intentions and emerging programs because each country offers important opportunities for multilateral collaboration that enhances the impact of U.S. security cooperation programs.

¹ As noted in Chapter One, even though security cooperation is always a joint effort, we refer to the countries leading security cooperation activities as *providers* and the countries on the receiving end of those efforts as *recipients*. And, in addition to our own review of the security cooperation programs in this chapter, another source of such activities for the project was Scott W. Harold, Derek Grossman, Brian Harding, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Gregory Poling, Jeffrey Smith, and Meagan L. Smith, *The Thickening Web of Asian Security Cooperation: Deepening Defense Ties Among U.S. Allies and Partners in the Indo-Pacific*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-3125-MCF, 2019.

Australia

Australia is at the very top of the list of reliable and capable U.S. allies, particularly in the Indo-Pacific and Middle East. The country's security cooperation activities are focused to some degree on nearby neighbors, especially the Pacific Island states, but also reach more broadly throughout the region to include such major partners as Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia.² Considering its historical relationships and extensive variety of exercises, training programs, and capacity-building efforts, Australia has the second-largest security cooperation profile in the region, behind only the United States and still today ahead of China. This is remarkable for a country with a total defense budget of only about \$34 billion.

There was a significant strategic shift in Australia's defense policy in 2020. The 2020 Defence Strategic Update and the 2020 Force Structure Plan, jointly launched by the Australian government on July 1, 2020, promised to take Australia's strategic posture from a largely defensive force to a conventional deterrence one in which Australia will take more of a lead in military operations in the region.³ The Defence Strategic Update, though not a white paper, is likely to be enduring. It essentially replaced the 2016 Defence White Paper, which called for an increase in international engagement activity in Australia's near abroad.

This significant shift emphasizes the Australian government's acknowledgment of the strategic challenges that Australia is likely to face in the coming decade and places capability development at the forefront of the strategy. The government has committed to acquiring long-range strike weapons and boosting offensive cyber capabilities to hold potential adversaries' forces and infrastructure at risk from a greater distance and in a much more confined timeline.⁴

Going back a few years, Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper stated that Australia would "engage with the Pacific with greater intensity and ambition" and aim to "strengthen regional cooperation and integration."⁵ Strategy and policy discussions have noticeably changed over the past few years to focus on Australia's role in its immediate region, and resources are flowing in the direction of the Pacific in terms of both economic aid and security-related investments.

In 2016, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull first announced Australia's intention to step up its engagement with the Pacific Islands and asked his government to identify promising innovative ideas to engage the islands in the Southwest Pacific to contest China's growing influence.⁶ The initiative was made public in November 2018.⁷ The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was directed to lead this effort, which is called Pacific Step-Up.⁸ Pacific Step-Up is an AUD \$2 billion program with an emphasis on infrastructure (along the lines of the 2018 U.S. BUILD Act), maritime security, peacekeeping, and senior leader engagement and relationship-building.⁹ As of late 2020, this initiative was supported by Prime Minister Scott Morrison.¹⁰

² Harold et al., 2019, p. 168.

³ Australian Department of Defence, *2020 Defence Strategic Update*, Canberra, July 1, 2020a; and Australian Department of Defence, *2020 Force Structure Plan*, Canberra, July 1, 2020b.

⁴ See Euan Graham, "Australia's Serious Strategic Update," International Institute for Strategic Studies, July 3, 2020.

⁵ Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Foreign Policy White Paper*, Canberra, November 2017, p. 101.

⁶ See the official statement at Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Strengthening Our Pacific Partnerships," infographic, November 2018.

⁷ Office of the Prime Minister of Australia, "Strengthening Australia's Commitment to the Pacific," press release, Canberra, November 8, 2018.

⁸ Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Stepping-Up Australia's Engagement with Our Pacific Family," webpage, undated-b.

⁹ Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018.

¹⁰ Stan Grant, "Scott Morrison's New Vision for Australia Accepts the Old Global Order Is Changing," November 28, 2020.

All new branches in the respective departments have been charged with improving coordination with the United States, Japan, France, and other key allies. For its part in the Pacific, Australia is focusing its international engagement efforts primarily on the Pacific inner islands (Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands) and Timor Leste. One key project thus far is the Blackrock Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre in Nadi, Fiji, which was designed to train up to 800 peacekeepers per year, starting in 2020.¹¹ In addition, Australian National University set up the Australia Pacific Security College in May 2019 to engage senior leaders from the region.¹²

The Royal Australian Air Force has had an important role to play in implementing the Australia's defense strategies. The U.S.-Australia Force Posture Initiatives announced in 2011 are being implemented under the 2014 Force Posture Agreement. The air contribution to those initiatives is the Enhanced Air Cooperation initiative, which seeks to enhance air power interoperability, prepare and posture joint and combined forces, and promote multilateral engagement and security in the Indo-Pacific. In late 2020, the Royal Australian Air Force announced a new Air Force Strategy, which outlines five lines of effort and the subsequent strategic directions associated with integrated air and space power for the joint force.¹³ The five lines of effort are

1. delivering air and space power as part of the joint force
2. developing an intelligent and skilled workforce
3. deepening relationships, strengthening engagement
4. evolving Air Force culture
5. agile and coherent governance.

Yet even as Australia lays out these new priorities, it faces several challenges in shaping its expanded security cooperation profile in the region. First, because the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has not defined the strategic effects being sought in the new programs, Department of Defence officials find it difficult to develop, implement, and then attempt to assess progress. For example, the 2016 Defence White Paper calls for doubling the amount of training delivered to international students and making engagement a “core function” of the defense portfolio in the Indo-Pacific,¹⁴ but Pacific Step-Up did not include new resources for manpower; rather, it simply re-prioritized functions. Thus, the government has had to find savings elsewhere in an already stretched budget.

A second challenge is that, until recently, Australia was struggling to balance its clear regional commitments with ongoing operations in the Middle East. The 2020 Defence Strategic Update made it clear that such out-of-area operations are a low priority.¹⁵ Australia has been engaged in the train, advise, assist, and enable operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan,¹⁶ and the Australian Defence Force's only purpose there was to support the United States in counterterrorism missions. But there clearly are not enough defense resources, or the political support, to both maintain those operations and meet Australia's regional commitments going forward.

A third and more institutional challenge is that, like the U.S. military, Australia's military services are trying to develop more-effective ways to train, employ, and retain service members with the right skills for

¹¹ Scott Morrison, “Remarks at Blackrock Camp, Fiji,” Office of the Prime Minister of Australia, January 18, 2019.

¹² Marise Payne, “ANU to Lead Australia Pacific Security College,” press release, Canberra, August 10, 2019.

¹³ Australian Air Force, *Air Force Strategy: Key Highlights*, Canberra: Australian Department of Defence, 2020.

¹⁴ Australian Department of Defence, *Defence White Paper*, Canberra, 2016, p. 125.

¹⁵ Australian Department of Defence, 2020a.

¹⁶ Australian Department of Defence, “Operations,” webpage, undated.

the largely nonmilitary engagements called for by Australia's new defense programs. The Australian Defence Force does not have positions equivalent to U.S. foreign area officers, and it has no way to track or recognize personnel with the cultural, regional, and language skills required for the new programs.

Fourth, Australia might not have the right force structure to engage the South Pacific in the way that its strategy calls for. Like the U.S. military, the Australian military has been focusing on acquiring high-end platforms for major contingencies.¹⁷ For the kinds of security cooperation missions demanded by Pacific Step-Up, the force likely needs more low-end platforms, coast guard assets, and units tailored to security cooperation activities.

Australia's mindset as a strategic actor is clearly evolving. The country has historically been more of a strategy *consumer*, living under the U.S. security umbrella and looking to Washington for strategic ideas and initiatives. In the new environment, in which Australia is becoming much more ambitious with its own regional initiatives, it must become more of a strategy *maker*. In the process, the Australian government—and the Department of Defence specifically—needs better analysis of and more consensus on opportunities to underpin the Pacific Step-Up effort and to drive policy and resourcing decisions.

Japan

Japan's security cooperation activities remain relatively modest compared with those of the leading security cooperation providers, although Japan's activities are growing as the country takes a more active role in countering Chinese influence in places as far away as Southeast Asia.¹⁸ Japan's constrained post-World War II role as a security actor has implications for its security cooperation activities as well: Japan does not have a military—it calls its armed forces the Self-Defense Forces (SDF)—and thus does not refer to any of its security cooperation assistance as *military* activities.¹⁹ There are other, broader reasons why the SDF does not perform the same variety and types of security cooperation activities as the United States, and those reasons are largely related to the nature of Japan's regional profile and relationships. As a result, Japan's security cooperation role is generally limited to security-related diplomacy, personnel exchanges, and limited capacity-building assistance. Nonetheless, Japan has been working to increase its role as a hub of regional security partnerships, and its security cooperation role is likely to grow somewhat in support of this objective.

Several main themes and trends are apparent in Japan's security cooperation activities. The first theme is a gradually increasing level of broadly defined security assistance. Japan offers capacity-building assistance in such areas as HA/DR, search and rescue, civil engineering, medicine, equipment maintenance, and law.²⁰ In 2012, Japan was working with five partners in the region (Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste); by 2017, that number had grown to 14 (Brunei, Cambodia, Djibouti, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam).²¹ During our study period (2013–2018), the budget for these activities grew from 160 million yen to more than 500 million yen. Although that budget is still small by global standards, these programs signal modest growth in Japan's regional security profile.

Japan's security cooperation profile also includes bilateral and multilateral exercises. Japan's portfolio of exercises is dominantly bilateral with the United States; even most of the multilateral exercises that Japan

¹⁷ Australian Department of Defence, *Defence Science and Technology Capability Portfolio*, 2nd ed., Canberra, June 2018b.

¹⁸ Harold et al., 2019, p. 30.

¹⁹ Japanese Ministry of Defense, *Overview and Fundamental Concepts of National Defense*, Tokyo, undated.

²⁰ Japanese Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan*, Tokyo, 2018, pp. 351–356.

²¹ Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2018, p. 354.

takes part in involve the United States.²² The number of exercises that Japan participates in has not grown year-on-year.

Second, though, because of its history and constitutional constraints, Japan's role in arms sales and transfers remains strictly limited. In April 2014, Japan's Cabinet approved the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, which provided a more flexible framework for Japan to participate in arms sales and transfers, although case-by-case approval is still conditioned on caveats.²³ Still, Japan has very limited experience in this type of security cooperation activity. It has several modest agreements and cooperative research programs underway with the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, France, and India, and it has transferred some training aircraft to the Philippines.²⁴

Third, Japan is strengthening its security relationships in the region through a growing set of defense exchanges, a form of security-oriented diplomacy akin to China's activities.²⁵ Between 2013 and 2017, Japan conducted dozens of defense exchanges with leading partners, especially Australia, South Korea, and India, as well as countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), particularly Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. Japan conducted between 25 and 45 exchanges per year with ASEAN partners during that period.²⁶

Japan also engages in personnel exchanges through PME programs. It has hosted students from, for example, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, and other regional countries, as well as the United States and France.²⁷ The modest size of Japan's SDF means that these programs remain small—between ten and several dozen officers from each main partner country. Nonetheless, they draw several hundred foreign officers each year.

Finally, Japan undertakes periodic HA/DR activities. It has sent medical teams, SDF units, and other capabilities to assist in Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere.²⁸ The largest HA/DR response was in 2013, when more than 1,000 SDF personnel were deployed to the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan.²⁹

In sum, Japan is an emerging defense partner for several regional states and conducts a slowly increasing array of security cooperation activities throughout Asia. As of this writing, the Japanese government appears to intend to build this role over time, although political and legal constraints will continue to impose significant limits on Japan's security cooperation profile.

India

In this study, we considered India's role in the security cooperation landscape through two lenses. One is as a potential partner for the United States in the role of security cooperation *recipient*; we discuss that role in Chapter Six. But we also examined India as an emerging security cooperation *provider*. That role, which we consider in this section, is still quite limited.

²² Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2018, pp. 475, 499–500, 516.

²³ Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology,” press release, April 1, 2014.

²⁴ Emma Chanlett-Avery, Caitlin Campbell, and Joshua A. Williams, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, July 13, 2019, RL33740, pp. 38–39.

²⁵ Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2018, pp. 356–369.

²⁶ Japanese Ministry of Defense, “Vientiane Vision: Japan's Defense Cooperation Initiative with ASEAN,” Tokyo, 2016.

²⁷ Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2018, pp. 356–376.

²⁸ Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2018, p. 354.

²⁹ Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2018, p. 513.

Our review of India's role as a security cooperation provider pointed to several leading themes. First, India still has a modest conception of its own role as an active sponsor of regional security, beyond its own security and direct national interests. The tiny Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan is the only nation for which India is a true security provider and ally in all but name. In 1949, the two countries signed a Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship, under which Bhutan agreed to permit India to "guide" its foreign policy.³⁰ The treaty was updated in 2007 to remove Bhutan's obligation to accept India's guidance. On the basis of this and related agreements and policies, India has served, and continues to serve (though not explicitly obligated), as Bhutan's security provider against any external adversary.

This relationship was tested in summer 2017, when China attempted to move its SCS strategy to dry land. PLA troops started an infrastructure project (extending a road) on territory jointly claimed by China and Bhutan. Indian troops moved in immediately to halt the action, which produced a significant crisis between India and China.³¹ But India's relationship with Bhutan is the exception; otherwise, India's strict policy of nonalignment leaves it with no formal alliances and no active security commitments.

India's longest-lasting episode of serving as a security provider in a combat situation was its deployment of a peacekeeping force to Sri Lanka between 1987 and 1990.³² In 1987, Sri Lanka's president invited India to send a peacekeeping force to stabilize a shaky ceasefire with the insurgent Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This intervention followed years of Indian involvement in the civil war that had raged in Sri Lanka for the previous four years; India's participation was partly a result of ties between the LTTE and Tamil political parties in India. Although India did not intend the peacekeeping force to engage in combat, within months, it found itself fighting the LTTE. At its peak, Indian troop strength reached 50,000.

In 1990, India withdrew the last of its troops without having accomplished its mission. The civil war continued until 2009. In 1991, an LTTE bomber assassinated Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian prime minister who had sent the troops.³³ International media and analysts often refer to the Sri Lanka operation as "India's Vietnam." Approximately 1,155 Indian troops were killed, and 2,984 were wounded.³⁴ India's experience in Sri Lanka has generally soured it on other ambitious security provision beyond its borders.

A second theme is that, even within these constraints, India has become somewhat more active in security cooperation initiatives to help offset China's influence throughout South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, particularly in the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.³⁵ In addition, India cooperates with Myanmar in counterinsurgency along their shared border area.³⁶ In the coming years, India's role as an active security cooperation provider is likely to expand, if only slowly, under the influence of these perceptions.

An example of this gradually increasing profile is India's portfolio of military exercises. Since the 1990s, India has gone from exercising with other nations relatively rarely to exercising with—and hosting exercises for—other nations on a regular basis. India exercises more with the United States than with any other nation: Since 2015, India has hosted the United States for at least ten bilateral exercises (six Army, three Navy, one Air Force) and one multilateral exercise (India's Milan naval exercise). India has hosted Indonesia and Thailand

³⁰ Government of India and Government of Bhutan, Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship Between the Government of India and the Government of Bhutan, Darjeeling, August 8, 1949.

³¹ Bruce Vaughn, *China-India Border Tension at Doka La*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, IN10748, August 9, 2017.

³² Alan Bullion, "The Indian Peace-Keeping Force in Sri Lanka," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 1994, p. 152; and Mark Fineman, "Last Indian Troops Leave Sri Lanka," *Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 1990.

³³ Bullion, 1994, p. 154.

³⁴ Bullion, 1994, p. 155.

³⁵ Indian Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report 2018–19*, New Delhi, 2019, pp. 198–204.

³⁶ Ankit Panda, "India, Myanmar Conclude Defense Cooperation Agreement," *The Diplomat*, July 30, 2019c.

for eight bilateral exercises each, and Indonesia has hosted India for the multilateral naval exercise Komodo. India has hosted Russia for six bilateral exercises and hosted France, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and Myanmar for five. India reportedly trains the militaries of Vietnam, Malaysia, and other nations in maintaining and upgrading Russian and former Soviet gear, but hard figures on these training engagements are difficult to obtain.³⁷ India permits Singapore's Air Force to conduct its own training in Indian airspace.³⁸

Third, arms sales and transfers constitute one area of security cooperation activities in which India does have a higher profile. India is not a major supplier of arms but has carved out a quiet niche in supplying spare parts, upgrades, and aftercare for Russian and former Soviet military hardware.³⁹ India's markets for this activity include Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Of arms sales recorded by SIPRI (which does not offer a complete record), India's largest regional customers are Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Nepal (Mauritius is a pass-through financial channel for other nations).⁴⁰

India's security cooperation relationships are therefore embryonic, but they are growing and could expand significantly if India determines that a more elaborate engagement posture is essential to safeguard its interests. The country is working to sustain or deepen its bilateral security relationships with several major regional actors, most especially Japan, Australia, Singapore, and Vietnam.⁴¹ India's growing sense of its own power and regional role is likely to intensify this sense of itself as a regional security hub, and a very limited but growing security cooperation portfolio is part of that effort.

Leading Security Providers in Europe

European nations contribute heavily to international defense engagement, whether individually or as part of NATO, the European Union (EU), or both. Some European actors are among the world's largest military aid donors, arms exporters, and HA/DR providers.⁴² Their partners, at times, overlap with Russia's and China's. This is especially the case for France, which is experiencing heightened security competition with China and Russia; in particular, Russia increasingly engages France's traditional partners in sub-Saharan Africa. NATO and the EU, too, engage not just Russia's partners but also some states, such as Ukraine and Georgia, that Russia considers part of its sphere of influence. Several European actors (NATO, the EU, France, and the United Kingdom, but not Germany) have clearly defined security cooperation doctrines or approaches, and they engage in a wide variety of activities, from arms sales to HA/DR (see Table 5.1).

³⁷ For India's training of pilots in the Royal Malaysian Air Force operating Su-30 fighters, see Manu Pubby, "India, Malaysia to Deepen Defence Ties, Set Up Su 30 Forum," *Economic Times*, July 12, 2018.

³⁸ Pankaj Kumar Jha, "India's Defense Diplomacy in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 2011, p. 52.

³⁹ Vivek Raghuvanshi, "Russia Allows Companies to Work with India to Supply Weapons Spares," *Defense News*, January 23, 2017.

⁴⁰ SIPRI, undated-a (data queried September 25, 2019).

⁴¹ Harold et al., 2019, p. 117.

⁴² In this report, we define *European actors* as NATO, the EU, and the individual nations in Europe. Our analysis of how European actors approach security cooperation is not exhaustive and instead focuses on the European security providers most relevant for each type of security cooperation activity examined here. We also examined only the security cooperation activities that benefit non-EU or non-NATO nations, leaving aside activities taking place between members of these organizations. Finally, we excluded relations between European actors and regional and international organizations, focusing instead on bilateral, country-to-country relations.

TABLE 5.1
European Actors' Security Cooperation Activities

Activity	NATO	EU	France	Germany	United Kingdom
Arms sales	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Military capacity-building	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education and training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Personnel exchanges	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Military exercises (bilateral, multilateral)	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Access-related agreements and overseas bases	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Armament-related agreements	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Sustainment	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
HA/DR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

In many cases, these activities overlap with Russia's and China's security cooperation initiatives. Overall, European actors' security cooperation activities advance Western interests in important ways and represent a critical piece of the strategic competition with Russia and China.

Leading Areas of Security Cooperation

The summary figures in Appendix B define European activities in several primary areas of security cooperation. Military aid data for 2013 to 2017, for example, show that France, Germany, and Spain are the only European countries that spent, on average, more than 1 billion euros per year on foreign military aid over that period, and the United Kingdom came very close to that number. In 2017, France and Germany were by far the largest European providers of foreign military aid, contributing close to 2 billion euros each (Figure B.5).⁴³

In terms of arms transfers, six European countries were among the world's ten largest arms exporters over 2014–2018; those six countries, in decreasing order of the share of global arms exports, were France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands. All except Italy saw their arms sales increase since the 2009–2013 period; specifically, France's sales increased by a staggering 43 percent, Spain's by 20 percent, the Netherlands' by 16 percent, Germany's by 13 percent, and the United Kingdom's by close to 6 percent.⁴⁴ France competes with Russia in particular in India, Egypt, China, and (to a lesser extent) Kazakhstan. France sells more weapons and equipment than Russia does to Egypt (constituting 37 percent of Egypt's arms imports versus 30 percent for Russia) but falls far behind Russia in sales to China (10 percent of China's arms imports versus 70 percent for Russia) and Kazakhstan (3 percent of Kazakhstan's arms imports versus 84 percent for Russia). France's trendline in sales to India is noteworthy: France is only India's fourth-largest supplier of arms sales since 2000, constituting 4 percent of India's arms imports compared with Russia's dominant 69 percent in the 21st century. But for recent years (2017–2019), France is India's second-largest supplier, coming in at 19 percent versus Russia's 50 percent of the imports.⁴⁵

⁴³ Data from 2017 were the most recent available at the time of writing.

⁴⁴ Wezeman et al., 2019, Table 1, p. 2.

⁴⁵ SIPRI, "Financial Value of the Global Arms Trade," web tool, undated-b. The suppliers that ranked second and third in India's arms imports for 2000–2019 (the United States and Israel) slipped behind France for 2017–2019, and neither registered \$1 billion in sales to India for the three years combined.

Most European countries enroll thousands of foreign students and military officers in their PME institutions. For instance, the United Kingdom had 2,240 international defense training places to offer in 2017, up from 1,964 in 2016 and 1,397 in 2015.⁴⁶ NATO has several education and training institutions that are open to personnel from NATO members and partners.⁴⁷ As of 2019, NATO had endorsed 33 Partnership Training and Education Centres on such issues as crisis management, language training, and peace operations training (see Figure B.6),⁴⁸ and France had established 14 regional-focused national schools in Africa that are managed by partner nations and that welcome students and trainees from the partner nation's region.⁴⁹

In 2019, NATO was set to conduct 102 exercises, including 39 open to partners. In 2018, NATO conducted 103 exercises, 51 of which were open to partners.⁵⁰ In 2016, the United Kingdom counted 173 overseas training exercises, 98 short-term training teams, and 38 individual training activities.⁵¹ Some of these exercises were conducted with potential Russian or Chinese threats in mind. For instance, in October 2018, the United Kingdom conducted a large-scale joint exercise (Saif Sareea 3) with Oman that mobilized 5,500 United Kingdom and 60,000 Omani personnel in a counter-Russia scenario.⁵² In 2018, France made a decision to increase joint military exercises with Japan, with a view on the threat from China.⁵³ France and the United Kingdom also conduct exercises with countries that train, at other times, with Russia. This is the case for India and Egypt, which are becoming closer partners of France and the United Kingdom, respectively.

France, the United Kingdom, and Italy all have military bases outside their territories. One of the newest of these installations is the joint training base that the United Kingdom opened in Oman in 2019.⁵⁴ As of 2019, the United Kingdom also sought to open two new permanent bases in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia,⁵⁵ and France was seeking additional access with new partners, such as India. Djibouti is a particularly critical location and hosts military bases belonging to China, France, Italy, Japan, the United States, and soon Saudi Arabia.⁵⁶ Djibouti hosts the only African military base for Italy, China, and the United States and the only foreign military base for Japan and (eventually) Saudi Arabia. Russia reportedly sought to open its own base in Djibouti but met with opposition from Djiboutian authorities.⁵⁷

⁴⁶ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, "UK Defence in Numbers 2018," London, October 24, 2018, p. 13.

⁴⁷ NATO, "Relations with Pakistan," webpage, last updated April 4, 2019e. See also NATO, "NATO Defense College Mission," webpage, last updated February 27, 2017a; and NATO School Oberammergau, "Corporate Identity," webpage, undated.

⁴⁸ Allied Command Transformation, "Partnership Training and Education Centres," map, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, undated.

⁴⁹ French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, "Les Écoles nationales à vocation régionale," undated.

⁵⁰ NATO, "Key NATO and Allied Exercises in 2019," fact sheet, February 2019a.

⁵¹ House of Commons Defence Committee, "4. Defence Engagement and National Resilience," in House of Commons Defence Committee, *SDSR 2015 and the Army: Eighth Report of Session 2016–17*, London, HC 108, April 29, 2017, para. 69.

⁵² British Army, "Exercise SAIF SAREEA 3," October 4, 2018; and Mark Hookham, "In the Biggest War Games for 17 Years Troops Have One Enemy in Mind: Russia," *The Times*, October 7, 2018.

⁵³ Tallulah Lutkin and Togo Shiraishi, "France and Japan to Scale Up Military Exercises to Deter China," *Nikkei Asian Review*, January 25, 2018.

⁵⁴ William James, "United Kingdom Announces Joint Omani-British Military Training Base," Reuters, November 5, 2018.

⁵⁵ J. Vitor Tossini, "A Look at the Considered Locations for New British Military Bases Overseas," *United Kingdom Defence Journal*, March 1, 2019. Possible sites under consideration in Southeast Asia are Brunei and Singapore, both of which already host British troops (Tossini, 2019).

⁵⁶ Saudi Arabia signed an agreement with Djibouti in 2016, but as of 2019 no new base had been built (Neil Melvin, *The Foreign Military Presence in the Horn of Africa Region*, Solna: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Background Paper, April 2019, p. 13). See also John Aglionby and Simeon Kerr, "Djibouti Finalizing Deal for Saudi Arabian Military Base," *Financial Times*, January 17, 2017.

⁵⁷ Aglionby and Kerr, 2017.

Institutional and Country Profiles

NATO

NATO's repertoire of security cooperation activities ranges from civil emergency planning to consultations and cooperation in counterterrorism, counter-proliferation, and other emerging security challenges, such as cyberattacks and piracy. Since the June 2004 Istanbul Summit that featured NATO's adoption of the Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building, improving the defense and military institutions of partner nations has become a clear focus of NATO.⁵⁸ At a Berlin meeting in April 2011, NATO foreign ministers endorsed an updated security cooperation policy with a more robust consultation mechanism and defined a "toolbox" of cooperation mechanisms and activities.⁵⁹ NATO's members and partners form an increasingly large group that covered 69 nations as of 2019 (see Figure B.7).⁶⁰

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, NATO's security cooperation activities picked up, with two new initiatives. The Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative consists of country-specific packages of defense-building measures. As of early 2019, Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Moldova, and Tunisia benefited from this initiative, and a decision on Libya was pending.⁶¹ The Partnership Interoperability Initiative gave Australia, Finland, Georgia, Jordan, and Sweden Enhanced Opportunities Partner status, which was renewed in 2017.⁶²

Some countries are part of more than one NATO program. Georgia, for instance, participates in all five programs represented in Figure B.8: the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative, the Enhanced Opportunities Partner initiative, the Interoperability Platform, the Defence Education Enhancement Programme, and the Building Integrity initiative; Moldova participates in four of those. Thus, the two countries that participate in the most programs are countries that Russia seeks to maintain in its sphere of influence.

European Union

The EU conducts activities with partner countries through Common Security and Defense Policy missions.⁶³ As of June 2019, there were six military and ten civilian missions. Military missions cover a broad range of mandates. For instance, the EU has training missions in Mali and the Central African Republic; a mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina that oversees the military implementation of the Dayton Agreement; a maritime policing and training operation in the Mediterranean region; and an anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia. Its civilian missions in Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, the Palestinian territories, Mali, Niger, Libya, Somalia, Iraq, and Kosovo seek to "assist in border management, conflict prevention, combatting organised crime and smuggling, reforming national security sectors or in monitoring the judicial system and the rule of law."⁶⁴ The European Union Advisory Mission that supports civilian security sector reform efforts in Ukraine was established in 2014.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ NATO, "Defense Institution Building," webpage, last updated May 9, 2018a.

⁵⁹ NATO, "Partnerships: Projecting Stability Through Cooperation," webpage, last updated August 30, 2018c.

⁶⁰ This number includes Russia, which is a member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace program.

⁶¹ NATO, "Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative," webpage, last updated July 12, 2018b.

⁶² NATO, 2018c.

⁶³ Information on these operations is drawn from European Union External Action Service, "A Stronger EU on Security and Defence," November 19, 2018.

⁶⁴ European Union External Action Service, "Civilian CSDP Missions: Europeans on the Ground Provide Security in Our Neighborhood," June 20, 2019.

⁶⁵ European Union Advisory Mission Ukraine, "About Us," webpage, undated.

The EU's security cooperation activities overlap with China's anti-piracy efforts in the Horn of Africa and activities in the Central African Republic. They also overlap with Russia's activities in the Central African Republic and in Libya.⁶⁶ Finally, these activities take place in Russia's effective or desired zone of influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, and Ukraine.

France

Security cooperation is briefly mentioned in France's foremost strategic document, the 2017 Defence and National Security Strategic Review.⁶⁷ France's relations with its partners fall in two categories: defense agreements, which tie France to 12 countries in Africa and the Middle East,⁶⁸ and technical military assistance and logistical support agreements,⁶⁹ which cover such initiatives as education, training, equipment, and advisory missions, as well as logistical support (see Figure B.9). Historically, France was heavily involved in its former colonies in francophone sub-Saharan Africa, but it has progressively marked a shift toward (1) the Middle East, with the opening of a new base in Abu Dhabi in 2009, and (2) the Asia-Pacific region, with a new partnership with India in 2013 and, in May 2019, the publication of a dedicated defense policy for the region.⁷⁰

Yet France is still very present in Africa. In 2019, it began a partnership with Ethiopia focusing on Air Force and Navy cooperation,⁷¹ and its partnership with Egypt—which has existed since 2005—was reinforced in 2017 with major arms sales and the creation of a bilateral High Military Committee.⁷² France's choice of partners is based on a variety of considerations, including history (Sahel, West Africa), geographic proximity to French bases and territories (India, West Africa), opportunities for counterterrorism and counter-piracy cooperation (Egypt, Ethiopia), markets for arms exports (Egypt, India), and prospects for joint industrial development (Australia).

France's security cooperation activities directly overlap with Russia's, and there is some degree of competition with China as well. Russia is increasingly present in sub-Saharan African countries that are France's traditional partners.⁷³ For example, the Central African Republic signed a military cooperation agreement with Russia in 2018, and Russian trainers present in the country likely outnumber those from France.⁷⁴ A Russian military adviser works with the Central African Republic's president, and there are plans to increase the size of Russia's advisory team there more broadly.⁷⁵ And Russia's presence is increasingly felt in other

⁶⁶ Amaury Hauchard, "China, Russia Rise in CAR as Western Influence Shrinks," *Mail & Guardian*, May 24, 2018.

⁶⁷ French Republic, *Defence and National Security Strategic Review*, Paris, October 2017, especially pp. 59–61.

⁶⁸ Defense agreements (*accords de défense*) mean potential—but not automatic—French intervention if a partner is attacked. See former Joint Chief of Staff General Henri Bentégeat's remarks cited in French Senate, "La France et la gestion des crises africaines: quels changements possibles?" Information Report No. 450 (2005–2006), July 3, 2006.

⁶⁹ This is our translation of *accords d'assistance militaire technique et de soutien logistique*.

⁷⁰ French Ministry of Armed Forces, *France and Security in the Indo-Pacific*, Paris, May 2019.

⁷¹ John Irish, "Macron signe un accord 'inédit' de défense avec l'Éthiopie," Reuters, March 12, 2019.

⁷² French Embassy in Cairo, "La coopération militaire et de défense," French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, last updated June 12, 2018.

⁷³ In 2019, French Defense Minister Florence Parly stated, "We feel very much concerned by the growing Russian influence in a country that we know well, the Central African Republic" (Eric Schmitt, "Russia's Military Mission Creep Advances to a New Front: Africa," *New York Times*, March 31, 2019).

⁷⁴ According to a *New York Times* article, "Russia said in a statement last year [2018] that 175 instructors—believed by Pentagon officials and Western analysts to be employed by the Wagner Group—have trained more than 1,000 Central African Republic troops" (Schmitt, 2019). Another source found no evidence that the Wagner Group is present in the Central African Republic (Aaron Ross, "How Russia Moved into Central Africa," Reuters, October 17, 2018b). See also Hauchard, 2018.

⁷⁵ Ross, 2018b; Schmitt, 2019.

parts of Africa. In early 2018, for instance, the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger)—which cooperate closely with France’s Operation Barkhane in the region—asked Russia for military support.⁷⁶ Overall, between 2014 and 2019, Russia signed agreements on military cooperation with 12 sub-Saharan countries that are also France’s security cooperation partners: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria, and Zambia.⁷⁷

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom’s 2017 International Defence Engagement Strategy provides guidance for the country’s security cooperation activities and defines *defense engagement* as “the use of our people and assets to prevent conflict, build stability and gain influence.”⁷⁸ Since 2015, defense engagement has been a core task of the Ministry of Defence, thus ensuring that such engagement receives dedicated funding and is prioritized accordingly. Defense engagement is part of the broader persistent engagement concept, which relies on a whole-of-government approach to provide access, prevent instability from developing, enable potential future interventions, and support the United Kingdom’s commercial interests. Ministry of Defence funding for these activities was approximately \$100 million in 2017 and was projected to keep rising until at least 2021. The United Kingdom’s Conflict, Stability and Security Fund is another source of funding for security cooperation, with \$70 million in 2017.⁷⁹

France and the United Kingdom also provide operational training to overseas partners. The United Kingdom has short-term training teams and British peace support teams, which it describes as “permanent overseas training hubs.”⁸⁰ Ongoing training operations (excluding ongoing military operations) take place in Kenya, with a 350-personnel permanent training support unit called the British Army Training Unit, Kenya; Nigeria, with 300 personnel providing training and advice to the Nigerian armed forces against Boko Haram; and Ukraine, with 100 personnel providing military training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces as part of Operation Orbital.⁸¹

The 2017 International Defence Engagement Strategy mentions mainly the United Kingdom’s highly capable partners, such as the members of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, and the GCC countries.⁸² Yet the United Kingdom has partners with a much broader range of capability and, since 2015, has opened three new British Defence Staff offices—in Nigeria, where Russia concluded a military cooperation agreement in 2017;⁸³ the United Arab Emirates; and Singapore.⁸⁴ The purpose of these offices is to provide a

⁷⁶ Schmitt, 2019.

⁷⁷ Aaron Ross, “Factbox: Russian Military Cooperation Deals with African Countries,” Reuters, October 17, 2018a.

⁷⁸ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *UK’s International Defence Engagement Strategy*, London, 2017, p. 1.

⁷⁹ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2017, p. 18.

⁸⁰ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2017, p. 14.

⁸¹ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, 2018, p. 8; British Army, “The British Army: Operations and Deployments,” webpage, undated; and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2019*, London: Routledge, February 2019, p. 162.

⁸² The Five Power Defence Arrangements includes Australia Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom (Prashanth Parameswaran, “Five Power Defense Arrangements in the Spotlight with Land Exercise,” *The Diplomat*, June 12, 2018a).

⁸³ Jakob Hedenskob, “Russia Is Stepping Up Its Military Cooperation in Africa,” Swedish Defence Research Agency, Memo 6604, December 2018.

⁸⁴ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2017, p. 8.

regional hub for security cooperation activities. The British Defence Staff in Nigeria, for instance, also covers Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.

Other European Actors

Germany's 2016 white paper on German security policy and the future of the German military (Bundeswehr) mentions that two of the Bundeswehr's "tasks" are HA/DR and "partnerships and cooperation above and beyond the EU and NATO."⁸⁵ The white paper, however, does not outline a clear geographic focus or doctrine for these activities. As examples, Germany has been deepening its bilateral defense relationship with India since 2006, and activities include annual strategic dialogues, joint defense projects (including transfers of technology), and military staff trainings.⁸⁶ Germany is also intensifying its relationship with Singapore, a country with which it engages in high-level visits and exchanges, technological collaboration, and military exercises.⁸⁷

Spain has a dedicated security cooperation plan, (Plan de Diplomacia de Defensa) but it has not been updated since 2011.⁸⁸ Spain mostly provides training and support through its participation in various NATO, EU, United Nations (UN), and multilateral military missions (e.g., the EU Training Mission in the Central African Republic and Operation Barkhane in the Sahel).⁸⁹ Spain's security cooperation activities are focused on North and West Africa, and the country maintains defense diplomacy missions in the Gulf of Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal, and Tunisia.⁹⁰

Italy's security cooperation activities are mentioned in its 2015 White Paper for International Security and Defence.⁹¹ The paper mentions the Euro-Mediterranean region, the Mashreq, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Persian Gulf as general areas of focus for Italy's defense.⁹² Italy's two overseas military installations are located at a support base in Djibouti (135 personnel) and the Al Minhad Air Base in the United Arab Emirates (121 Task Force Air personnel).⁹³ Italy, however, plans to decrease its overseas presence to focus more on the Mediterranean region.⁹⁴ It also experienced severe defense cuts in 2019—to the tune of \$512 million—which might affect security cooperation activities.⁹⁵ Finally, as part of its overall foreign policy toward Libya since the collapse of the Muammar Qadhafi regime, Italy has been involved with various aspects of Libyan security organizations, including the Libyan coast guard and some militias.

⁸⁵ German Federal Government, *White Paper 2016: On German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*, Berlin, July 13, 2016, pp. 92–93.

⁸⁶ German Council on Foreign Relations, "India's Defense Engagement in a Disordered World: Principles, Priorities and Partnerships—Conversation with H. E. Nirmala Sitharaman, Defense Minister of India," event webpage, February 12, 2019.

⁸⁷ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Singapore-Germany Defense Ties in Focus with Military Exercise," *The Diplomat*, March 25, 2019a.

⁸⁸ Spanish Ministry of Defence, *Plan de Diplomacia de Defensa*, Madrid, April 2011.

⁸⁹ Spanish Ministry of Defence, "Misiones en el exterior," webpage, last updated January 2019.

⁹⁰ Spanish Ministry of Defence, 2019.

⁹¹ Italian Ministry of Defence, *White Paper for International Security and Defence*, Rome, July 2015, pp. 38–40.

⁹² Italian Ministry of Defence, 2015, pp. 28–30. The white paper defines the Mashreq as "all the Arab countries that lie east of Cairo" (p. 29).

⁹³ Those personnel numbers were current as of January 2018 (Italian Ministry of Defence, "Military Operations," webpage, undated).

⁹⁴ International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2019, p. 119.

⁹⁵ Tom Kingston, "Italy Plans to Slash Half a Billion Dollars from Defense in 2019," *Defense News*, October 24, 2018.

Case Studies Examining the Emerging Security Cooperation Competition in Select Countries

Now that we have reviewed the ongoing security cooperation activities of the provider countries, we turn to assessing the other end of the security cooperation pipeline—the recipient, or junior partner, countries. As part of this study, we sought to identify a small number of candidates for detailed case analysis, which will serve three purposes. First, these case studies will provide greater fidelity on the security cooperation activities underway in the subject country by each of the three competitors considered in this study (United States, Russia, and China). Second, they will support an analysis of the relative success of the various security cooperation activities underway and reveal to what degree U.S. security cooperation programs are valued over Russian or Chinese ones, and whether this balance is changing over time. Third, the deep dives will identify initiatives that the United States could take to enhance its competitive profile in the subject country.

To nominate countries for in-depth analysis of competitive dynamics in security cooperation through a USAF lens, we first compiled a list of countries that are recipients of security cooperation from two or more of the three focus competitors. In this first stage, we were striving to be inclusive and thus included any country that is a participant in the security cooperation process that might theoretically be a good subject for deep-dive analysis. The list of proposed candidate countries for applying criteria was as follows:

Algeria	Iraq	Mongolia
Angola	Japan	South Korea
Armenia	Jordan	Sri Lanka
Australia	Kazakhstan	Tajikistan
Azerbaijan	Myanmar	Tanzania
Bangladesh	Nepal	Thailand
Belarus	New Zealand	Turkey
Cambodia	Pakistan	Uganda
Ecuador	Philippines	Ukraine
Egypt	Romania	United Arab Emirates
Ethiopia	Serbia	Vanuatu
Fiji	Singapore	Venezuela
Georgia	Kenya	Vietnam
India	Kyrgyzstan	
Indonesia	Malaysia	

We then developed criteria that we could use to help us select between six and eight countries from that list for our case studies. The purpose of the criteria was to highlight how potential case-study countries stacked up along several critical lines of comparison, not to generate an objective ranking according to a formal model.

We were able to identify a few initial criteria based on the purposes of our deep-dive analyses. For example, because the goal of these analytical efforts was to compare security cooperation activities, we wanted to choose countries where at least two of the competitors have significant interests and are active with security cooperation. In addition, to make the resulting recommendations relevant to the USAF, the case-study countries should have a meaningful air service. Because other analytical offices (inside and outside the U.S. government) are engaged in prioritization efforts in the security cooperation field with a focus on technological and operational criteria, and because this study takes a geopolitical rather than operational approach, we sought to include criteria that emphasized the strategic significance of a potential selected country and its pure technical capacity for interoperability. Nonetheless, because an important purpose of security cooperation is to shape the environment for potential conduct of combined arms operations, a country's ability to contribute to major combat operations also served as a factor. Given these considerations, we developed the following measures to analyze, and we used that analysis to help us choose the case-study countries:

1. level of U.S. national interests involved
2. level of Russian or Chinese interests or ambitions involved
3. anticipated economic weight of the country in 2050
4. degree of geopolitical flexibility—that is, is the state open to new influence or mostly locked in alignment with one side
5. whether and the degree to which two or more of the three competitors have provided security cooperation activities to the country
6. degree to which the country's capabilities, location, air service capacity, and logistical base would be key to a high-end conflict
7. possession of significant air service assets with which the USAF can profitably engage.

Using the results of this analysis and in consultation with the sponsor, we chose eight countries for deep-dive analysis, including field visits. Those selected do not reflect countries that ranked most highly in the described measures; rather, the case-study countries are a representative sample that provides a snapshot of security cooperation dynamics in multiple regions of the world and includes countries that fit our desired criteria in at least four of the seven measures. Of our eight case studies, six are included in this report: India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Serbia, Thailand, and Vietnam. We omitted the case studies on Algeria and Egypt because we did not feel that the source data were strong enough, although lessons from those analyses still inform our findings.

Throughout the case studies described in this chapter, we rely on interviews that we conducted with various experts in or on each country, including defense strategists, military officials, and researchers. These interviews were conducted in spring and summer 2019 for this project and an unrelated RAND project that sought similar information from interview participants.¹ The interviews added depth to our understanding of the current security cooperation trends in these countries, building on the foundation of official government documents and press reporting cited elsewhere in this report.

¹ See Bonny Lin, Michael S. Chase, Jonah Blank, Cortez A. Cooper III, Derek Grossman, Scott W. Harold, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Lyle J. Morris, Logan Ma, Paul Orner, Alice Shih, and Soo Kim, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific: Study Overview and Conclusions*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-4412-AF, 2020.

India

Throughout its postcolonial history, India has eschewed all formal alliances and been extremely hesitant to enter into any security arrangement that might be construed as an informal one.² Under the nation's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, India became a charter member of the Non-Aligned Movement and has maintained a deep-seated aversion to permanent security arrangements ever since. For much of the Cold War period, this theoretically nonaligned stance masked a pronounced tilt toward the Soviet Union, and Russia continues to be India's primary source of imported arms. Over the past two decades, India has moved slowly but steadily closer to the United States and other Western security partners, a trend that is likely to continue.

Paired with India's ideological distrust of formal alignment is an intellectual distrust of formal doctrine. The Indian military is decidedly nondoctrinal: The few texts that have been published relate primarily to tactics and operations rather than to grand strategy. Some of the Indian sources whom we interviewed described this as a deliberate choice: Lack of overarching doctrine, they argued, provides flexibility to adapt to any given situation. Other interviewees were less charitable, describing this approach as operating ad hoc.

The basic picture of India's strategic challenges, however, has remained relatively constant since the mid-1950s. Pakistan has been India's primary security concern from the moment of the two nations' independence (August 14 and August 15, respectively, 1947). Over time, the nature of the rivalry has shifted among various styles of conflict, including conventional war (they have fought three, in 1947–1948, 1965, and 1971), semi-conventional war (a “near war” at Kargil in 1999 and numerous skirmishes across the decades), unconventional or proxy warfare (primarily through Pakistan's sponsorship of militant or terrorist groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad), and the potential for nuclear exchange (since 1998, both nations have acknowledged that they hold nuclear weapons). For the first decade of its history, India maintained a friendly relationship with China, but this soured in the late 1950s, and the two nations fought their only war in 1962. Since then, India has regarded Pakistan as its more acute threat but China as its more potent long-term rival. The fact that China and Pakistan have been close security partners since the late 1960s provides India with an intertwined challenge.

For most of the 21st century, India has been seen by many U.S. policymakers as a prime candidate for increased security cooperation. This assessment rests on demography (India is second only to China in population and projected by the UN to surpass China within a decade³); geography; economy; democracy; and, perhaps above all, India's own strategic interest in preventing China from dominating the Indo-Pacific region. Such an assessment is correct if viewed as a long-term proposition, but drastic changes in India's appetite for security cooperation are unlikely to be realized on a rapid time frame.

India's geography is strategically significant for competition with China on land, sea, and air. On land, India is one of only two nations (Vietnam is the other) that has fought a full-scale land war with China unsupported by foreign military troops and is the only country (apart from India's de facto protectorate Bhutan) with which Beijing has unresolved territorial land disputes. At sea, India is the only nation with the force capability and political intent to prevent China from extending its hard-power (i.e., military and economic) dominance from the Pacific Ocean into a similar dominance of the Indian Ocean region. In the air domain, India has numerous air bases that do not currently provide access to USAF aircraft but might do so under the right conditions in the future.

² This section draws from previously published RAND research on U.S.-China competition in the Indo-Pacific, particularly Jonah Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific: India*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-4412/2-AF, 2021a.

³ “India May Overtake China as Most Populous Country Sooner than UN Projections of 2027: Report,” *Economic Times*, May 12, 2021.

India has the world's third-largest economy in purchasing power parity and fifth-largest in nominal ranking.⁴ Yet India—like most other nations in Asia—is deeply reliant on China as a trade partner. Moreover, China's considerable military superiority has made Indian planners risk-averse about taking positions that could provoke full-scale warfare. One recent confrontation was a three-month standoff in 2017 on the Doklam Plateau, territory claimed by Bhutan and China.

In 2019, India devoted \$71.1 billion to military expenditures, representing 2.4 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (slightly above the global average). India had the world's third-highest level of military spending in 2019, after the United States and China and ahead of Russia and Saudi Arabia.⁵ Russia was by far India's largest foreign supplier of military hardware over 2010–2019; purchases from Russia represented two-thirds (\$21.7 billion) of India's overall spending on foreign military hardware (\$33 billion) over that period. Far behind Russia were the United States (\$3.7 billion), Israel (\$2.6 billion), France (\$1.8 billion), and the United Kingdom (\$1.1 billion). SIPRI data record no arms purchases by India, either in that decade or any point in the past.⁶

Security Cooperation with the United States

In 2016, the United States designated India as a *major defense partner*.⁷ In 2018, India was granted Strategic Trade Authorization Tier 1 status, which allows India to receive license-free access to a wide variety of military and dual-use technologies that are regulated by the U.S. Department of Commerce. That same year, the United States and India signed the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement to, as Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman noted, “cooperate in every possible way, to ensure peace and stability as well as to realise the aspirations of our peoples for continued economic growth, prosperity and development.”⁸ This agreement allows India access to more advanced communications technology for defense equipment purchased from the United States.⁹

With that agreement and other enabling agreements now in place, U.S.-India defense trade cooperation continues to expand—from nearly zero in 2008 to \$15 billion in transfers agreed upon in 2019.¹⁰ Recent important military sales include P-8I Poseidon long-range maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft, MH-60R Seahawk maritime multi-mission helicopters, C-17 Globemaster III strategic transport aircraft, C-130J-30 Super Hercules tactical transport aircraft, and AH-64E Apache Guardian attack helicopters.¹¹ India was the first non-treaty partner to be offered a Missile Technology Control Regime Category 1 unmanned aerial system, the Sea Guardian unmanned aerial system manufactured by General Atomics. Since 2008, the United States has also sold more than \$6.6 billion in defense articles to India via the DCS process, which licenses the export of the defense equipment, services, and related manufacturing technologies

⁴ Edie Purdy, “Tracking GDP in PPP Terms Shows Rapid Rise of China and India,” World Bank blog, October 16, 2019. See also the “Report for Selected Country Groups and Subjects (PPP valuation of country GDP)” in International Monetary Fund, “World Economic Outlook Database October 2019,” web tool, October 2019.

⁵ Nan Tian, Alexandra Kuimova, Diego Lopes Da Silva, Pieter D. Weseman, and Siemon T. Wezeman, “Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2019,” fact sheet, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, April 2020.

⁶ Arms sales registered by SIPRI provide a useful metric but do not record all transactions (SIPRI, undated-b).

⁷ U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation with India,” fact sheet, last updated June 4, 2019.

⁸ Jim Garamone, “U.S.-India Defense Cooperation a ‘Key Driver’ of Overall Relationship,” U.S. Department of Defense, September 6, 2018.

⁹ Alyssa Ayres, “What Next for U.S.-India Military Ties,” Council on Foreign Relations, September 7, 2018.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, 2019.

¹¹ U.S. Department of State, 2019; and Jane's, “India: Air Force,” *Jane's World Air Forces*, last updated June 30, 2020b.

controlled under the 21 categories of the U.S. Munitions List. The top categories of DCS to India are aircraft, electronics, and gas turbine engines.

The United States also conducts several military exercises with India. These include Yudh Abhyas, an annual Army training exercise held most recently in September 2018 and in February 2021 in India with hundreds of soldiers from both sides.¹² The United States also provides billets to mid-level Indian officers at staff and war colleges in the United States.¹³ The U.S. Navy cooperates with the Indian Navy on its blue-water deployment, particularly in expanding its capabilities to detect and monitor Chinese naval activity in approaches to the Indian Ocean.¹⁴ In addition, India participates in the IMET program and has received at least \$1 million of IMET funding annually since 2003.¹⁵

Security Cooperation with Russia

Russia has consistently been India's primary supplier of military hardware: From 1992 to 2018, Russia has provided \$40.8 billion of the \$59.7 billion in total arms sales to India recorded by SIPRI—and has supplied more arms than any other nation in every year since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. During this same period, the next-largest suppliers, the United States and Israel, each provided slightly less than \$4 billion—less than one-tenth of the Russian total.¹⁶

There are several reasons that India favors Russian hardware. The first is history: India has many legacy weapon systems dating back to its Cold War relationship with the Soviet Union (between 1950 and 1991, the Soviet Union supplied \$42 billion of the \$64 billion India spent on imported arms).¹⁷ Second, Russian military equipment tends to be less expensive than its Western counterparts. Third, and perhaps most important, India sees Russia as a reliable and flexible partner. Being reliable is of key significance: Indian planners fear that they might be engaged in a prolonged conflict and be unable to keep their equipment operational because Western nations will place restrictions on the equipment or it simply will not be available. (Related to this is India's more generalized desire to maintain a diverse supplier base for its arms imports.) The fourth reason that India favors Russian hardware is that Russia is willing to let India create indigenous versions of many of its products, both for India to use itself and to sell to third parties.

Russia also conducts many military exercises with India. A tri-service joint exercise called Indra has taken place several times and focuses on an effort to augment joint planning capability and increase interoperability for peacekeeping operations. The Indian Air Force and Russian Air Force conducted the first phase of Exercise Aviaindra 18 in Lipetsk, Russia, in September 2018, and the second phase was held in Jodhpur, India, in December. The Indian Air Force's Sukhoi, MiG, and Antonov aircraft participated in the exercise.¹⁸

Security Cooperation with Other Partners

One of the most discussed, yet least developed, pieces of strategic architecture in the Indo-Pacific region is known as *The Quad*—that is, a four-way partnership between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. All Quad members except India already operate on a variety of compatible military equipment and use com-

¹² Jane's, "India: Army," *Jane's World Armies*, last updated February 10, 2021a.

¹³ Jane's, "India: Armed Forces," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—South Asia*, last updated February 15, 2021b.

¹⁴ Jane's, "India: Navy," *Jane's World Navies*, last updated March 1, 2021d.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of State, 2019.

¹⁶ SIPRI, undated-b.

¹⁷ SIPRI, undated-b.

¹⁸ Jane's, 2020b.

patible and familiar procedures for operations. Yet this multilateral construct has so far produced relatively little concrete engagement.

India and Japan have major bilateral ground (Dharma Guardian) and sea (Jimex) military exercises, and both participate in multilateral exercises for ground (Force 18), air (Pitch Black, Red Flag), and sea (Rim of the Pacific, Malabar, Kakadu, Komodo). In 2015, the two countries signed an Agreement Concerning Security Measures for Protection of Classified Military Information. India and Australia elevated their relationship to a “strategic partnership” in 2009 and expanded it to a “framework for security cooperation” in 2014.¹⁹ They conduct military exercises together, including ground (Austra Hind) and sea (Ausindex—in 2019, held in Freemantle),²⁰ as well as multilateral exercises, including those for ground (Force 18), air (Pitch Black, Red Flag), and sea (Rim of the Pacific, Malabar, Kakadu, Komodo, and Milan). Australian arms sales to India totaled \$108 million in 2017.²¹ At least according to Australia, this is a partnership on the rise.²²

India’s most significant security partnership in Southeast Asia is with Singapore. In 2003, the two countries signed a defense cooperation agreement, under which they would annually hold defense policy dialogues to discuss security cooperation and other matters of mutual concern.²³ The cooperation is perhaps most noteworthy in the arena of airpower: Singapore is the only nation that India permits to conduct regular exercises of its *own* air force (rather than bilateral or multilateral exercises) in Indian airspace. Under an agreement reached in 2007, the Republic of Singapore Air Force is permitted to train its personnel at India’s Kalaikunda Air Base and to station Singaporean aircraft there.²⁴ The two countries’ air forces conduct an annual bilateral exercise called Sindex, during which Singapore’s Air Force has flown its F-16 C/D fighter jets alongside India’s MiG-27 multirole aircraft. The two nations’ armies have traditionally held two annual exercises together: Bold Kurukshetra for armor and Agni Warrior for artillery.²⁵

India and Singapore share a core security interest in defending the sea lines of communication (including the potential choke point of the Strait of Malacca) and in combating shared threats, such as piracy. Since 1994, they have conducted annual naval exercises together, under the rubric of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (Simbex). These exercises alternate in location and have expanded from anti-submarine warfare to complex operations involving major surface vessels.²⁶ Singapore also participates in India’s multilateral Milan naval exercise.

Military engagement between India and Vietnam rests on the foundation of shared Soviet or Russian platforms, and India’s future role in the Southeast Asian security structure may rest partly on its unique capabilities in operating, repairing, and upgrading military hardware compatible with Soviet or Russian models. Although informal security ties between India and Vietnam date back at least to the 1970s, a defense

¹⁹ Australian High Commission New Delhi, “PA5009 Indian and Australian Prime Ministers Agree a Strategic Partnership,” November 12, 2009; and Indian Ministry of External Affairs, “Framework for Security Cooperation Between India and Australia,” November 18, 2014.

²⁰ Australian High Commission New Delhi, “Australia’s Largest Defense Force Deployment in India to Further Deepen Defense and Strategic Relationship,” press release, March 28, 2019.

²¹ SIPRI, undated-b.

²² Australian High Commission New Delhi, 2019; and Christopher Pyne, “Fullerton Forum Keynote,” January 28, 2019.

²³ Singaporean Ministry of Defence, “Permanent Secretary (Defence) Visits India for 8th Defence Policy Dialogue,” press release, July 10, 2012.

²⁴ Singaporean Ministry of Defense, “Strengthening Bonds with Indian Air Force at Joint Military Training 2019,” December 4, 2019.

²⁵ “India and Singapore Carry Out Joint Naval Exercises,” *DefenceNow*, March 22, 2011.

²⁶ Jane’s, 2021d.

cooperation agreement was negotiated only in 1994 and not formally signed until 2000.²⁷ India's role as a provider of aftercare for Soviet and Russian military equipment has led to servicing and maintenance agreements for Vietnam's military hardware, including MiG-21s. India supplies spare parts to submarines and surface vessels for Vietnam's Navy. Since 2011, India has been training Vietnam's crews operating *Kilo*-class submarines—a type of vessel that India has been operating since 1986.²⁸ In 2013, New Delhi provided a \$100 million credit line to enable Vietnam to purchase military equipment from India, which was the first of such offers by India to a country outside of India's "traditional sphere of influence."²⁹

Assessment and Evaluation

At first glance, few (if any) U.S. partners present more-suitable opportunities for increased security cooperation than India does. But many of the same challenges that have prevented closer partnership between the United States and India in the past remain in effect today. The outlook is one of steadily increasing engagement, with the United States continuing to gain ground on Russia in security cooperation with India. But U.S. planners should be wary of expecting India to move faster than its inherent impediments permit.

From a security cooperation standpoint, a key reason for caution is Indian decisionmakers' distrust of U.S. reliability as a provider of both protection (whether military or diplomatic) and equipment (whether during a conflict or at any time in the procurement cycle). The United States and India have a long-standing, arms-length relationship stemming from India's Cold War nonalignment policy; U.S. support for Pakistan after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; and several disputes over the history of the modern relationship. As a result, Indian policymakers are often not convinced that the United States can be trusted to carry through any agreement that it might make to supply not only military technology but also the spare parts, upgrades, and other services that an expanded security cooperation relationship would require over the course of that technology's operational lifetime. This distrust could eventually change if U.S.-India ties become strong and consistent over time, but India's inherent skepticism is not likely to disappear any time soon.

Although Indian planners see China as their most significant long-term security challenge, and although Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been more tolerant of risk than some of his predecessors, Indian strategists understand that India is not yet a peer competitor of China. Most strategists interviewed for this project see the gap between the two nations increasing. *NonAlignment 2.0*—a quasi-doctrinal document published by the Centre for Policy Research, an Indian think tank—highlights the challenges presented by China but is careful to avoid portraying India's neighbor in overly antagonistic terms.³⁰ The emphasis of Indian strategy, according to this document, should be to avoid goading China into a conflict: "If China perceives India as irrevocably committed to an anti-China containment ring, it may end up adopting overtly hostile and negative policies towards India, rather than making an effort to keep India on a more independent path."³¹ From a security cooperation standpoint, this approach will limit the number and type of exercises and other engagements that India is willing to undertake.

²⁷ Ajaya Kumar Das, "India's Defense-Related Agreements with ASEAN States: A Timeline," *India Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2013.

²⁸ P. K. Ghosh, "India's Strategic Vietnam Defense Relations," *The Diplomat*, November 11, 2014.

²⁹ "Global Insider: India Shows Willingness to Defend Economic Interests in Southeast Asia," *World Politics Review*, August 7, 2013.

³⁰ Sunil Khilnani, Rajiv Kumar, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Prakash Menon, Nandan Milekani, Srinath Raghavan, Shyam Saran, and Siddharth Varadarajan, *NonAlignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century*, New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, February 29, 2012.

³¹ Khilnani et al., 2012, p. 14.

Moreover, China's economic ties to India make any prospect of military tension a risky proposition. In 2017, China was by far India's largest source of imports, constituting 16.2 percent of the total. This is triple the amount of the second-ranking source (the United States, at 5.4 percent) and more than the three next-highest sources combined (the United Arab Emirates at 5.2 percent, Saudi Arabia at 4.8 percent, and Switzerland at 4.6 percent).³² No policymaker in New Delhi could safely ignore the economic impact of a trading partner as large as Beijing.

Options for Enhanced Security Cooperation

Given these constraints—and India's sensitivity about any security cooperation activities that might be seen as threatening to China—one of the most realistic but still promising avenues for enhanced security cooperation programs would be to focus on less-threatening activities, including HA/DR.

The primary reason for emphasizing HA/DR in security cooperation is that exercises, training, and many other security cooperation activities likely cannot get the approval of India's risk-averse civilian bureaucracy. In India's policymaking structure, uniformed officers have very little control: Virtually every decision must be approved by officials in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of External Affairs, both of which are cautious to avoid activities that could alarm China. In such an environment, HA/DR is seen as unthreatening and easier to approve. Given the combination of climate change, the rapid spread of pandemics, and environmental overstress resulting from population growth, nontraditional missions are likely to take up an increasing share of the Indian military's mission set.

The United States' existing HA/DR exercises and cooperation with India (as with some other partners) have sometimes been more symbolic than substantive. A decision to use such activities to deepen U.S.-India security cooperation ties would involve efforts to make such interactions as substantive as possible. Such an increased focus on HA/DR efforts with India would have several clear benefits for the United States, including the following:

- Improved interoperability with India across all types of operations. In some cases, the skills required for complex HA/DR cooperation are almost identical to those of kinetic operation—for example, how to deconflict areas of responsibility, coordinate seamlessly, have people and systems talk to each other, and operate as a single team.
- HA/DR exercises could, and should, be multilateral—just like real HA/DR operations. The skills necessary to coordinate a variety of partners, with an enormous range of capabilities, can be developed only by training with a variety of partners.
- In the realm of U.S. competition with China, HA/DR operations are one area in which the United States is unquestionably in a superior league. Although China does not present the United States with significant competition in security cooperation, it out-competes the United States in the economic arena, particularly in trade and infrastructure investment. Thus, HA/DR provides an avenue for the United States to run up the score in an area of strength to offset losses in areas where the United States is disadvantaged. The United States has capabilities—particularly in such areas as transport and aviation—that China cannot hope to match.

An underdeveloped aspect of security engagement between the United States and India is maritime domain awareness. Although ensuring maritime domain awareness is primarily a maritime mission, much of it is carried out by air assets—and has a complementary air counterpart. Moreover, this is one area in

³² World Integrated Trade Solution, "India Imports, Tariffs by Country and Region 2017," web tool, World Bank, 2017. All figures are for 2017, the latest year for which World Bank data were available.

which the United States can offer a variety of assistance programs that China cannot. Finally, another low-cost, high-value area for increased engagement with India is in education and professional military training.

Indonesia

Indonesia is the world's fourth-most-populous country and encompasses some 900 inhabited islands stretched out across 3,000 miles.³³ Until late in the period of Dutch colonial rule (17th–20th centuries), the area that forms modern Indonesia had never been a single political entity; the greatest security challenge faced by Indonesia during the decades after its 1945 independence was forging a unified nation out of the more than 300 ethnic groups speaking dozens of languages. This history helps explain both the orientation of the military (focused on domestic threats, obsessed with insurgency and subversion) and the political culture (inward-looking, suspicious of foreign entanglements, and fiercely protective of national sovereignty).

The most traumatic event in postcolonial Indonesian history—and the one most decisively shaping Indonesia's relationship with China—occurred on the night of September 30 and the morning of October 1, 1965. The facts remain poorly documented and highly disputed, but they revolve around an aborted coup d'état (purportedly launched by Beijing-backed Communists), which Indonesia's military leaders used to depose the founding president Sukarno and which resulted in a widespread pogrom against the nation's ethnic-Chinese population. Evidence linking China to this conspiracy is highly suspect, but the conflation of the People's Republic of China with Indonesia's ethnic-Chinese population (now estimated at 8.3 million) remains strong, fueling policymakers' suspicion of Beijing and of a “foreign hand” embedded within Indonesia.

Indonesia's foreign policy is characterized by an intense desire for nonalignment—indeed, the Non-Aligned Movement was formed in Indonesia at the Bandung Conference of 1955. Most members of this organization abandoned its ideology by the end of the Cold War, but Indonesia retains both the ideas and the rhetoric. This formulation is known as *mendayung antara dua karang* (“rowing between two reefs”).³⁴ In interviews conducted for this project, uniformed officers and officials at the Ministry of Defense recited precisely this phrase, word for word. Other Western interlocutors reported the same experience.

In practice, this focus on nonalignment leads to a desire for balance among the widest possible range of security partners. On the plus side, Jakarta's engagement with such U.S. partners as Australia, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea edges Indonesia toward interoperability with Western equipment and methods and achieves many U.S. objectives without the need for direct U.S. involvement. But a desire for modern-day avoidance of ideological blocs or camps also leads Indonesia to engage with U.S. rivals, such as Russia and China, and limits the extent of direct cooperation with the United States.

Indonesia's GDP in 2017 was \$1.02 trillion. That year, China was the largest market for Indonesian exports, constituting 13.7 percent of the total. Other top purchasers were Japan (10.5 percent), the United States (10.6 percent), India (8.3 percent), and Singapore (7.6 percent). On the import side, China's role was

³³ This section is informed by U.S. and Indonesian military and diplomatic officials and Indonesian scholars and security analysts, interviews with the authors, Jakarta, April 1–6, 2019. In addition, it draws from previously published RAND research on U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific, particularly Jonah Blank, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific: Indonesia*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-4412/3-AF, 2021b.

³⁴ Mohammad Hatta, a major figure in Indonesia's independence, delivered these words on September 2, 1948, to a meeting of the Working Group of the Central National Committee of Indonesia in Yogyakarta (Indonesian Embassy in the United States, “Indonesia's Foreign Policy/The Principles of the Foreign Policy,” undated).

even larger, accounting for more than one-fifth of Indonesia's imports (21.9 percent). Other top sources were Singapore (10.8 percent), Japan (9.0 percent), Malaysia (5.8 percent), and Thailand (5.7 percent).³⁵

Indonesia's military budget for 2019 was \$7.2 billion. In constant 2019 dollars, Indonesia spent between \$6.8 billion and \$7.3 billion annually on defense between 2016 and 2019. This figure is projected to rise to \$9.0 billion by 2023.³⁶ Indonesia's 2015 Defence White Paper (Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia) called for zero growth in personnel for the country's Army, Navy, and Air Force.³⁷ The official strategy behind these figures is an intent to build a *minimum effective force*—that is, the smallest military necessary to enable Indonesia to “develop and modernize defence power to be more effective in military duties and peace missions.”³⁸

The U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation considers Indonesia to be mid-level in capability, and Indonesia recently purchased Apache attack helicopters and other hardware from the United States with its own funds rather than relying on FMF or other pots of U.S. money. But funding is scarce, and a lack of funds has a definite impact on the capability of Indonesia's military to expand beyond its current set of highly localized, internally focused missions.

According to SIPRI data, Indonesia's largest suppliers of military hardware over 2010–2019 were South Korea (\$849 million), the United States (\$784 million), the United Kingdom (\$691 million), and Russia (\$675 million—a drop from \$880 million over 2009–2018). China is also a fairly significant supplier (\$343 million) but ranked tied with Germany for only seventh place over that span (the Netherlands and France were fifth and sixth).³⁹ Other sources have a different ranking: Another SIPRI analysis ranked Indonesia's principal military suppliers for 2016–2020 as the United States, Russia, France, Germany, and China.⁴⁰

Security Cooperation with the United States

Even in the context of Indonesia's careful balancing act, the United States has become Indonesia's most important security partner. Other key partners are mostly U.S. allies and partners, such as Australia, South Korea, Singapore, and several European nations. Among the United States' rivals, the most important partner for Indonesia is Russia.

After the United States suspended military aid and sales to Indonesia in the late 1990s because of human rights sanctions triggered by the Leahy Amendments, the aid and sales resumed in 2005. The decision had been in the works for some time but was accelerated by the immense destruction of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. This disaster not only destroyed a lot of Indonesian National Military (Tentara Nasional Indonesia [TNI]) hardware but also necessitated the acquisition of utility helicopters and fixed-

³⁵ World Integrated Trade Solution, “Indonesia Imports, Tariffs by Country and Region 2018,” web tool, World Bank, 2018. All figures are for 2017—the most recent year for which World Bank data were available (except GDP, for which 2018 figures were available, but 2017 is given in order to maintain uniformity of data).

³⁶ Jane's, “Indonesia Defense Budget,” *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—Southeast Asia*, last updated June 9, 2020a.

³⁷ Indonesian Ministry of Defence, *Defence White Paper*, Jakarta, 2015, pp. 122–124.

³⁸ Indonesian Ministry of Defence, 2015, p. 106. The Bahasa Indonesia version of the paper does not present much greater clarity on what a minimum effective force should be more effective at doing. The Indonesian version states, “Dalam melaksanakan tugas-tugas militer, termasuk tugas dalam misi perdamaian” (Kementerian Pertahanan Republik Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia*, Jakarta, 2015, p. 100), which can be translated with slightly more precision as, “in performing military duties [tasks, jobs, missions], including peace [reconciliation—presumably UN peacekeeping] missions” (emphasis added).

³⁹ SIPRI, undated-b.

⁴⁰ Pieter D. Wezeman, Alexandra Kuimova, and Siemon T. Wezeman, “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2020,” fact sheet, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, March 2021. See also Ristian Atriandi Supriyanto, “Indonesia's Opportunistic Approach to Arms Procurement,” East Asia Forum, July 1, 2021.

wing aircraft for rescue and relief operations. Some of Indonesia's first purchases were C-130 aircraft, badly needed for HA/DR efforts.

Shortly after the resumption of sales, Indonesia ordered older F-5 and more-modern F-16 fighters. In 2012, Indonesia ordered additional refurbished USAF F-16s. The same year, Indonesia requested to purchase 180 Raytheon FGM-148 Javelin Block I anti-tank guided weapons, along with support equipment, parts, and logistics support. In 2015, the U.S. government approved the sale of 30 AIM-9X-2 Sidewinder missiles and associated parts and support; the following year, approval was given for a similar sale of 36 AIM-120C-7 advanced medium-range air-to-air missiles. In January 2015, Indonesia ordered eight AH-64E Apache Guardian attack helicopters for just under \$296 million. This contract was the largest U.S. sale of a new military platform to Indonesia since the imposition of sanctions in the 1990s. All eight Apaches entered service in May 2018.⁴¹

As a middle-income country, Indonesia receives relatively little FMF funding: Such funding to Indonesia was \$1 million in 2006, \$6.5 million in 2007, and \$12.9 million in 2008. When we look over our period of study, FMF and related funding peaked at \$22 million in 2011. According to a 2020 Jane's source, Indonesia receives \$2.4 million per year in IMET funding, which focuses on maritime security, counterterrorism, mobility, and disaster relief capabilities.⁴²

The United States engages in numerous exercises with Indonesia. A major Air Force exercise is Cope West; the 2019 iteration of this annual exercise was held in Manado (North Sulawesi province) and featured about 100 U.S. service members and their TNI Air Force counterparts.⁴³ The Army conducts an exercise called Garuda Shield, with 200 personnel, and the Navy conducts one called Carat (Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training) involving U.S. marines assigned to the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force and the expeditionary fast transport ship USNS *Fall River*, a P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft. TNI Navy assets deployed in the 2018 Carat exercise included a frigate, the KRI *Iskandar Muda*, KRI *Surabaya* (a landing platform dock), and CN-235 and NC-212 maritime patrol aircraft.⁴⁴ Indonesia also participates in multilateral exercises, such as SEACAT (Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training) and Rim of the Pacific.

Security Cooperation with Russia and Other Partners

Russia is Indonesia's second-most-preferred partner of choice. According to public reports, Russia has provided assistance via preferential loans and other financing programs; discussed the possibility of barter arrangements to facilitate military modernization;⁴⁵ provided eight Mi-35 attack helicopters since 2003, with additional units contracted in 2016; discussed the sale of Mi-26 helicopters in 2016;⁴⁶ and, as of 2020, solidified its position as a major supplier through the expected sale of 11 Su-35s for \$1.1 billion (assuming that a way could be figured out to avoid sanctions stemming from the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act).⁴⁷ In the arena of arms sales, however, Russia has been losing market share since at least 2014 and has registered no major sales since then.

⁴¹ Jane's, "Indonesia: Army," *Jane's World Armies*, last updated February 24, 2021c.

⁴² Jane's, 2020a.

⁴³ Miguel Lara III, "U.S., Indonesian Air Forces Build on 70-Year Relationship Through Cope West 2019," U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, June 17, 2019.

⁴⁴ Naval Surface Force, "2018 CARAT Builds Cooperation," *Surface Warfare Magazine*, No. 50, Fall 2018.

⁴⁵ Jon Grevatt, "Slow and Steady: Modernizing Indonesia's Armed Forces," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, July 24, 2019.

⁴⁶ Jane's, 2021c.

⁴⁷ Jane's, "Indonesia: Air Force," *Jane's World Air Forces*, last updated August 19, 2020c.

Indonesia and Australia have a deep and long-standing security relationship, which remained undisturbed throughout the late-Suharto era of human rights abuses and despite maritime border conflicts that have only recently been resolved. Key ongoing forums for cooperation include the Indonesia-Australia Defence Strategic Dialogue, the Australia-Indonesia High Level Committee, and the Two Plus Two Dialogue (meetings between the defense ministers and foreign affairs ministers of both countries).⁴⁸ Areas of cooperation include counterterrorism, maritime security, HA/DR, peacekeeping and intelligence, and military education.⁴⁹ The two nations hold more than one dozen exercises each year and have multiple security dialogues at the general officer level. Australia also hosts more than 150 Indonesian officers at its service academies and resumed training of Indonesian special forces units in 2006. And Indonesia has acquired surplus C-130H transports from the Royal Australian Air Force.

In 2018 and 2019, South Korea was the primary supplier of arms to Indonesia; the \$246 million in purchases from South Korea were nearly half of Indonesia's overall arms purchases (\$557 million) over those two years.⁵⁰ A significant portion of that number was the purchase of T-50 jet trainers (light attack aircraft). In addition, Indonesia and South Korea are said to be cooperating in the cyber sphere, and the landing craft used by Indonesia's Marine Corps are made in South Korea. Japan has a more operational security relationship with Indonesia than South Korea does, but Japan's sales of military hardware (if any) are not significant enough to show up on the SIPRI register. In December 2007, Japan donated three fast patrol boats to be used for security patrols in the Strait of Malacca. The vessels were subsequently assigned to the maritime police.⁵¹

Indonesia also has an evolving though still largely embryonic security cooperation relationship with India. The two nations have overlapping exclusive economic zones in the Bay of Bengal; consequently, the most robust area of engagement is maritime. India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands are much closer to Southeast Asia than to the rest of the country. In 2018, India was granted access to the port of Sabang (at the northernmost tip of Sumatra, an island in Indonesia), and Indian sailors have reportedly been seen there on port calls. Indonesia and India conduct several bilateral exercises, such as Garuda Shakti, focused on counterterrorism, and the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol Naval Exercise. The TNI Navy also participates in India's biennial multinational exercise, Milan, which involves navies from all over the Indo-Pacific region.

Singapore's relationship with Indonesia is unusual: Singapore is a close security partner yet also (at least from Singapore's vantage point) a potential adversary. Indonesia is not threatened by Singapore but is at least mildly chagrined by its smaller neighbor's superior technical capabilities. For example, Singapore manages the airspace over Indonesia's Natuna Islands—a particularly galling fact given that China contests Indonesia's claim to this archipelago. According to an agreement signed in September 1995, Indonesia gave Singapore access for both naval and air training in the Natuna Sea and surrounding areas.⁵² And there is a joint Indonesia-Singapore air-to-ground and air combat maneuvering range at Siabu in Riau province, Sumatra. In 2016, the TNI Air Force participated in two bilateral exercises with Singapore's Air Force: Camar Indopura (the 23rd iteration of this exercise) was held in Pekanbaru, Sumatra, and featured Singapore's Fokker 50 maritime patrol aircraft and the TNI Air Force's Boeing 737 aircraft. Eland Indopura was held in both Singapore and Pekanbaru. More than 150 personnel from both countries participated, using

⁴⁸ Australian Department of Defence, 2016, p. 125.

⁴⁹ Australian Department of Defence, 2016, p. 125.

⁵⁰ SIPRI, undated-b.

⁵¹ Jane's, "Indonesia: Navy," *Jane's World Navies*, last updated August 25, 2020d.

⁵² Australian Department of Defence, 2016, p. 81.

ten aircraft, including Singapore's F-16C/Ds and TNI Air Force F-16A/Bs.⁵³ The TNI Army and TNI Navy also participate in exercises with Singapore.

Finally, China has relatively limited security cooperation with Indonesia, befitting its status as Indonesia's only potential adversary that could pose a realistic threat. Indonesian military officers take training courses in China, but in our interviews, officers reported dissatisfaction with the level of education provided. China is a significant source of arms but is not one of Indonesia's top-five partners. And Indonesian military officials reported that Chinese arms are regarded as being of inferior quality to those offered by the United States and other Western partners.

Assessment and Evaluation

Despite Indonesia's strong desire to balance its security relationships, the United States remains its preferred partner. The 2015 Defence White Paper refers to the United States ten times—double the number of times it refers to China or Russia.⁵⁴ It refers to the United States as a “strategic partner”; the only other nation to earn this appellation is China, although U.S. and Indonesian military officials made clear in interviews that the TNI sees the United States as more transparent and reliable than China is. When the TNI buys Chinese gear that is inferior to U.S. equipment, it does so mainly because that equipment is less expensive, but the pervasive corruption of Chinese arms sales results in a system that is far less effective than a more transparent system is. Furthermore, when Indonesian officers go to China for military education, the language of instruction is English, and the students are segregated from their Chinese counterparts.

Yet many of the same challenges that have prevented closer partnership between the United States and Indonesia in the past remain relevant today. Such challenges include

- xenophobia in military circles
- a deep-seated aversion to any partnership that might be characterized as aligning with one country over another
- a strong desire on the part of policymakers to balance Indonesia's security engagement activities among the widest possible array of partners
- a sclerotic structure for making and implementing security policy
- a historical and ongoing underfunding of basic military needs
- lack of military capability and interoperability sufficient for frictionless interaction with the U.S. military and close partners, such as Australia or Japan
- an institutional mission for all branches of the military that is geared more toward internal stability than external defense.

Such challenges should moderate U.S. expectations about the pace for increased engagement with Indonesia. In interviews, Indonesian security planners expressed that political reliability is one area of concern about engagement with the United States. They see rapidly changing U.S. regulations as an unpredictable tangle of obstruction, one that they are ill-equipped to understand or navigate. Some of this has to do with long-standing and firmly established points of U.S. law, including end-use monitoring, protection of copyright for technology, and rules concerning human rights and bribery. Several Indonesian uniformed officers expressed confusion at the possible impact of U.S. sanctions on Iran and Russia, as well as U.S. tariffs on

⁵³ Jane's, 2020c.

⁵⁴ Indonesian Ministry of Defence, 2015. This assessment is based on references to the country of China (i.e., the People's Republic of China); it does not include purely geographical references, such as *South China Sea* or *East China Sea*.

goods made in China. They did not know how these would affect their own purchasing decisions or what other unpredictable factors might arise in the near future.

The TNI claims to not train or conduct exercises against any specifically capable adversary. Instead, training and exercises are conducted against a generic foe seeking to attack from land or sea. This approach ostensibly affects the utility of such events; the strategy and techniques necessary to fight against a militarily superior invader (for example, China) are very different from those necessary to repel a limited-scale incursion by a neighbor (for example, Malaysia) or to conduct counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations against a large and well-organized internally based adversary. Ongoing Indonesian participation in U.S. exercises has proven very useful to develop military-to-military relations and to provide some training and capacity-building on the margins; the importance of these activities should not be downplayed. But, in most cases, they are not directly focused on building coalition warfighting capabilities.

One manifestation of its quest for nonalignment is Indonesia's mania for balance among a wide variety of security partners. Over 2010–2019, four nations (Russia, South Korea, the United States, and the Netherlands) sold roughly the same amount of military hardware to Indonesia, all within a narrow band between \$751 million and \$880 million.⁵⁵ Another nation, the United Kingdom, was only slightly lower (\$691 million). Three more nations (France, Germany, and China) were clustered tightly around the \$350 million mark in total sales to Indonesia over that span. This is not a coincidence: Indonesia works hard to keep the widest possible variety of partners all in approximate balance. When the USAF is denied permission for an engagement, it is often because the TNI Air Force wants to give that activity to the air force of a different partner. But this game of mix-and-match among suppliers of military hardware generates significant inefficiencies: The TNI must maintain spare parts and expertise for a large assortment of noncompatible equipment.

Options for Enhanced Security Cooperation

U.S. military personnel in Jakarta suggested that one approach to making security cooperation with Indonesia more effective is to focus less on areas that the TNI *wants* and more on areas that the TNI *needs*. For example, Indonesia faces a real, present threat from tsunamis, earthquakes, and other natural disasters that require HA/DR missions. HA/DR represents perhaps the most fruitful area of potential security cooperation engagement with the Indonesian military. The 2004 earthquake and tsunami demonstrated the enormous potential of HA/DR as an instrument of strategic competition. During the disaster, the United States proved itself to be Indonesia's most capable partner. The carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* and hospital ship USS *Mercy* became iconic throughout Indonesia. They are still referenced, by U.S. and Indonesian interlocutors alike, as the most concrete manifestation to date of U.S. commitment and friendship. Moreover, in the realm of U.S. competition with China (and as noted earlier in this chapter), HA/DR operations are one area in which the United States is unquestionably in a superior league.

The U.S. military would be well served to provide exactly this type of assistance in such areas as enhancing the operational rate of Indonesian transport aircraft and reconfiguring some exercises to have an HA/DR focus. USAF special forces could be brought into the equation; for instance, personnel from Air Force Special Operations Command could train troops from the TNI Air Force's special forces unit (Paskhas) in such HA/DR missions as parachuting into a damaged airfield to clear runways and set up basic flight operations.

In addition, many U.S. military officials highlighted maritime domain awareness as a key area for increased security cooperation. New efforts could involve the precise mapping (and often re-mapping) of every meter of coastline and territorial waters in Indonesia's archipelago and tracking of every naval vessel that enters—or, ideally, even approaches—the country's territorial waters. Strengthening Indonesia's own

⁵⁵ SIPRI, undated-b.

maritime domain awareness capability would have clear benefits for U.S. naval operations in the region because any U.S. ship transiting this archipelago would have access to vital information about its surroundings and any potential threats. Although maritime domain awareness is primarily a maritime mission, much of it is carried out by air assets—and has a complementary air counterpart.

Military education is a third area in which the United States has an enormous advantage over China. Indonesian officers eagerly compete for slots at U.S. institutions, and all slots offered are typically seized; in contrast, according to our interviewees, Indonesian officers treat military education in China as a hardship post where they learn almost nothing.

Malaysia

Malaysia adheres to a strict nonaligned approach to foreign affairs and thus seeks equilibrium in its relations with great powers, such as the United States and China. This provides both opportunities and challenges for the U.S. military. On one hand, Malaysia has long-standing relations with Western partners and a preference for Western military doctrine, equipment, and training. These relations and preferences are partly a result of Malaysia's membership—along with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom—in the Five Power Defence Arrangements, a set of defense cooperation relationships established by multilateral agreements that amounts to a sort of nonbinding defense treaty.⁵⁶

Yet key attributes also serve to align Malaysia more closely with China's and, to some extent, Russia's interests. China is Malaysia's largest trade partner, and Malaysia's large Chinese diaspora lends an added cultural and linguistic element to the country's relations with Beijing. Malaysia has recently agreed to several large infrastructure projects under China's Belt and Road Initiative, which may serve to bind Malaysia even closer to China in the future. Compared with many other ASEAN countries, Malaysia sees more benefit than risk in pursuing closer relations with China, even though it has territorial disputes with China in the SCS. Over the past several decades, Malaysia has also procured several big-ticket Russian military platforms, including the MiG-29 and Sukhoi Su-30MKM fighter aircraft. However, compared with its defense ties with China, Malaysia's ties with Russia are narrow and limited to arms sales and maintenance.

What this means for Washington's future relations with Malaysia is that there will be opportunities for continued close security and military ties, but the United States will increasingly cede influence in economics and trade to China and compete with Russia and China on arms sales. In addition to offering new arms sales packages, the United States can work with allies and partners, especially Australia, on enhanced joint military exercises to bolster the United States' standing in Malaysia and continue to build a reputation as the security partner of choice.

Malaysian Threat Perceptions and Security Priorities

Malaysia has territorial disputes with Singapore off the coast of Tuas near the Johor Bahru port of Malaysia.⁵⁷ Malaysia also claims about one dozen features in the SCS, which overlap with China's nine-dash line claim covering almost the entire body of water. As a result, the Royal Malaysian Navy has been in quiet standoff with the PLAN and the China Coast Guard, which have deployed vessels to patrol and loiter near Malaysia-

⁵⁶ This section is informed by U.S. and Malaysian defense and foreign policy officials and Malaysian scholars, interviews with the authors, Kuala Lumpur, April 29–May 2, 2019.

⁵⁷ Sebastian Liu, "Deep Waters, Close Quarters: Malaysia and Singapore's Cross-Strait Disputes," *The Diplomat*, December 20, 2018.

claimed features, such as James Shoal and South Luconia Shoals, since 2013.⁵⁸ During a state visit to the Philippines in 2019, then-Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad called on China to “define its so-called ownership” of features in the SCS.⁵⁹ After his 2018 election, Mahathir expressed his intent to “continue to occupy our islands in the South China Sea” and said “there were too many warships” in the waters of the SCS—an oblique critique of both the United States and China for their deployment of naval vessels in these waters.⁶⁰ Yet, in our interviews with Malaysian defense officials and policymakers, most did not view the territorial disputes with China with any great alarm and expressed confidence that the issue could be managed internally between Malaysia and China.

Disputes with China are not the only, or even leading, security threat perceived by Malaysian leaders. The 2013 Lahad Datu standoff (also known as the Lahad Datu incursion) still reverberates in the Malaysian Armed Forces. On February 11, 2013, 235 armed Filipino militants arrived by boat in Lahad Datu District, Sabah, Malaysia. The self-proclaimed Royal Sulu Sultanate Army considered themselves claimants to eastern Sabah and were reportedly sent by Jamalul Kiram III, who claims to be a Filipino Sultan to the throne of the Sulu Sultanate of Malaysia.⁶¹ In response, the Malaysian Armed Forces launched Ops Daulat, which mobilized 8,147 Malaysian Army troops, Royal Malaysia Police, and the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency. During the operation, 72 insurgents were killed and 551 people were detained.⁶² Although the Malaysian Armed Forces fended off the attack and neutralized the threat, the conflict exposed gaps in the capabilities of the Air Force and Army. It also reopened wounds from the force’s decades-long counterinsurgency campaign against the Malayan Communist Party insurgency that ended in 1989.⁶³

However, Malaysia’s overriding security concerns, as enunciated in its 2019 defense white paper, seem to emphasize maritime and air threats over counterinsurgency contingencies. These newly emphasized operational areas and concerns are broken down into core areas, offshore economic interests, and strategic waterways and airspace.⁶⁴ The *core areas* include Malaysia’s landmass of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak, as well as its territorial waters and the airspace above them. The *offshore economic areas* include Malaysia’s exclusive economic zone and continental shelf. Those areas, which include parts of the SCS, are abundant with fisheries and hydrocarbon resources that have contributed significantly to the nation’s economy. Malaysia’s *strategic waterways and airspace* are areas connecting Peninsular Malaysia with Sabah and Sarawak, the Strait of Malacca, and the Strait of Singapore.⁶⁵ However, asymmetric threats have become major concerns of the Malaysian government, and the principal nontraditional security threats listed in Malaysia’s defense white paper include terrorism, insurgencies, piracy, and the flow and use of illegal drugs.⁶⁶

As in most other militaries in Southeast Asia, the Malaysian Army has more manpower than any other component of the armed forces. As of 2012, the Army had about 80,000 active troops, the Royal Malaysian Navy had about 14,000, the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) had about 15,000, and the Malaysian

⁵⁸ Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, “Tracking China’s Coast Guard off Borneo,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 5, 2017.

⁵⁹ “Malaysia: Mahathir Asks China to Define Claim on South China Sea,” Al Jazeera, March 7, 2019.

⁶⁰ “Malaysia Wants to Continue Occupying Its South China Sea Islands,” *Straits Times*, June 21, 2018.

⁶¹ Jasmine Jawhar and Kennimrod Sariburaja, *The Lahad Datu Incursion and Its Impact on Malaysia’s Security*, Kuala Lumpur: Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016, pp. 17–19.

⁶² “Sabahans Will Not Forget Lahad Datu Incident—Musa,” *Borneo Post*, June 30, 2013.

⁶³ K. S. Nathan, “Malaysia in 1989: Communists End Armed Struggle,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 30, No. 2, February 1990.

⁶⁴ Malaysian Ministry of Defence, *Malaysia’s National Defence Policy*, Kuala Lumpur, July 22, 2019.

⁶⁵ Malaysian Ministry of Defence, 2019.

⁶⁶ Malaysian Ministry of Defence, 2019.

paramilitary force had about 26,000.⁶⁷ The Malaysian Ministry of Defence plans on establishing a Marine Corps, but, as of this writing, amphibious warfare is conducted by the 10th Paratrooper Brigade of the Malaysian Army.

The Malaysian government has been mired in a debt crisis stemming from former Prime Minister Najib Razak's fiscal mismanagement and reports of corruption.⁶⁸ Because of this dire financial situation, Malaysian defense spending has decreased significantly over the past several years. The 2019 defense budget was 13.91 billion Malaysian ringgit (\$U.S. 3.3 billion), a year-on-year decline of 10 percent from 2018 (\$U.S. 3.48 billion) and the lowest level as a share of the government budget since the 1980s.⁶⁹ Recent budget cuts reflect a broader push within the Malaysian government for fiscal austerity with the aim of reducing debt. Overall, defense spending as a percentage of GDP has declined to around 1.1–1.2 percent. With a GDP of \$U.S. 354 billion in 2018, Malaysia ranks among Southeast Asia's lowest spenders on defense as a percentage of GDP.

The RMAF was formed in 1958 as British colonialism in the region ended. Since then and into the 21st century, the RMAF progressed from a support arm of the Malaysian Army with a counterinsurgency role to a professional air force capable of operating in relatively complex, sophisticated combat environments. Because of budgetary constraints and service life extensions of legacy and older-generation aircraft, however, the capabilities of the RMAF have atrophied.⁷⁰

The RMAF maintains a mix of U.S., Russian, and European fighter platforms. These include the Boeing F/A-18D Hornet and Sukhoi Su-30MKM, capable of performing air superiority, interdiction, and strike missions. Medium-term priorities for the RMAF are to integrate its somewhat diverse fleet into a more cohesive force, with improved airlift and logistics capability. Four Airbus A400M fixed-wing transport aircraft delivered in 2017 should have helped address airlift needs. The RMAF also received one dozen EC-725 Cougar helicopters and plans to continue pursuing upgrades of some of its long-serving C-130 transport aircraft and S-61A-4 Nuri helicopters.⁷¹ Over the longer term, the RMAF will also need to replace the MiG-29Ns and Su-30MKMs if it intends to continue to meet operational requirements. Both programs have been delayed by fiscal constraints, despite the RMAF continuing to withdraw the MiG-29N from service. Plans for an airborne early warning and control capability have also been deferred.

Security Cooperation with the United States

Although the U.S. military does not have a SOFA or permanent rotational presence with the Malaysian Armed Forces, Malaysia has long-standing relations with the United States and other Western powers and is a member of the Five Power Defence Arrangements. As a result, Malaysia has a preference for U.S. and Western military equipment and security training and assistance. Defense and security cooperation remains one of the dimensions most important to the United States in its relationship with Malaysia, as manifested in the two countries' military engagements, especially those related to counterterrorism and maritime security.

The U.S.-Malaysia relationship exists at many levels. Head defense officials from both countries, for example, meet regularly to bolster overall military-to-military ties. In September 2018, Malaysia's Defense

⁶⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2012*, London: Routledge, March 2012; this is the best unclassified summary available of total force size.

⁶⁸ Cynthia Gabriel, "Cleaning Up Corruption in Malaysia Goes Beyond Najib," *Al Jazeera*, May 22, 2019.

⁶⁹ Jon Grevatt and Craig Caffrey, "Malaysia Cuts Defence Budget by 10%," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, November 5, 2018.

⁷⁰ Mike Yeo, "Commentary: Plagued by Defence Budget Curbs—the Royal Malaysian Air Force in Crisis," *Channel News Asia*, April 2, 2019.

⁷¹ The details in this section come from Jane's, "Malaysia: Air Force," *Jane's World Air Forces*, last updated April 22, 2019b.

Minister Mohamad Sabu and U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis held a ministerial-level bilateral meeting in Washington, D.C.⁷²

The two countries' armed forces have trained together in bilateral and multilateral exercises for decades. The capstone exercise between the U.S. Air Force's Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) command and the RMAF is Cope Taufan—a biennial, bilateral tactical airlift exercise that typically involves U.S. fighter and transport aircraft from Yokota Air Base, Japan, alongside RMAF fighters and transport aircraft. The exercise trains air-to-air, air defense, and logistics capabilities and provides opportunities for U.S. and Malaysian airmen to exchange views on tactics, techniques, and procedures.⁷³

The capstone army-to-army exercise is Keris Strike, an annual exchange of subject-matter expertise typically lasting four or five days. Keris Strike 19, the 24th iteration of the exercise, was held on March 11, 2019, in Camp Sungai Buloh, Kuala Lumpur. The exercise provides a venue for the exchange of knowledge on tactics, techniques, and procedures that “contribute to regional humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capability in the Indo-Pacific,” according to the U.S. Army's report on the 2019 exercise.⁷⁴ That same year, U.S. Army Pacific unveiled a new, division-level exercise called Defender Pacific designed to showcase its capability to deploy a much larger force to the Indo-Pacific region.⁷⁵ Importantly, Keris Strike 19 featured a joint live-fire exercise between the two armies, marking the first time the Malaysian Army held such a joint exercise with another nation's army.

Defender Pacific is one of the most important additions to the INDOPACOM exercise cycle. Early plans called for it to include an SCS scenario and opportunities to work with various partners and allies, such as Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The first iterations of this exercise were scaled back because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the United States plans to use it—now renamed Operation Pathways—as a centerpiece of multilateral regional defense cooperation going forward.⁷⁶ Two other exercises of importance are Bersama Warrior and Tiger Strike. Bersama Warrior is a INDOPACOM command post exercise; the 2019 iteration was held on March 6, 2019, in Kuala Lumpur.⁷⁷ Tiger Strike is a joint exercise between the Malaysian Army and the U.S. Marine Corps. Recent iterations took place in Malaysia in November 2017 and October 2019.⁷⁸ Finally, the Royal Malaysian Navy is involved in an annual maritime exercise with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps as part of the U.S. Navy's Exercise Carat with regional militaries. The exercise involves several states in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

Another important component of this security cooperation relationship is U.S. military aid in the form of IMET, FMS, and FMF, along with arms sales. These programs promote U.S. interests in several important ways. Most prominently, they serve to enhance interoperability to the extent that the ally or partner employs similar weapon systems and conducts training and operations using similar military doctrine, tactics, and culture. In the case of Malaysia, IMET in particular has become a crucial tool to engender bonds between the militaries of the two countries and was highlighted as one of the United States' most-important soft-power tools in overall

⁷² Prashanth Parameswaran, “US-Malaysia Military Ties in Focus with Defense Ministerial Meeting,” *The Diplomat*, September 25, 2018c.

⁷³ During the July 2018 exercise, the U.S. Air Force 36th Airlift Squadron and the RMAF joined forces at Subang Air Base, Malaysia (Michael Smith, “Cope Taufan 18 Kicked Off in Malaysia,” Yokota Air Base, Japan, July 18, 2018).

⁷⁴ Jason Kriess, “Exercise Keris Strike Begins in Malaysia,” U.S. Army, March 21, 2019b.

⁷⁵ Lara Seligman “A Rising China Is Driving the U.S. Army's New Game Plan in the Pacific,” *Foreign Policy*, March 21, 2019.

⁷⁶ Jen Judson, “Army Reshapes Defender Pacific to Bolster Joint Focus,” *Defense News*, October 11, 2021.

⁷⁷ Jason Kriess, “Malaysian Armed Forces Host Exercise Bersama Warrior 2019,” U.S. Army, March 11, 2019a.

⁷⁸ Jane's, “Malaysia: Army,” *Jane's World Armies*, last updated April 22, 2019c; and Josue Marquez, “U.S. and Members of the Malaysian Armed Forces Participate in Exercise Tiger Strike 2019,” U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, October 4, 2019.

military-to-military relations with the Malaysian Armed Forces. Such assistance has had a lasting impact on the Malaysian military: Many senior Malaysian officers were educated in U.S. PME institutions.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, Malaysia has gaps across the board in defense capabilities that need to be filled. According to one analysis by the RMAF, the Air Force alone needs an additional six squadrons of 18 multirole combat aircraft to adequately patrol its airspace and territorial waters.⁸⁰

Security Cooperation with China and Russia

China's security ties with Malaysia, as with most other countries in Southeast Asia, remain limited. When Malaysia signed a 1.17 billion ringgit (\$410 million) deal with China to build four littoral mission ships (LMS-68s)—to be commissioned into the Royal Malaysian Navy as coastal patrol vessels and jointly built by the state-linked China Shipbuilding and Offshore Company and the Boustead Naval Shipyard in Malaysia—many thought the signing was the beginning of a closer defense relationship. After all, it was the first major defense contract between the two countries and one of the first major naval procurements between China and any country in Southeast Asia. The deal, however, amounted to a major splash in an otherwise calm, but slowly warming, relationship between China and the Malaysian Armed Forces.

The main bilateral military exercise between Malaysia and China is the Peace and Friendship exercise. As of this writing, four iterations of this exercise had been held since it began in 2014. Previously, China and Malaysia had held one joint tabletop exercise and two joint exercises in 2014 and 2016. The 2018 Peace and Friendship exercise included Thailand—the first time the three militaries had exercised together—and incorporated both naval and air elements. The 2018 iteration included more-advanced scenarios and tactics than previous iterations had, but it still focused on safety and was thus relatively rudimentary in substance. The other exercise that allows the PLA and the Malaysian Armed Forces to engage is the China-ASEAN maritime exercise, initiated in October 2018. Held off the coast of Guangdong, China, the exercise involved search-and-rescue drills and Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea protocols. Roughly 1,000 personnel and eight ships—three from China and one each from Brunei, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam—took part.⁸¹

The only major arms sales from China to Malaysia, besides the four LMS-68s, was the sale of 64 portable SAMs in 2008. However, China has been bidding hard to sell unmanned aerial vehicles, tanks, light combat aircraft, and small arms.⁸² In terms of personnel exchanges, it is unclear how many Malaysian officers receive PME scholarships to study in China, but there appear to be at least several dozen officers who have attended over the past few years. The experience has been generally negative, according to our interviews with RMAF officers, partly because Chinese PME institutions separate foreign students from the PLA, creating little opportunity to socialize and interact with PLA officers.

Defense cooperation between Russia and Malaysia is limited to arms sales, technical cooperation, and repair services.⁸³ Since the early 2000s, Russia has supplied Malaysia with Russian-made weapons, military

⁷⁹ Total numbers of Malaysian officers and enlisted personnel attending U.S. PME institutions and otherwise participating in IMET programs are available in the annual Foreign Military Training Report (DoD and U.S. Department of State, various years).

⁸⁰ Alex Vuving, "Tracking Malaysia's Force Build-Up in the South China Sea," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, October 20, 2017.

⁸¹ Linette Lim, "ASEAN, China Kick Off First Maritime Exercise," Channel News Asia, October 22, 2018.

⁸² Bhavan Jaipragas, "How China Is Helping Malaysia's Military Narrow the Gap with Singapore, Indonesia," *South China Morning Post*, August 20, 2017.

⁸³ Muhammad Irfan, "Russia-Malaysia Intergovernmental Commission on Defense to Convene in April—Press Service," *UrduPoint News*, March 22, 2019.

equipment, and spare parts and assists in the maintenance and repair of weapons in service in Malaysia. As of 2018, Malaysia owned 28 Russian military aircraft. The biggest purchase was the procurement of 18 Su-30MKM jets in 2003, which entered into service in two batches in 2007 and 2009.⁸⁴ The other ten aircraft are MiG-29 fighters that entered into service in 1994. In 2017, the Malaysian government unveiled a \$2 billion aircraft purchase plan to replace the 15-year-old MiG-29s. However, the purchase was suspended after Mahathir's victory in the 2018 general election. After that government was established, several RMAF plans, including this \$2 billion purchase, were put on hold because of budgetary constraints. Defense Minister Mohamad Sabu later complained that only four of the 28 Russian fighters were operational.⁸⁵

Security Cooperation with Other States

Malaysia has sought to strengthen security cooperation ties with other countries in the region—notably, Australia, India, and Japan. Some of the key elements of this increased security engagement include education and training for international partners, exchanges of liaison personnel, and participation in bilateral and multinational exercises. Malaysia has a strong history of participation in UN peacekeeping operations; in particular, it has engaged in 30 major peacekeeping operations involving nearly 30,000 Malaysian troops since 1960.⁸⁶

Australia is arguably the most important U.S. ally to maintain defense ties with Malaysia, and this relationship is largely a result of geographic proximity to Southeast Asia, common interests, and a legacy of cooperation in the Five Power Defence Arrangements. That agreement, initiated in 1971, is Australia's longest-running regional security mechanism.⁸⁷ Australia and Malaysia also have a Joint Declaration of Strategic Partnership, signed in November 2015, and engage in dialogues, training, and educational exchanges. Furthermore, Australia maintains access to the RMAF base in Butterworth.⁸⁸ Through such exercises as Bersama Shield and its Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2019, Australia is able to engage in defense exchanges with Malaysia and other countries in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.⁸⁹

Japan has comparatively little direct engagement with Malaysia. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe signed an agreement with Malaysian Prime Minister Najib in 2016 for Japan to donate two patrol vessels to Malaysia, and those were delivered in 2018 and 2019.⁹⁰ In May 2017, Malaysia reportedly asked Japan for some of its retired Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft.⁹¹ As of this writing, an agreement had yet to be signed. Finally, Japan engages with Malaysia through its Japan-ASEAN Ship Rider Cooperation Program, which launched its third iteration in 2019. That iteration came as part of Indo-Pacific Deployment 2019, conducted by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force from April 30 to July 10, and included ship-rider engagements with five Southeast Asian countries: Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam.⁹²

⁸⁴ Li Xirui, "Boosting Malaysia-Russia Relations," *The Diplomat*, November 20, 2018.

⁸⁵ Martin Carvalho, "Mat Sabu: Only Four out of RMAF's 28 Russian Fighter Jets Can Fly," *The Star*, July 31, 2018.

⁸⁶ Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Malaysia's Priorities: Strengthening the UN Peacekeeping Operations," undated.

⁸⁷ Pyne, 2019.

⁸⁸ Australian Department of Defence, 2016, p. 131.

⁸⁹ Ankit Panda, "Royal Australian Navy Task Group Arrives in Sri Lanka for Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2019 Exercises," *The Diplomat*, March 18, 2019b.

⁹⁰ Elaine Lies, "Japan Gives Malaysia Two Patrol Boats," Reuters, November 4, 2016.

⁹¹ Mike Yeo, "Malaysia Reportedly Asks Japan for Lockheed-Made P-3 Orion Aircraft," *Defense News*, May 9, 2017.

⁹² Prashanth Parameswaran, "Japan-ASEAN Indo-Pacific Security Cooperation in Focus with Ship Rider Program Launch," *The Diplomat*, June 27, 2019c.

India's defense engagement with Malaysia hinges primarily on meetings between the ministers of defense and one bilateral exercise called Exercise Harimau Shakti. The only iteration thus far took place in Kuala Lumpur in April 2018 and involved counterterrorism training scenarios under a UN mandate.⁹³

Assessment and Evaluation

The United States remains Malaysia's partner of choice across most indicators of cooperation, including training, arms sales, PME, and joint military exercises. This advantage, with a few minor exceptions, is unlikely to erode over the near-to-medium term. Despite a recent push by policymakers in Beijing, China does not have the doctrine or capability to replace the U.S. military in defense cooperation with Malaysia. In fact, security cooperation between China and Malaysia is quite limited and focused on a few ongoing exercises that are rather rudimentary in scope. Chinese PME is also weak compared with that of the United States. As long as the United States continues to stay engaged in Malaysia by funding its officers to study in U.S. PME institutions and continues to maintain (and perhaps increase) the current roster of joint exercises, it can build on these systematic advantages. In the meantime, Russia's defense relationship with Malaysia is transactional in nature and confined to arms sales and technical cooperation programs that do little to bind the two countries in a holistic security cooperation relationship.

There is in fact an appetite within the Malaysian Armed Forces to increase cooperation with the U.S. military in all dimensions of security cooperation. However, certain constraints exist in that organization that are not present with other U.S. allies in the Asia-Pacific. For example, the two sides lack a SOFA (which the United States has with the militaries of Japan and Australia). Furthermore, Malaysia's foreign policy preference of nonalignment means that its government and military services will not seek to establish close relations with one great power *at the expense of another*. However, there are avenues for cooperation that can be exploited to a greater degree than before. More than that, U.S., Japanese, and Australian engagement of Malaysia could be better coordinated; all too often, in this case as in others, the security cooperation activities of these three allies take place with little coordination or thought to mutual complementarity.

Options for Enhanced Security Cooperation

In the U.S.-Malaysia security cooperation relationship, one area of possible improvement is in expanded air staff talks. There is a perception among RMAF officials of a need for more staff engagements among senior leaders in PACAF and the RMAF. The first air-to-air talks occurred only recently, in September 2018, and involved exchanges at the one-star level at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.⁹⁴ The exchange was well received by the RMAF and left senior leaders desiring more-consistent high-level engagement with PACAF. Because many RMAF personnel study in U.S. PME institutions, staff exchanges serve to reinforce cultural and doctrinal bonds.

PACAF could also build on Malaysia's preference for multilateral defense engagements, including more joint air exercises with Australia, Japan, and Singapore. As one example, Cope Taufan could be enlarged to include participation from other U.S. partners and allies in the region, particularly Australia, which has a long-standing relationship with Malaysia. Joint exercises with the three air forces could pave the way for increased PACAF access to Butterworth Air Base in Malaysia.

Numbers matter, and the more aircraft the United States can send to participate in exercises, the more goodwill is created among not only senior RMAF officials but also senior military leaders in the country in

⁹³ "Armies of India, Malaysia Start Their First-Ever Bilateral Exercise," *Economic Times*, April 30, 2018.

⁹⁴ Zachary Vaughn, "First A2A Talks Strengthen Relationship Between U.S., Malaysia," U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, September 14, 2018.

general. In our interviews, RMAF officials in Malaysia emphasized the importance of the USAF continuing its current levels of participation in Cope Taufan. Any downgrade in the scope or decrease in the number of aircraft in Cope Taufan would send a negative signal to the RMAF that PACAF is not invested in relations with the service.

Finally, the United States can aim to compete on key arms sales and system upgrades. Current Malaysian priorities point to the importance of maritime patrol aircraft, unmanned aerial systems, light combat aircraft, multirole combat aircraft, and command and control data sets. Because of the dire fiscal situation facing the Malaysian Armed Forces at the time of this writing, if the United States is to make these systems affordable for Malaysia, it may have to offer financial incentives through FMF channels or the excess defense articles program.

Serbia

Although Serbia's most traditional security relationship is clearly with Russia, its geostrategic position between the East and the West has prompted the Serbian government to pursue a balancing act in its foreign relations. Consequently, despite anti-NATO sentiment in the country, the United States remains one of the four pillars of Serbia's foreign policy; the other three are the EU, Russia, and China.⁹⁵ Rhetoric aside, the United States is a key partner for Serbia in security and defense, and Serbia engages in several U.S. programs and activities in this space, including NATO exercises and initiatives. Serbia views potential membership in the EU as a means to improved economic and social standing in the international community and as a way to enhance the country's national security.⁹⁶

Serbia's relations with Russia and China, meanwhile, are primarily crafted as a hedge against the potential that Serbia's application for EU membership will fail. Serbia's ties to Russia are primarily political and aimed at domestic consumption, while its relationship with China is primarily economic. Although Russia wields a degree of influence over Serbian society and certain actors in the government—largely through Russian exploitation of media outlets and military assistance to Serbia—Serbia is by no means irrevocably in the Russian sphere of influence.⁹⁷ The Serbia-Russia relationship is mostly opportunistic—rather than ideological—for both parties and, for Serbia, is highly dependent on the issue of Kosovo, which Belgrade continues to view as a part of Serbia that illegally declared its independence in 2008.

Serbia's strategic outlook is also colored by the legacy of Slobodan Milošević's regime and the wars of the 1990s, and nearly every issue is viewed through the lens of the Kosovo question. Serbia's number one priority as a matter of national strategy is to resolve the Kosovo issue. The focus on Kosovo pervades all policy areas, with one interviewee asserting that Serbia is becoming a "single-issue state." The desire to resolve the Kosovo issue and efforts to normalize relations between Belgrade and Pristina are linked to Serbia's second strategic priority of joining the EU.

The presidency and the Ministry of Defence are the most important organizations in the country for shaping its security cooperation policies and portfolio. The various elements of Serbia's defense and security strategies are captured in three documents produced by the Ministry of Defence: the National Security Strat-

⁹⁵ The four-pillar policy originated in 2009 with then-President Boris Tadić and has continued with President Aleksander Vičić. See Christopher Hartwell and Katarzyna Sidło, *Serbia's Cooperation with China, the European Union, Russia and the United States of America*, Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for External Policies, November 2017.

⁹⁶ This section is informed by U.S. and Serbian defense and diplomatic officials and Serbian scholars and analysts, interviews with the authors, Belgrade, June 3–6, 2019.

⁹⁷ Vuk Vuksanovic, "Serbs Are Not 'Little Russians,'" *American Interest*, July 26, 2018.

egy, the Defence Strategy, and the White Book of Defence.⁹⁸ A new National Security Strategy was published in 2021; it is heavily focused on meeting requirements for the EU accession process and explicitly states that European integration is a national priority.⁹⁹

Serbia's military budget for 2019 was \$878 million. In its 2010 White Book of Defence, Serbia set a goal of spending 2 percent of its GDP on the core defense budget and allocating special funding for equipping and modernizing the Serbian Air Force with complex combat systems. As of 2019, Serbia remained well below the 2 percent of GDP benchmark and had yet to modernize its Air Force with a planned multirole combat plane.¹⁰⁰

As of 2018, the Serbian Armed Forces had nearly 20,000 active-duty personnel, broken down as follows: 13,250 Army personnel; 5,100 Air Force personnel; 500 Navy personnel; and 800 special operations forces personnel.¹⁰¹ There were an additional 51,150 reserve personnel, 1,000 of whom served in the Air Force and the remainder served in the Army.¹⁰² Over the past few years, the Serbian military has embarked on a modernization program, procuring new combat aircraft, helicopters, air defense systems, and armored vehicles. However, the Serbian armed forces still rely largely on refurbished Soviet-era equipment that likely will not last past 2030.

Security Cooperation with the United States, NATO, and the European Union

The United States conducts a wide variety of military-to-military engagements with Serbia. The top U.S. security priorities for Serbia are infrastructure development, peacekeeping, medical engagement, and PME. The cornerstone of Serbia's security cooperation with the United States is its partnership with the Ohio National Guard through the State Partnership Program. The Ohio National Guard has had a partnership with Serbia since 2006. The United States also engages bilaterally with Serbia through EUCOM and various other DoD agencies and directorates. And the United States engages quite extensively with Serbia in IMET, FMF, the Global Peace Operations Initiative, the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Initiative, the Wales Initiative Funds program for military-to-military exchanges, and other programs.

Despite the Serbian public's aversion to NATO, Serbia is a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace program, participates in an Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO, and has conducted myriad events with the Alliance.¹⁰³ Serbia is also a member of the Balkans Medical Task Force, which has conducted exercises under the auspices of both EUCOM and NATO.

Serbian security cooperation with the EU primarily involves bilateral relationships between Serbia and specific EU countries. However, Serbia has also participated in some EU operations and missions, such as the EU Training Mission in Mali, the EU Training Mission in the Central African Republic, and EU Naval Force Somalia's Operation Atalanta.¹⁰⁴ Serbia has deployed 255 Army personnel to participate in EU and UN operations, making it the third-largest contributor in Europe and the top contributor in the Balkans. As an

⁹⁸ Serbian Ministry of Defence, homepage, undated.

⁹⁹ Serbian Ministry of Defence, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia*, Belgrade, 2021. For analysis of an earlier draft, see Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies, *Kosovo First: Analysis of the Context of the Adoption Process and Analysis of the Draft National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia*, Serbia, September 2018, pp. 15, 28.

¹⁰⁰ Jane's, "Serbia: Defence Budget," *Jane's Defence Procurement Budgets*, last updated April 30, 2019d.

¹⁰¹ Jane's, "Serbia: Army," *Jane's World Armies*, last updated May 28, 2019f.

¹⁰² Jane's, 2019f.

¹⁰³ NATO, "Relations with Serbia," webpage, last updated March 26, 2019d.

¹⁰⁴ European Union Naval Force Somalia, "Continued Collaboration and Support from Serbia to Operation Atalanta," June 14, 2018.

EU candidate country, Serbia has an agreement with the European Defense Agency and has been involved with the Permanent Structured Cooperation initiatives. Serbia is also part of the EU's Balkan Battlegroup (also known as HELBROC), alongside Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, and Ukraine.

Serbia has strong security cooperation relationships with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and North Macedonia. Serbia also participates in exercises with some EU members, most prominently exercise Air Solution with Romania. Serbia has attempted to strengthen its security cooperation relationship with the EU through air acquisitions. Although Serbia still buys equipment primarily from the cheapest source (namely, Russia), it has recently procured equipment from European companies in an effort to show European partners that it is interested in procuring Western systems. Serbia is also involved in several UN peacekeeping missions alongside the United States and EU countries.

Security Cooperation with Russia and China

Although they are often overblown in the press, significant security cooperation activities exist between Russia and Serbia, particularly in terms of military arms transfers. The Serbian Air Force had been facing major challenges in recent years as its fleet of aging planes were fast becoming nonoperational. Russia seized this opportunity by offering MiG-29s to Serbia at a relatively low cost, although Serbia bore the cost of refurbishing these aircraft.¹⁰⁵ In 2017, Russia delivered six MiG-29s, with an additional four coming from Belarus in 2019, which helped avoid sanctions related to the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. Russia also delivered two refurbished An-26 transports and new Mi-17V-5 helicopters. Furthermore, Serbia signed a deal to acquire the Pantsir missile system from Russia and was looking to procure additional Mi-17V-5s and a reported seven Mi-35 attack helicopters from Russia or Belarus in 2020.

Serbia is lacking an adequate air defense system, which is still primarily composed of outdated Soviet-era SAMs, including the Kub-M (SA-6) and Neva-M (SA-3) systems and associated radars, with poor serviceability. Serbia is allegedly exploring a deal with Russia or Belarus for the transfer of S-300 systems. In the ground component, Russia agreed to transfer 30 tanks and 30 armored vehicles to Serbia in 2017.¹⁰⁶

Because Serbia primarily uses Russian equipment, Russia routinely provides training to the Serbian military. Russia also conducts exercises with Serbia, including some that involve offensive scenarios concerning the Baltic states. For instance, over June 14–27, 2019, Russia held a tactical joint exercise with Belarus and Serbia called Slavic Brotherhood.¹⁰⁷ The exercise included 300 members of the Serbian military, 200 Russian air force representatives, and 60 soldiers from Belarus, as well as more than 50 combat vehicles and Il-76MD military transport aircraft. Russia has also recently offered to help increase Serbia's cyber defense capacity, and the Serbian and Russian Ministries of Interior collaborate on capabilities to protect high-profile people and similar tasks. In addition, Serbia has observer status in the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the two countries maintain a Joint Humanitarian Center in Serbia.¹⁰⁸

Economically, Russia wields influence over Serbia through its energy supplies; in particular, Serbia receives all of its natural gas from Russia.¹⁰⁹ Yet Serbia's trade with EU countries far outweighs its trade with Russia.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Jane's, "Serbia: Air Force," *Jane's World Air Forces*, last updated May 28, 2019e.

¹⁰⁶ Jane's, 2019f.

¹⁰⁷ Maja Zivanovic, "Serbia to Host Slavic Brotherhood Military Exercise," *Balkan Insight*, June 13, 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Zivanovic, 2019.

¹⁰⁹ Dusan Stojanovic, "Serbia Opens Pipeline for Russian Gas, Ignores US Opposition," PBS News Hour, January 1, 2021.

¹¹⁰ "EU Continues to Be Serbia's Largest Trade Partner," EU Delegation to Serbia, November 9, 2020.

Serbia's cooperation with China has been primarily economic to date, but political and technological engagements are growing. For instance, Serbia and several other Balkan states are members of the 16+1 diplomatic forum, founded in 2012 as a Chinese effort to facilitate dialogue and cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe.¹¹¹ On technology, Serbia signed a deal with Chinese company Huawei to build a 5G network in Serbia, and China is installing closed-circuit television cameras with facial recognition software all over Belgrade. This broad engagement has raised concerns among Western states about China's influence in the country.¹¹²

There is a nascent but growing military relationship as well. For instance, high-level meetings between the two countries have increased in recent years. General Zhang Youxia, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, met with Serbian Minister of Defence Aleksandar Vulin in July 2018, and Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić participated in the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing in April 2019.¹¹³ Serbia has received limited amounts of military aid from Beijing over the years and more recently became China's first European arms client in decades. In 2017, the PLA followed through on a 2015 pledge to donate some rafts, snowmobiles, and other miscellaneous equipment, and it has reportedly further donated some medical vehicles to Serbia and some information technology equipment to the Serbian Ministry of Defence.¹¹⁴ Chinese hardware sales to Serbia have been slowly in the making over a decade of discussions.¹¹⁵ More recently, Serbia agreed to purchase Chinese unmanned combat aerial vehicles in September 2019, marking the biggest European purchase of Chinese hardware in decades.¹¹⁶ As of the writing of this report, there have not been any significant Serbian-Chinese exercises or training programs.

From a Serbian perspective, China is an attractive partner because it is investing in strategic infrastructure, such as highways and telecommunications. Yet the prospect of large-scale security cooperation activities between China and Serbia appears remote, according to our interviews with Serbian interlocutors.¹¹⁷

Assessment and Evaluation

Serbian security cooperation is best characterized as a series of ad hoc, opportunistic attempts to balance relations with Russia in the East and the United States, NATO, and the EU in the West. Because of a steady deterioration in the U.S.-Serbia bilateral relationship over the past several years and partly because of the views of former Defense Minister Vulin, U.S.-Serbia security cooperation, at least at high political levels, was at a low point at the time of this writing. Yet defense cooperation is seen by many in the government and by outside observers as a bright spot in the broader bilateral relationship, and activities continue at the working

¹¹¹ For an overview of the 16+1 forum, see Astrid Pepermans, "China's 16+1 and Belt and Road Initiative in Central and Eastern Europe: Economic and Political Influence at a Cheap Price," *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, Vol. 26, No. 2–3, 2018.

¹¹² Vuk Vuksanovic, "Light Touch, Tight Grip: China's Influence and the Corrosion of Serbian Democracy," *War on the Rocks*, September 24, 2019.

¹¹³ Yao Jianing, ed., "China, Serbia Vow to Boost Military Cooperation," *China Military*, July 27, 2018; and Serbian Ministry of Defence, "Meeting Between Minister Vulin and His Chinese Counterpart Wi Fenghe," April 25, 2019.

¹¹⁴ Mengjie, ed., "China Donates Military Equipment to Serbia," *Xinhua*, June 21, 2017; and U.S. and Serbian defense and diplomatic officials and Serbian scholars and analysts, interviews with the authors, Belgrade, June 3–6, 2019.

¹¹⁵ Aleksandar Vasovic, "Serbian Purchase of Missile Defence System Shows Ties Deepening with China," *Reuters*, August 3, 2020; Michael Raska and Richard A. Bitzinger, "Strategic Contours of China's Arms Transfers," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2020.

¹¹⁶ Zhao Lei, "Deal with Serbia Marks First for Drones," *China Daily*, September 18, 2019.

¹¹⁷ U.S. and Serbian defense and diplomatic officials and Serbian scholars and analysts, interviews with the authors, Belgrade, June 3–6, 2019.

level. The engagement with the Ohio National Guard is seen as a particular success; interviewees praised the long-standing partnership and cited it as the key “good news story” coming out of U.S.-Serbia relations. From a Serbian perspective, the main advantage of security cooperation with the United States is the quality of the equipment and the professionalism of the force. This differs greatly from security cooperation engagements with Russia, which tend to be for political consumption rather than capacity-building.

For the Serbian government, the main advantages of security cooperation with Russia are political grandstanding, the relatively low cost of equipment, and the historical relationship. With relatively little investment, security cooperation activities with Russia provide an outsized opportunity for the Serbian government to project tightening relations with Russia and thumb their nose, at least rhetorically, at the West and NATO. Serbia buys Russian equipment because it is less expensive than that from the West and because the Serbian military is used to operating Russian equipment. Serbian media outlets rarely report on U.S.-Serbia cooperation, choosing to focus heavily on the few instances of joint exercises with Russia.

Nonetheless, the extent of Serbia’s security cooperation relationship with Russia is often exaggerated by politicians and the press. For instance, exercises with Russia receive an enormous amount of attention, but there are far fewer of them than there are Serbian exercises with the United States, NATO, and the EU. In 2017, for instance, Serbia participated in two joint exercises with Russia, but it participated in 13 with NATO members and an additional seven with the United States.

There is some appetite on the Serbian side for increased security cooperation with the United States, but significant obstacles stand in the way. Some are the political barriers noted in this chapter; without a lasting solution to the Kosovo issue, the relationship will have natural limits. In military terms, Serbia does not have the resources to operate or maintain some of the more advanced U.S. systems. And there are sensitivities with operational military training, given Serbia’s defense ties with Russia. Moreover, there are widespread problems with corruption in the Ministry of Defence’s procurement of military equipment and systems.

That said, maintaining the status quo is important, as lessening cooperation efforts would likely lead to Russia and China stepping in to fill the void. Although U.S. options are constrained, the United States could consider efforts that would help, at least on the margins, to enhance its competitive advantage and slow Russian and Chinese advances in the security cooperation space. These activities could include increasing PME and other programs focused on building longer-term defense institutions; stepping up efforts to counter Russian propaganda and misinformation, including funding independent media and ramping up public diplomacy efforts from the United States, NATO, and the EU; and better coordinating security cooperation efforts among NATO and EU countries.

Thailand

The United States’ alliance with Thailand is possibly the most misunderstood and complex of the United States’ five treaty allies in the Asia-Pacific. The alliance, made official with the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 1833, is regarded as the United States’ oldest in Asia and continues to provide important benefits for the United States, such as base access and a means of multilateral engagement in the region.

Today, the alliance is arguably in a state of drift as Thai domestic politics have become increasingly tumultuous and the security environment in Asia has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War. King Rama X’s ascent to the throne in 2016 and the general election in March 2019 might help stabilize U.S.-Thailand relations (see the next section), but more-systematic trends may already be entrenched. Most importantly, the absence of a Cold War–style threat environment has enabled Thailand to balance its relations with regional and global powers, raising key considerations for the United States as it assesses its security posture in the region. China, more than any other U.S. competitor in the region, continues to use eco-

conomic and defense ties to bring Bangkok closer into Beijing's orbit, and this will be a long-term challenge for U.S. relations with Thailand that Washington will have to proactively address.

Overall, Thailand's relationships with the United States, China, and Russia follow similar themes of other ASEAN countries: Thailand maintains close security ties with Washington but holds close and increasingly enhanced trade and economic ties with China (since the 1990s), and at times it procures arms from Russia.

Defense Policy and Armed Forces

The U.S.-Thailand alliance has struggled since the May 2014 military coup, which brought sustained political tension and the moderate downgrading of military ties between the two countries. Immediately following the coup, the U.S. State Department cut FMF and IMET assistance; prior to this cutoff, Thailand had received approximately \$1.3 million in IMET annually.¹¹⁸ Thailand is hoping that the election of a civilian government will restore a sense of stability to a bilateral relationship in need of momentum. Since 2017, the bilateral relationship has shown signs of improvement. Senior-level visits, expanded military engagement, and Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha's visit with U.S. President Donald Trump in the White House in October 2017 highlighted progress in official relations. Further progress led to a resumption of U.S. IMET funding for Thailand in FYs 2019 and 2020.¹¹⁹

In 2019, Thailand took on the role of chairman of ASEAN. On June 23, 2019, ASEAN released its much-anticipated ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.¹²⁰ The document has several main objectives focused on ASEAN regional community-building and cooperation. It adds that "ASEAN may also seek to develop, where appropriate, cooperation with other regional and sub-regional mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions on specific areas of common interests to complement the relevant initiatives."¹²¹ In that spirit, the United States has an opportunity to adapt the language of its Indo-Pacific strategies to fit into this new ASEAN Outlook statement in ways that are complementary and mutually beneficial and that take into consideration regional concerns.

There has been an increasing emphasis in the armed forces of Thailand to guard against nontraditional security threats over traditional threats, such as large-scale invasions or threats to Thai sovereignty.¹²² The primary threats that the armed forces are oriented toward include the ongoing insurgency in Southern Thailand, transnational crime, and terrorism.

Despite recent coups, Thailand boasts one of the largest defense budgets in Southeast Asia and appears to be increasing funding on a yearly basis. Thai defense spending averaged more than \$6 billion over 2010–2019, ranking third in Southeast Asia. Since the September 2006 coup against the elected caretaker government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, the defense budget in Thailand increased from 115 billion Thai baht (\$U.S. 4.7 billion) in 2007 to 227 billion baht (\$U.S. 7.35 billion) in 2019.¹²³

The Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) was established in 1913, making it one of the oldest air forces in the region. It is also one of the region's most capable. The service's primary priorities are (1) the aerial defense

¹¹⁸ Agence France-Presse, "US Cuts More Thailand Aid in Response to Military Coup," *South China Morning Post*, June 25, 2014.

¹¹⁹ Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, "U.S. Security Cooperation with Thailand," fact sheet, U.S. Department of State, April 22, 2021.

¹²⁰ ASEAN, "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific," statement, June 23, 2019.

¹²¹ ASEAN, 2019.

¹²² Napisa Waitoolkiat and Paul Chambers, "Khaki Veto Power: The Organization of Thailand's Armed Forces," in Paul Chambers, ed., *Knights of the Realm: Thailand's Military and Police, Then and Now*, Bangkok: White Lotus Books, 2013.

¹²³ SIPRI, "Military Expenditure Database," web tool, undated-d (accessed July 2019).

of national boundaries, including air interdiction, aerial reconnaissance, airlift, and search and rescue, and (2) air-to-ground missions supporting the land forces. Asymmetrical or counterinsurgency threats have increasingly been tasked to the Royal Thai Army's rotary-wing assets.¹²⁴ The RTAF's combat capabilities have not been tested in external operations for more than 30 years, however, and much of the RTAF's experience over this period has been in support of ground forces engaged in counterinsurgency operations.

In 2008, the RTAF procured 12 Saab JAS 39 Gripen fighters, two Saab 340 airborne early warning and control aircraft, and one Saab 340 transport from Sweden for approximately \$1.1 billion.¹²⁵ In addition, the RTAF has upgraded its Lockheed Martin F-16 aircraft and procured T-50TH lead-in fighter aircraft from Korea Aerospace Industries. In early 2018, the RTAF took delivery of its final modernized F-16, following a mid-life upgrade project that started in 2010 and featured 18 aircraft upgraded in three phases. The F-16 mid-life upgrade will extend the life of these aircraft until about 2028.¹²⁶ The RTAF also ordered an initial batch of four Korea Aerospace Industries T-50TH lead-in fighter aircraft in 2015, two of which were delivered in January 2018 and an additional eight aircraft in 2017 to start replacing Thailand's Aero L-39ZA aircraft.¹²⁷ As of this writing, the RTAF's fleet of C-130H and C-130H-30's (six of each) were in various needs of repair, and many had been taken out of operation because of backlogs in RTAF repair depots.

Security Cooperation with the United States

The United States and Thailand maintain deep and long-standing military-to-military ties that are generally regarded as important to both governments despite the ebbs and flows of the domestic political situation in Thailand. The United States remains Thailand's security partner of choice in most dimensions of military and defense relations, but U.S. forces do not have a SOFA with Thailand. Compared with the United States' relationship with all its other allies in the region, the alliance with Thailand is arguably adrift because the glue that typically bonds allies together—a common security threat—is absent.

The United States' 2017 National Security Strategy and 2018 National Defense Strategy identify Thailand as a key ally in maintaining a “free and open Indo-Pacific region” and call for reenergizing the alliance.¹²⁸ In addition to the geographical advantages that it offers, Thailand allows the United States to maintain a regional hub of the world's largest non-warzone embassy, housing 49 U.S. agencies, and the bilateral relationship spans all areas of government services. For example, the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok supports building criminal justice institutions and capacity in Asia, with an emphasis on the rule of law, and nine other U.S. federal law enforcement agencies partner and cooperate with Thai law enforcement to address the full spectrum of transnational crime.¹²⁹

The United States has been working to promote the U.S.-ASEAN Strategic Partnership, including cooperative efforts to combat regional security threats, such as terrorism; pandemic disease; and transnational trafficking in persons, drugs, and wildlife. The December 2017 U.S.-Thailand Defense Strategic Talks were the first talks bringing together personnel from the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense and Thailand's Ministry of Defence since the 2014 coup, and U.S. troops' participation in Cobra Gold 2018 returned to pre-

¹²⁴ Jane's, “Thailand: Air Force,” *Jane's World Air Forces*, last updated March 7, 2019a.

¹²⁵ “Thailand to Buy SAAB Gripen and Erieye AEW Aircraft,” *AvioNews*, October 22, 2007.

¹²⁶ Craig Hoyle, “Analysis: How Gripen Became Prize Thai Fighter,” *Flight Global*, January 7, 2019.

¹²⁷ Jane's, 2019a.

¹²⁸ White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C., December 2017; and DoD, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*, Washington, D.C., 2018a, p. 9.

¹²⁹ Bangkok International Law Enforcement Academy, homepage, undated.

coup levels.¹³⁰ Going forward, Thailand will be receiving maritime security assistance under the Maritime Security Initiative, and representatives from the Royal Thai Armed Forces participate in the U.S.-Thailand senior staff talks.

Security Cooperation with China and Russia

Among all states in ASEAN, Thailand is one of China's most important partners for defense and security cooperation. As the United States curtailed defense engagement with Thailand after the 2014 coup, China stepped up cooperation with the Thai military. Thailand has become one of the largest markets in Southeast Asia for China's arms. Although Chinese military equipment lacks the sophistication of U.S. weapon systems, it is cheaper and easier to procure.¹³¹

Joint military exercises have expanded in scope and frequency over the past several years, and China has participated in more combined military exercises with Thailand than with any other Southeast Asian country. Between 2005 and 2019, the Royal Thai Armed Forces participated in 13 bilateral and 14 multilateral exercises with the PLA.¹³² The three ongoing bilateral military exercises between PLA and Thai forces include Blue Commando or Blue Strike (involving the Marine Corps),¹³³ Joint Strike (involving the Army or armed police for counterterrorism),¹³⁴ and Falcon Strike (involving the Air Force).¹³⁵ Thailand remains the only country in Asia with which China engages across the three services of Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force, and Thailand boasts several firsts for a Southeast Asian military engaging with the PLA. For example, in 2005, Thailand became the first ASEAN country to hold military drills with China. In 2007, Royal Thai Army special forces became one of the earliest groups from a foreign military to exercise with their Chinese counterparts. In 2010, the Thai Marine Corps was the first foreign military service to conduct maneuvers with the PLAN Marine Corps. And in 2015, the RTAF became the second Southeast Asian air force to train alongside the PLA Air Force.¹³⁶ Falcon Strike 2018 was held at Udorn RTAF Base in Thailand and featured combat tactics and exchanges of methods and equipment development that were more advanced than in the past.¹³⁷

Although all these exercises and exchanges might be cause for concern for the U.S. military, they lack the substance and rigor of U.S.-Thailand military engagements. Chinese exercises tend to be relatively rudimentary in equipment, tactics, and training and are meant more as an effort to promote goodwill and friendly relations.

Nevertheless, in November 2017, the Thai government's Defence Technology Institute announced plans to establish Thailand's first commercial joint defense facility with the China North Industries Group Corpo-

¹³⁰ DoD, "4th US-Thailand Defense Strategic Talks," readout, December 22, 2017c; and Panu Wongcha-um, "Biggest U.S. Force in Years Joins Thai Military Exercise," Reuters, February 12, 2018.

¹³¹ Ian Storey, "Thailand's Military Relations with China: Moving from Strength to Strength," *ISEAS Perspective*, Vol. 2019, No. 43, May 27, 2019.

¹³² Storey, 2019.

¹³³ Prashanth Parameswaran, "China, Thailand Kick Off Military Exercise Blue Strike 2016," *The Diplomat*, May 23, 2016.

¹³⁴ Lin Xiuqiang and Chen, "China, Thailand Kick Off 'Joint Strike-2019' Counter-Terrorism Exercise," *China Military*, January 7, 2019.

¹³⁵ Li Jiayao, ed., "China, Thailand Host Joint Air Force Exercise 'Falcon Strike 2018,'" *China Military*, September 7, 2018.

¹³⁶ Storey, 2019. Of note, the earliest that Chinese special operations forces participated in a foreign military exercise appears to be in 2005, with Russia for Peace Mission-2005, not Thailand in 2007. See Martin Andrew, "Power Politics: China, Russia, and Peace Mission 2005," *China Brief*, Vol. 5, No. 20, September 27, 2005.

¹³⁷ Li, 2018.

ration, which produces tanks and other weapons.¹³⁸ And in 2019, the Thai government earmarked more than 40 billion baht to purchase items from China, including a 13.5-billion baht submarine and almost 9 billion baht for 49 VT-4 battle tanks.¹³⁹

Finally, the number of Thai officers studying in Chinese PME institutions increased since the United States ceased IMET funding after the coup in 2014.¹⁴⁰ Several dozen Thai officers have attended courses and training in China's National Defense University since then, for example. However, as noted earlier, there is some evidence from our interviews that the Chinese PME experience is not regarded favorably among officers from Thailand and other countries.

Military cooperation with Russia remains modest but has been increasing in recent years. In 2017, the two countries signed a new defense cooperation agreement focused especially on the potential sharing of defense technology.¹⁴¹ Russian firms have displayed technology in Thailand, and the two militaries have engaged in general discussions.¹⁴² Still, total Russian arms sales between 2000 and 2019 totaled only \$73 million, and Moscow may be losing ground to alternative suppliers in Thailand and other countries in Southeast Asia.¹⁴³ Thus, Thailand has only modest security relations with Russia, and there seems little prospect of a dramatic uptick.

Security Cooperation with Australia, Japan, and India

An important component of a broader effort in Thailand to expand ties with other partners in the region has been to strengthen defense cooperation with Australia, Japan, and India. Enhanced cooperation includes such activities as bilateral defense exchanges and multilateral exercises.

In particular, Australia's efforts to strengthen defense cooperation with Thailand include such areas as counterterrorism, maritime security, logistics, and legal and English-language training.¹⁴⁴ The ASEAN Regional Forum is the primary avenue for Australia-Thailand defense engagement. In November 2018, for example, Australia co-chaired, with China and Thailand, a two-day workshop on regional climate change and coastal disaster mitigation in Tianjin, China, in which defense officials discussed disaster mitigation practices and humanitarian assistance training. And for 2018–2020, Australia was co-chair, along with Vietnam and the EU, of the ASEAN Regional Forum's Maritime Security Work Stream, which brings together officials from Thailand and Australia, among others, to consult on maritime security issues.¹⁴⁵ In addition, since 1998, Australia and Thailand have hosted a biennial peacekeeping exercise called Pirap Jabiru, which is a multilateral workshop involving 24 countries in the Indo-Pacific region that brings together defense officials to discuss best practices for peacekeeping operations.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁸ Panu Wongcha-um, "Thailand Plans Joint Arms Factory with China," Reuters, November 16, 2017.

¹³⁹ "Army Budget out of Control," 2019.

¹⁴⁰ Storey, 2019.

¹⁴¹ Prashanth Parameswaran, "What's in the New Russia-Thailand Military Pact?" *The Diplomat*, September 21, 2017.

¹⁴² Prashanth Parameswaran, "Russia-Thailand Military Ties in Focus with Helicopter Display," *The Diplomat*, November 29, 2018f.

¹⁴³ Ian Storey, "Russia's Defence Diplomacy in Southeast Asia: A Tenuous Lead in Arms Sales but Lagging in Other Areas," *ISEAS Perspective*, Vol. 2021, No. 33, March 18, 2021.

¹⁴⁴ See, for example, details on the Australia-Thailand Education Cooperation at Australian Embassy in Thailand, "Australia-Thailand Education Cooperation," webpage, undated.

¹⁴⁵ Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)," webpage, undated-a.

¹⁴⁶ Australian Department of Defence, "Australia and Thailand Celebrate 20 Years of Peacekeeping Cooperation," May 21, 2018.

In May 2016, Japan provided capacity-building support to the Thai Ministry of Defence in the form of diesel engine maintenance for naval vessels. And on June 13, 2016, Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani visited Thailand to discuss deepening Japan-Thailand defense ties. Plans included a regular dialogue between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Royal Thai Army, including Thai Army observations of Japan's Nankai Rescue, a Japanese disaster response exercise, for the first time.¹⁴⁷ Thailand has expressed interest in procuring Japan's P-1 patrol aircraft and US-2 large amphibious rescue aircraft, but the two sides have yet to sign an agreement.¹⁴⁸

Finally, India has enhanced defense ties with Thailand in recent years. During Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha's three-day visit to India in July 2018, the two sides discussed expanding maritime security cooperation, joint defense production, and counterterrorism efforts.¹⁴⁹ The countries conduct one ongoing joint army exercise, Exercise Maitree, which involves the Indian Army and the Royal Thai Army.¹⁵⁰ As of this writing, the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy have been conducting coordinated maritime patrols twice per year since 2005, including one in June 2018. In 2019, Thailand decided to join India and Singapore for a trilateral naval exercise in the Andaman Sea called Sitmex.¹⁵¹ As part of the announcement about that exercise, Defence Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman of India and Ng Eng Hen of Singapore underscored the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight consistent with international law and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.¹⁵²

Assessment and Evaluation

Our overall assessment of the competition among the United States, Russia, and China for security cooperation with Thailand is that the United States remains the partner of choice across most indicators of cooperation, including arms sales, training, PME, and joint military exercises. This advantage, however, is starting to erode as Beijing has made significant inroads in defense ties with Bangkok. Although China does not have the doctrine or capability to replace the U.S. military in defense cooperation in the short term, if China continues to sell military equipment to Thailand, build on the limited but growing joint military exercises, and undertake joint PME exchanges, the U.S. military is in danger of ceding influence in Thailand to China. There is an appetite in the Royal Thai Armed Forces, however, to increase cooperation with the U.S. military in all dimensions of security cooperation.

Options for Enhanced Security Cooperation

This analysis pointed to the following potential avenues for enhanced security cooperation between the United States and Thailand:

- *Lead and expand on multilateral hosting mechanisms.* Compared with other U.S. allies and partners in Southeast Asia, Thailand excels at multilateral hosting. Exhibit A is Cobra Gold, which is the largest

¹⁴⁷ Catharin Dalpino, "Both Push and Pull: Japan Steps Up in Southeast Asia," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 19, No. 1, May 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Pavin Chachavalponpun, "Japan-Thailand Ties in a New Era of Uncertainty," *Japan Times*, December 19, 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "India, Thailand to Firm Up Maritime Security Cooperation," *Economic Times*, July 12, 2018.

¹⁵⁰ "India, Thailand Complete Two-Week-Long 'Exercise Maitree,'" *Economic Times*, August 19, 2018.

¹⁵¹ Parul Chandra, "China on Mind, Thailand to Join India and Singapore in Trilateral Navy Exercises in Andaman Sea," *SNI Wire*, January 31, 2019.

¹⁵² Indo-Asian News Service, "India, Singapore Resolve to Deepen Cooperation; Renew Military Training Pact," *Outlook India*, November 20, 2018.

multilateral exercise in the Indo-Pacific and one of the only U.S.-led exercises that includes China as a participant. Thailand not only has the facilities to host such exercises but also is regarded as sufficiently neutral politically to attract all countries in the region to join. The United States could expand on current support to Thailand-hosted multilateral exercises.

- *Ensure access to U-tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield.* Access to U-tapao has allowed the USAF to build relationships with the RTAF and the Royal Thai Navy, which operates the base. However, USAF access to this strategically important base is not guaranteed in the future. China might seek to curb USAF access through economic means. USAF and INDOPACOM leaders must regularly engage with their Thai counterparts; such engagement should include increasing U.S. participation in joint exercises to engender goodwill among senior Thai military officials and impart upon them the importance that the USAF maintain access to this strategically vital airfield.
- *Increase USAF participation in Cope Tiger.* There are two ongoing exercises in which the USAF participates with Thailand—Cope Tiger and Cobra Gold. Broadly speaking, the more aircraft the United States can send to participate in exercises, the more goodwill is created among not only senior air force officials but all senior military leaders in the country.
- *Create analytical tabletop exercises that would help the USAF and key allied air forces identify capability gaps against one or more scenarios.* Such an exercise series would be experimental in nature, with jointly developed scenarios ideally resulting in broad, multinational consensus on the types of capability enhancements that merit greatest emphasis.
- *Offer maintenance assistance packages for the RTAF's fleet of C-130s.* Because of bottlenecks in Thai repair depots, only a few of the RTAF's 12 C-130H and C-130H-30 aircraft are operational. There is an acute lack of spare parts, and some equipment is being sent to other countries for maintenance. More importantly, of all U.S. air equipment in the RTAF inventory, heavy transport aircraft (such as C-130s) are most at risk that China will offer alternative platforms for them, such as the Chinese-made Y-9. China has been active in enticing RTAF officials to procure the Y-9 to replace the C-130s.¹⁵³ If the RTAF decided on the Y-9, the USAF would be forced to cut off C-130 exchanges currently in place with the RTAF, ceding more security cooperation territory to China. To prevent Thailand from further sliding into China's security cooperation orbit, the United States, DoD, and the State Department should focus on the C-130 as a priority area and offer preferential maintenance, spare parts, mid-life upgrade packages, or all three to get the backlogged C-130s back into operation.

Vietnam

Vietnam is another of the United States' most important partners in the Indo-Pacific region.¹⁵⁴ Whether being deeply concerned about the long-term geostrategic implications of China's Belt and Road Initiative or dealing with Beijing's territorial claims and growing assertiveness in the SCS, Vietnam is a prime target of Chinese coercion. Vietnam is also a member of ASEAN and chaired the regional multilateral group in 2020. Hanoi has been the most outspoken proponent of reaching a legally binding code of conduct with China in the SCS and of enforcing the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling in July 2016 that went against China and

¹⁵³ Jon Grevatt, "China Positions Y-9 Transport Aircraft to Meet Thai Air Force Requirement," *Jane's Defence Industry*, September 19, 2016.

¹⁵⁴ This section relies in part on U.S. and Vietnamese military and civilian officials and Vietnamese researchers, interviews with the authors, Hanoi, April 2019. In addition, it draws from previously published RAND research on U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific, particularly Derek Grossman, *Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific: Vietnam*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-4412/6-AF, 2020.

in favor of the Philippines. Vietnam also served as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council from 2020 to 2021, elevating further its calls for all countries to abide by international law and norms of behavior.

Despite justifiable U.S. concerns over Vietnam's human rights record, therefore, the country's geopolitical interests align with those of the United States on many issues. As U.S. Secretary of Defense Mattis said during his January 2018 visit to Vietnam, the United States and Vietnam are "like-minded partners" in the Indo-Pacific.¹⁵⁵ Yet there remain strict limits on bilateral cooperation, especially in the defense and security domain, because of Vietnamese leaders' concerns that deep cooperation might unnecessarily antagonize China, Vietnam's most important and unavoidable partner. In the context of rising U.S.-China competition in recent years, Hanoi will never fully or formally align with the United States; instead, Vietnam's security policy has assiduously sought to balance great powers and avoid taking sides. Thus, the best scenario Washington can reasonably hope for is a gradual strengthening of economic and security exchanges that encourage Hanoi to contribute further to the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy.

Vietnam's Threat Perceptions and Security Priorities

Vietnam's near-exclusive security threat comes from the growing economic and military power of its much larger neighbor to the north: China.¹⁵⁶ For Hanoi, China poses a threat not only in the SCS, where the two sides have many unresolved sovereignty disputes, but also from the strengthening grip of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative in Vietnam. Overlapping sovereignty disputes between China and Vietnam in the SCS have always been an area of bilateral friction. An event in May 2014, when China moved the *Haiyang Shiyou* 981 oil rig into disputed waters, sparked a months-long maritime standoff and convinced Vietnamese leaders that the dynamic was becoming increasingly adversarial in the SCS. Around that time, a new term to underscore this point—the *new situation*—started to appear more regularly in conjunction with China in Vietnamese Communist Party speeches, official documents, and our conversations with Vietnamese interlocutors.¹⁵⁷ This is notable given that the 2009 defense white paper exclusively discussed China in cooperative terms.¹⁵⁸ A new white paper released in 2019 is more negative toward China; it notes, for example, "Divergences between Viet Nam and China regarding sovereignty in the East Sea [the SCS] are of historical existence, which need to be settled with precaution, avoiding negative impacts on general peace, friendship, and cooperation for development between the two countries."¹⁵⁹

In 2019, Vietnam and China were embroiled in yet another months-long standoff at Block 06-01 near Vanguard Bank—a key hydrocarbon extraction point in the SCS.¹⁶⁰ The standoff began in June when China Coast Guard vessels began harassing Vietnamese oil and gas operations in Vietnam's exclusive economic zone, and it ended in October when Vietnam's drilling rig left the area, followed one day later by China's vessels. Block 06-01 is particularly sensitive because it falls within Hanoi's 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone and provides Vietnam with 10 percent of its energy resources. China's actions underscore that Beijing will not allow any hydrocarbon extraction within its claimed nine-dash line. Partly because of these grow-

¹⁵⁵ Lisa Ferdinando, "Mattis Calls U.S., Vietnam 'Like-Minded Partners,'" U.S. Department of Defense, January 25, 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Hanoi perceives other, lesser threats from Southeast Asian maritime counter-claimants in the SCS, most notably Indonesia, with whom Vietnam had a violent fishing clash in early May 2019. See, for example, Rieka Rahadiana, "Indonesia Sinks 13 Vietnamese Boats in War on Illegal Fishing," Bloomberg, May 5, 2019.

¹⁵⁷ See, for example, Tran Thai Binh, "Fundamentals of the National Defense Strategy in the New Situation," *National Defence Journal*, June 10, 2014.

¹⁵⁸ Vietnamese Ministry of National Defence, *Vietnam National Defence*, white paper, Hanoi, 2009.

¹⁵⁹ Vietnamese Ministry of National Defence, *2019 Viet Nam National Defence*, white paper, Hanoi, November 2019, p. 16.

¹⁶⁰ Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, "Update: China Risks Flare-Up over Malaysian, Vietnamese Gas Resources," Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 13, 2019b.

ing threats, Vietnamese Communist Party leaders have a growing appetite for ways to mitigate the China threat in these dimensions; as part of this strategy, Hanoi has engaged several regional and global partners—especially the United States but also Australia, India, and Japan. And yet, because Vietnam must find ways to coexist with China while living at its doorstep, Hanoi has simultaneously sought to find ways to tamp down areas of disagreement with China by maintaining cordial and productive bilateral relations.

This strategy to avoid unnecessarily antagonizing Beijing has complicated ties with the United States, particularly in the defense and security domain. This persistent balancing act will keep Vietnam from falling more fundamentally into China's orbit, but is also likely to frustrate those in the United States seeking a rapid deepening of security ties. In particular, Hanoi's long-standing "Three Nos" defense policy serves as a key limiting factor to U.S. security ties. The Three Nos—(1) no formal military alliances, (2) no foreign military basing on its territory, and (3) no military activities with a second country aimed at a third country—has had real-world consequences for Vietnamese defense diplomacy when attempting to respond to China's actions in the SCS. According to an interview with a Vietnamese academic, the Three Nos policy was created to appease Beijing by signaling clear, self-imposed redlines on Vietnam's defense exchanges. But, as China-Vietnam tensions continue to rise in the SCS, there is perhaps increasing space for U.S.-Vietnam defense cooperation despite the constraints of the Three Nos policy.¹⁶¹

Vietnam's Military Response

The Vietnam People's Army (VPA) has responded to China's growing assertiveness in the SCS in several ways.¹⁶² Recognizing that defense budget constraints prevent Hanoi from competing with PLA modernization, Vietnam has instead charged the VPA to focus on investing in and procuring offsetting and retaliatory capabilities. For example, the VPA acquired six Russian-built *Kilo*-class submarines and a complementary network of anti-access missiles. Most notably, Vietnam acquired Russian-built Bastion-P shore-based anti-ship cruise missiles, seeking to guarantee that PLAN and PLA Air Force operations within Vietnam's exclusive economic zone would encounter lethal and heavy resistance in the event of an attack on the homeland or against disputed islands.

The Vietnam People's Navy has also procured systems capable of close naval encounters, such as Russian-built *Gepard*-class frigates and *Tarantul V (Molniya)*-class corvettes. In the air domain, the Vietnam Air Defence – Air Force (VAD-AF) has modernized its fleet with Sukhoi Su-30MK2 multirole aircraft, which have the range to strike targets throughout the SCS, as well as on the Chinese mainland. Although Vietnam possesses these naval and air capabilities, the VPA probably has not invested in the requisite realistic training to operate them successfully.

Vietnam has greatly expanded its capabilities to launch a "people's war at sea" in an attempt to compete with large numbers of Chinese Coast Guard and People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (China's government-funded maritime militia) in disputed waters.¹⁶³ The Vietnam Coast Guard fields the largest

¹⁶¹ For an in-depth discussion on the Three Nos policy and its implications for U.S. defense policy, see Derek Grossman and Dung Huynh, "Vietnam's Defense Policy of 'No' Quietly Saves Room for 'Yes,'" *The Diplomat*, January 19, 2019. Over time, this policy has evolved into what some have called "four nos and one depend"; see Nguyen The Phuon, "Vietnam's 2019 Defense White Paper: Preparing for a Fragile Future," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, December 17, 2019.

¹⁶² For an overview of Vietnam's military modernization and its intentions toward China in the SCS, see Derek Grossman, "Can Vietnam's Military Stand Up to China in the South China Sea?" *Asia Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2018.

¹⁶³ Vietnam has adopted the term *people's war at sea* from China. For China's use, see, for example James Holmes, "A 'People's War': How China Plans to Dominate the SCS," *National Interest*, May 2, 2019. For Vietnam's conception of the concept, see Derek Grossman and Nguyen Nhat Anh, "Deciphering Vietnam's Evolving Military Doctrine in the South China Sea," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, May 11, 2018.

coast guard force in Southeast Asia and is larger than those of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia—all archipelagic nations—combined.¹⁶⁴ As of July 2019, Vietnam had authorized the Coast Guard to operate in international waters to counter Beijing’s gray-zone tactics.¹⁶⁵ Hanoi is separately building its own fishing militia to rival China’s maritime militia. As of 2018, the force had at least 8,000 boats; Vietnam was hoping to add perhaps 2,000 more mostly steel-hulled boats, but this could be cost-prohibitive.¹⁶⁶ In addition, Vietnam has a civilian-led Vietnam Fisheries Surveillance Force serving in a constabulary role. These forces can quickly and inexpensively respond and offer support during a potential maritime standoff.¹⁶⁷

Finally, Vietnam is conducting some land reclamation at disputed outposts in the region where it maintains a de facto presence. These activities not only are designed to solidify Vietnamese sovereignty claims but also could support VPA operations in the future.¹⁶⁸ In August 2016, Vietnam apparently deployed Israeli-built Extended Range Artillery (EXTRA) guided-rocket artillery launchers on several of the disputed features that it controls.¹⁶⁹ These systems have sufficient range to destroy Chinese military infrastructure throughout the Spratly Islands. Later, in November 2016, Vietnam also extended its sole runway in the Spratly Islands—on Spratly Island itself—and built a new aircraft hangar there.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Vietnam has added signals intelligence or communications sites to Spratly Island, topped with a large radome in 2018.¹⁷¹

Security Cooperation with the United States

Washington’s security cooperation with Vietnam is growing due to Hanoi’s rising perception of the China threat in the SCS. Defense policy dialogues commenced in August 2010, and the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding in 2011 that covered information-sharing in the conduct of noncombat military operations, such as HA/DR, search and rescue, and peacekeeping operations. As part of U.S. President Barack Obama’s meeting in July 2015 with Vietnamese General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong at the White House, the two sides adopted a Joint Vision Statement that included plans for a program of U.S. assistance designed to improve Hanoi’s maritime domain awareness capabilities.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁴ Nguyen Nhat Anh, trans., “Images of Fearsome Weapons on Vietnam Coast Guard Ships” [“Ảnh hỏa lực đáng gờm trên tàu Cảnh sát biển Việt Nam”], *Kien Thuc News*, April 27, 2016.

¹⁶⁵ “New Law Enables Vietnam Coast Guard to Operate Outside Vietnamese Waters,” *VietnamNet Global*, July 6, 2019.

¹⁶⁶ For more on Vietnam’s fishing militia, see Nguyen Khac Giang, “Vietnam’s Response to China’s Militarized Fishing Fleet,” *Taiwan News*, August 5, 2018.

¹⁶⁷ “Vietnam Fisheries Surveillance Force Vessels to Be Equipped with Weapons: New Decree,” *Tuoi Tre News*, August 1, 2014; Government of Vietnam, “Regulation on Equipping, Managing and Using Military-Grade Weapons, Supporting Equipment and Specialized Apparatus by the VFSF and Directorate of Fisheries” [“Quy định về trang bị, quản lý, sử dụng vũ khí quân dụng, công cụ hỗ trợ và thiết bị chuyên dùng của lực lượng kiểm ngư”], trans. Nguyen Nhat Anh, Joint Circular No. 01/2015/TTLT-BCA-BNNPTNT, January 13, 2015; and Lam Son, “Vietnam Fishery Resource Surveillance Is Equipped with Military-Grade Weapons” [“Lực lượng kiểm ngư được trang bị vũ khí quân dụng”], trans. Nguyen Nhat Anh, *Lao Dong*, February 26, 2015.

¹⁶⁸ Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, “Vietnam Expands Another Outpost,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 13, 2018.

¹⁶⁹ Greg Torode, “Exclusive: Vietnam Moves New Rocket Launchers into Disputed SCS—Sources,” Reuters, August 9, 2016.

¹⁷⁰ Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, “Updated: Vietnam Responds with Spratly Air Upgrades,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 1, 2016.

¹⁷¹ Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, “Slow and Steady: Vietnam’s Spratly Upgrades,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 8, 2019a.

¹⁷² White House, “United States–Vietnam Joint Vision Statement,” press release, Washington, D.C., July 7, 2015.

In May 2016, Obama visited Vietnam and lifted the decades-long embargo on arms sales to Vietnam. In August 2017, Vietnamese Defense Minister Ngo Xuan Lich visited the Pentagon in what quietly appears to have been the largest VPA delegation to ever have made the journey for one-on-one meetings with U.S. counterparts. During the talks, the two sides hammered out plans for the first U.S. aircraft carrier to dock in Vietnam since the end of the Vietnam War—a notable milestone in U.S.-Vietnam defense ties, particularly for Hanoi and its usual low-key approach.¹⁷³

As mentioned earlier, in January 2018, Secretary of Defense Mattis made a reciprocal visit to Hanoi and referred to the United States and Vietnam as “like-minded partners” on ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific region. In March 2018, Washington and Hanoi made good on the carrier visit, as the USS *Carl Vinson* docked at Da Nang port.¹⁷⁴ Signaling a desire for stronger defense ties, Assistant Secretary of Defense Randall Schriver noted in 2019 that another carrier visit may be scheduled before the end of the year.¹⁷⁵

Despite this progress, enormous hurdles remain. Most notably, many Vietnamese Communist Party and VPA officers (especially those who have retired but still maintain influence in the system) show lingering suspicions of U.S. intentions stemming from the Vietnam War era. The Vietnamese Communist Party also seeks to avoid unnecessarily antagonizing China with closer defense ties to Washington, although that sentiment seems to be changing as China’s behavior becomes increasingly assertive in the region. In addition, Vietnam is constantly concerned with properly calibrating relationships between major powers—most recently between the United States and China. Indeed, one of the potential explanations for why Vietnam canceled or postponed 15 U.S.-Vietnam defense engagements in 2019 is that it wanted to avoid unnecessarily irritating Beijing.¹⁷⁶

Finally, the VPA remains highly secretive about its doctrine, training, capabilities, and many other details of its operations, which limits Vietnamese receptivity to U.S. overtures. There are two notable exceptions that the United States has focused on. One is enhancing the VPA’s maritime domain awareness capabilities to better track Chinese activities and Vietnam’s own activities in the SCS. Another is bolstering Vietnam Coast Guard capabilities, demonstrated by Washington’s transfer of a *Hamilton*-class cutter. Outside of these examples, however, it is difficult to find instances of deep substantive defense cooperation beyond the symbolism shown by high-profile events in recent years.

Security Cooperation with China and Russia

Although Vietnam and China maintain a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, bilateral cooperation in the defense and security domains is lacking because of Hanoi’s suspicions of China’s intent and activities in the SCS. The issue of defense cooperation with China is also very sensitive and politically charged in Vietnam, where anti-China sentiment tends to run high.

Nevertheless, both sides agreed to implement the January 2017 Joint Vision Statement on Defense Cooperation out to 2025.¹⁷⁷ The statement includes furthering areas of practical cooperation between the PLA and the VPA in coast guard patrols and joint fisheries management in the previously delineated Gulf of Tonkin (not in the SCS). As demonstrated by Vietnamese Deputy Defense Minister Nguyen Chi Vinh’s visit to Bei-

¹⁷³ DoD, “Readout of Secretary Mattis’ Meeting with Vietnamese Minister of National Defense Lich,” release, August 9, 2017a.

¹⁷⁴ Minh Nguyen, “U.S. Carrier Arrives in Vietnam amid Rising Chinese Influence in the Region,” Reuters, March 4, 2018.

¹⁷⁵ David Vergun, “U.S. Seeks Stronger Defense Relationship with Vietnam,” U.S. Department of Defense, April 3, 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Le Hong Hiep, “Why Did Vietnam Cancel Its Defence Engagements with the US?” ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, December 11, 2018.

¹⁷⁷ “Vietnam, China Seek Ways to Foster Defence Cooperation,” *Nhân Dân*, June 28, 2017.

jing in February 2019, the vision statement also includes many noncontroversial areas, such as military medicine, human resources, search and rescue, and peacekeeping operations.¹⁷⁸

Vietnamese interlocutors interviewed for this research suggested that, though severely circumscribed, Vietnam-China defense ties remain substantial. The two sides, for example, opened an emergency hotline following the May 2014 oil rig crisis to avert an escalation of incidents in the future.¹⁷⁹ Joint Vietnam Coast Guard and Chinese Coast Guard patrols of the previously disputed Gulf of Tonkin and border guard exchanges along the previously disputed land border continue to be held annually. On the Gulf of Tonkin patrols, Vietnam's Ministry of National Defence is considering adding navy-to-navy exchanges as well. As noted earlier, army-to-army ties are progressing, but it is difficult to ascertain the true nature of these exchanges. In our research, we discovered no ongoing air force exchanges between Vietnam and China.

Russia has historically served as Vietnam's most important defense partner. However, this is changing; some Vietnamese observers now characterize India as Vietnam's "most reliable" defense partner (although India has comparatively little to offer in arms sales).¹⁸⁰ During the Cold War, the Soviet Union supported North Vietnam's efforts to defeat the French and the United States, conquer the South, and even resist Chinese coercion after 1978. In March 2001, Moscow and Hanoi signed a strategic partnership agreement and, in July 2012, upgraded their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership. Vietnam procures approximately 80 percent of its military systems from Russia, enabling Hanoi to modernize the VPA for combat in the air and naval domains. Notable systems include dozens of Su-30MK2 multirole fighters, four *Gepard*-class frigates, six *Kilo*-class submarines, and a variety of air defense missile systems, among other platforms.¹⁸¹ Russia has also historically provided training for VPA officers in Moscow and maintenance and repair services for Soviet or Russian systems.

Security Cooperation with Australia, Japan, and India

Australia

Vietnam engages in annual high-level defense dialogues and a variety of military training activities with Australia. The VPA also benefits from the import of light weaponry from Australia, along with the blueprints for defense industrial development that enhance the VPA's defense industrial output. However, as of March 2019, there have been no joint military exercises between the two nations, no arms sales beyond light weapons, no co-development efforts, and no military agreements in place. In November 2018, Vietnam and Australia signed the Joint Vision Statement on Enhancing Defense Cooperation, reaffirming the Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Defense Cooperation signed in 2010.¹⁸² The document called for enhanced educational training opportunities, especially in such practical areas as English-language instruction and specialist training for peacekeeping operations. Hanoi and Canberra maintain annual defense cooperation talks among senior officials, including talks in October 2018, and added a "2+2" (defense and foreign minister) strategic dialogue in 2012.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ Vien Nhu, "Deputy Defense Minister Visits China," *VGP News*, February 20, 2019.

¹⁷⁹ Carl Thayer, "China-Vietnam Defense Hotline Agreed: What Next?" *The Diplomat*, October 20, 2014.

¹⁸⁰ Vietnamese think tank expert, interview with RAND authors for previous research, Hanoi, August 2017.

¹⁸¹ Zachary Abuza and Nguyen Nhat Anh, "Vietnam's Military Modernization," *The Diplomat*, October 28, 2016.

¹⁸² Thu Trang, "Vietnam, Australia Sign Joint Vision Statement on Furthering Defense Cooperation," trans. Thu Nguyen, *People's Army Newspaper*, November 8, 2018.

¹⁸³ Lam Anh, trans., "Vietnam, Australia Hold Second Defense Policy Dialogue," *People's Army Newspaper*, October 13, 2018.

Despite some limitations in the relationship, Vietnam and Australia conduct a variety of military training activities.¹⁸⁴ Australian training of VPA officers specifically includes training in the English language, military medicine, counterterrorism, maritime safety, military engineering, search and rescue, and peacekeeping operations.¹⁸⁵ The memorandum of understanding signed between the two sides in 2010 enabled further, more-sensitive training in the naval and special forces domains, typically centered on naval ship visits. In May 2019, Australia made Vietnam a part of its regional naval engagement tour, making port calls with HMAS *Canberra* and HMAS *Newcastle* at Cam Ranh Bay.¹⁸⁶

Japan

Vietnam-Japan defense ties are predicated on a series of official statements, beginning with a memorandum of understanding signed in 2011 that directed the establishment of reciprocal defense attaché offices and the commencement of the annual Defense Policy Dialogue. Vietnam and Japan followed up on that agreement with a Joint Vision Statement in September 2015 that codified cooperation on nontraditional security issues, such as maritime security, search and rescue, and peacekeeping operations.¹⁸⁷ Other areas of defense cooperation include military aviation, air defense, submarine rescue, personnel training, counterterrorism, maritime salvage, information technology training, cyber security, military medicine, HA/DR, human resources development, anti-piracy, unexploded ordnance removal, dioxin contamination removal, and training in how to comply with the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea.¹⁸⁸ Most recently, in March 2019, Vietnamese Deputy Defence Minister Phan Van Giang visited Japan to meet with military counterparts, including Japan's defense minister.¹⁸⁹

Vietnam and Japan have also conducted joint exercises. In an unprecedented move, Japan in June 2017 sent a Japan Coast Guard patrol ship to Da Nang to engage with Vietnam in joint exercises aimed at combating illegal fishing. In September 2018, Hanoi followed up on deepening maritime cooperation with Tokyo by allowing a Japanese submarine to make a first-ever port call in Vietnam.¹⁹⁰ Vietnamese Defense Minister Lich was given the unique opportunity to submerge in the Japanese submarine during the port call. Shortly thereafter, Vietnam made a return frigate visit to Japan in a sign of strengthening maritime security ties.¹⁹¹ Japanese training ships also made a port call at Da Nang in March 2019.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁴ According to the description on the website of the Australian Embassy in Vietnam, Canberra's Defence Cooperation Program encompasses "long-term professional development courses and short courses for Vietnamese personnel at Defence institutions in Australia, Mobile Training Team visits to Hanoi and Laos, and individual training in Australia" (Australian Embassy in Vietnam, "Defence Cooperation," webpage, undated).

¹⁸⁵ "Deputy Defence Minister Meets Vice Chief of Australia's Defense Force," *Nhân Dân*, July 28, 2017; and "Vietnam, Australia to Increase Work Exchanges, Joint Training," *Nhân Dân*, September 8, 2014.

¹⁸⁶ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Naval Visit Highlights Vietnam-Australia Defense Ties," *The Diplomat*, May 14, 2019b.

¹⁸⁷ Government of Japan, "Joint Vision Statement on Japan-Viet Nam Relations," Tokyo, September 15, 2015.

¹⁸⁸ Compiled from Le Hong Hiep, "The Strategic Significance of Vietnam-Japan Ties," ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, Perspective No. 23, April 11, 2017; and "Vietnam, Japan Defence Cooperation to Grow Further," *Voice of Vietnam*, June 6, 2017; and an undated Japanese government document titled "Japan-Vietnam Defense Cooperation and Exchanges," undated, provided to the authors by a Japanese interlocutor in August 2017.

¹⁸⁹ Le Xuan Duc, "High-Ranking Vietnamese Military Delegation Pays Official Visit to Japan," trans. Tran Hoai, *People's Army Newspaper*, March 5, 2019.

¹⁹⁰ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Why Japan's First Submarine Visit to Vietnam Matters," *The Diplomat*, September 19, 2018b.

¹⁹¹ Vu Anh, "Vietnamese Frigate on Long Naval Journey Docks in Japan," *VN Express International*, September 28, 2018.

¹⁹² "Japan, Vietnam Boosting Exchanges over Defense," *Nippon*, March 6, 2019.

Japan has assisted Vietnam in building the capacity of its maritime law enforcement capabilities in two other key areas. First, Tokyo announced in August 2014 that it would send six used patrol boats to Vietnam;¹⁹³ later, in January 2017, Prime Minister Abe offered an additional six new patrol boats. Second, Tokyo is assisting Hanoi in building up its maritime domain awareness capabilities. On the higher end of the technological spectrum, Vietnam has purchased the Japanese-built ASNARO-2 satellite, an Earth observation satellite that takes pictures in all weather and at any time. Vietnamese media sources claimed in 2016 that the satellite offered the highest quality of resolution available.¹⁹⁴ By leveraging Tokyo's technological expertise, Vietnam has been able to launch new satellites that will help it monitor SCS activities more precisely.¹⁹⁵ There were rumors in 2016 that Vietnam was interested in purchasing used P-3C maritime surveillance aircraft from Japan, although it is unclear where these discussions stand today.¹⁹⁶

India

Vietnam's defense cooperation with India spans many areas. In 2007, the two countries signed the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership that arranged for strategic dialogue at the vice-ministerial level, joint training, intelligence exchanges, and technical assistance.¹⁹⁷ It also specified cooperation on joint projects; procurement of defense supplies; and information-sharing on maritime security, anti-piracy, counterterrorism, and cyber security. In 2009, Hanoi and New Delhi signed a memorandum of understanding that authorized an annual strategic dialogue and high-level defense exchanges; in 2014, the government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged to provide four patrol vessels to Vietnam during the Vietnamese defense minister's visit, and the countries signed a memorandum of understanding on enhanced coast guard cooperation.¹⁹⁸ On Indian President Ram Nath Kovind's second visit to New Delhi in May 2015, Vietnam and India signed the Joint Vision Statement on Defense Relations and Defense Cooperation, which included an annual security dialogue, service-to-service exchanges, PME, port visits, ship construction and spare parts provision, defense co-production, maintenance of military equipment, exercises within multilateral constructs, and cooperation in regional forums.¹⁹⁹ During Modi's visit to Hanoi in September 2016, he announced a \$500 million line of credit for Vietnam to purchase defense equipment from India.²⁰⁰

In March 2018, Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang visited India and, in a joint statement with Modi, pledged to continue deepening defense and security cooperation in many areas, including implementation of an additional \$100 million for the procurement of high-speed patrol boats for Vietnam's Border Guards, capacity-building in both the traditional and nontraditional spheres, and cooperation in maritime domain awareness.²⁰¹ In November 2018, Kovind visited Vietnam and raised New Delhi's \$100 million credit package to Vietnam to build high-speed patrol boats. Kovind also reiterated New Delhi's commitment to deepen-

¹⁹³ Hiep, 2017.

¹⁹⁴ "Japan to Export Earth Observation Satellite to Vietnam," *Vietnam Plus*, September 20, 2016.

¹⁹⁵ Adelaida Salikha, "Vietnam to Launch Its First Satellites in 2019 & 2022," *Seasia*, September 7, 2017.

¹⁹⁶ Atsushi Tomiyama, "Vietnam Eyes Secondhand Japanese Defense Gear," *Nikkei Asian Review*, June 26, 2016.

¹⁹⁷ Carlyle A. Thayer, "Vietnam's Foreign Policy in an Era of Rising Sino-U.S. Competition: Providing Equity to the Major Powers While Pursuing Proactive International Integration," paper presented at the Conference on Great Power Rivalries, Domestic Politics, and Southeast Asian Foreign Policy, Dorothy Borg Research Project, Weatherhead East Asia Institute, New York, November 10–11, 2016.

¹⁹⁸ Ankit Panda, "India and Vietnam Push Ahead with Strategic Security Cooperation?" *The Diplomat*, May 26, 2015.

¹⁹⁹ Thayer, 2016.

²⁰⁰ "Vietnam, India Upgrade Ties to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," *Saigon Times*, September 6, 2016.

²⁰¹ Indian Ministry of External Affairs, "India-Vietnam Joint Statement During State Visit of President of Vietnam to India," March 3, 2018.

ing bilateral defense and security cooperation further, particularly through joint training opportunities.²⁰² Service-to-service exchanges are also a way for the partners to remain close.²⁰³ Hanoi likely benefits significantly from outside expertise, given the near-exclusive focus on land-centric warfare throughout its history. New Delhi has also offered submarine training using Vietnam's *Kilo*-class submarines, pilot safety training for the Su-27 Flanker and Su-30 fighter aircraft, and even ground forces training—underscoring the special and intimate nature of their cooperation.²⁰⁴

Vietnam and India may have quietly held a joint naval exercise in June 2013 that angered Beijing, although few details are available.²⁰⁵ Regardless, this alleged event was overshadowed by India and Vietnam's very public decision to conduct joint naval exercises in May 2018 in the SCS.²⁰⁶ Then, in June and September 2018, India sent warships to Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City, respectively, on port visits.²⁰⁷ In October 2018, for the first time ever, a Vietnamese Coast Guard vessel visited India. While there, the vessel conducted a joint exercise with India off the Chennai coast to practice maritime safety, search and rescue, and law enforcement tactics.²⁰⁸ In April 2019, the Indian coast guard returned the favor by sending a vessel to make a port call at Da Nang.²⁰⁹

With respect to arms procurement, New Delhi is a particularly valuable partner for Hanoi because its military inventory is composed primarily of Soviet-era weapon systems, similar to the majority of VPA systems, thereby reducing concerns about maintenance and interoperability. It is difficult, however, to identify concrete examples of weapon sales other than systems that have been pledged for the future, such as the four patrol boats in 2014.

Assessment, Evaluation, and Potential for Expanded Security Cooperation

USAF cooperation with Vietnam's VAD-AF has encountered both successes and challenges. On the successful end of the spectrum, the VAD-AF in June 2019 graduated its first student ever from the U.S. Aviation Leadership Program.²¹⁰ As of 2019, the program had two other Vietnamese students in training, meaning that Hanoi possessed three of the available ten program slots worldwide. Vietnam also had one slot at the Air Command Staff College, and the USAF awarded another for 2020. USAF Chief of Staff Gen David Goldfein's visit to Vietnam in 2019 appears to have marked the first time that a USAF Chief of Staff has visited the country since the end of the Vietnam War.²¹¹

These IMET opportunities have been greatly facilitated by U.S. institutions receiving Vietnamese students who are already proficient in English. Aviation training nevertheless includes 12–18 months of English-

²⁰² "Vietnam Pivotal to Act East Policy, Says President Ram Nath Kovind," *Hindustan Times*, November 21, 2018.

²⁰³ Relations between the two countries' navies and air forces are particularly close. For more, see Vu Tien Trong, "Vietnam-India Strategic Partnership in the Fields of Defence and Security," *National Defence Journal*, August 29, 2017.

²⁰⁴ See, for example, Vishnu Som, "As China Arms Pakistan, India Trains Vietnamese Soldiers in Jungle Warfare," New Delhi Television, March 16, 2016.

²⁰⁵ Rahul Mishra, "India-Vietnam: New Waves of Strategic Engagement," Indian Council of World Affairs, January 20, 2014.

²⁰⁶ Abhishek Mohanty, "India-Vietnam Defense Ties in Spotlight with Joint Naval Exercise," *Asia Times*, May 29, 2018.

²⁰⁷ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Destroyer Visit Highlights India-Vietnam Naval Ties," *The Diplomat*, September 29, 2018d.

²⁰⁸ Prashanth Parameswaran, "India-Vietnam Coast Guard Ties in the Spotlight with First Visit," *The Diplomat*, October 6, 2018e.

²⁰⁹ "Indian Patrol Vessel's Vietnam Visit Enhances Defence, Maritime Ties," *Economic Times*, April 2, 2019.

²¹⁰ Christopher Gross, "First Vietnamese Student Graduates from U.S. Aviation Leadership Program," Air Education and Training Command, June 6, 2019.

²¹¹ Charles Pope, "Air Force Generals Goldfein, Brown Make Historic Visit to Vietnam," U.S. Air Force, September 12, 2019.

language training. The appetite for English-language training across the board in Vietnam is substantial, and the USAF would like to capitalize on this momentum by establishing its own English training facility in Hanoi. Australia also has a robust English-language training program for Vietnamese personnel that complements U.S. and other partner activities; for instance, both India and Japan use English to communicate with Vietnam.

USAF training with VAD-AF through the T-6 training program is viewed by both sides as a success. However, VAD-AF's interest in procuring T-6 aircraft will have to go through a potentially lengthy and bureaucratic process of approval from the Ministry of National Defence and then by the Politburo. More broadly, Vietnam may be ready to move beyond dual-use HA/DR training and into other, more-traditional operational areas, such as maintenance, sustainment, safety, and logistics. Any of these categories individually, or in combination, would certainly strengthen air force service-to-service exchanges, as well as the broader U.S.-Vietnam defense relationship. Indeed, they are the next tier of cooperative activities in the defense domain.

The challenges, however, are formidable. First, the likely lack of Ministry of National Defence bandwidth to sustain a high number of engagements with both the United States and other partners has affected cooperation among air forces. For example, joint aviation training at Cam Ranh Air Base, which is part of the five-year bilateral defense plan, was postponed in 2019 until the next fiscal year. By 2019, the Ministry of National Defence had also canceled four of seven meetings for Pacific Angel—a regional HA/DR exercise held annually since 2008 and led by PACAF. Second, it is difficult for the USAF to effectively communicate with VAD-AF counterparts, because the Vietnamese typically become overly secretive in these engagements. This is probably partly because of lingering suspicions from the Vietnam War but is also largely because Russian systems, such as the Su-30, make up the backbone of the VAD-AF arsenal. Finally, Hanoi's unwillingness to move much beyond training for nontraditional military operations precludes the VAD-AF's participation in traditional warfighting exercises, such as Red Flag-Alaska (joint offensive counter-air, interdiction, close air support, and large force employment). For these reasons, the USAF should expect only incremental progress in air force-to-air force engagements going forward.

Summary and Lessons from the Case Studies

These deep-dive case studies (and data from the Algeria and Egypt cases that we do not include here) suggest broad lessons for the design and implementation of U.S. security cooperation programs.

First, these case studies made clear that the top concern of most countries, even in Asia, is not large-scale Chinese aggression. With the partial exception of Vietnam, these countries do not view preparing to prevail in a major regional contingency with China as a top objective. They are likely to be much more amenable to security cooperation efforts that have a focus on either nonmilitary efforts, such as HA/DR, or general military engagement and relationship-building. As an added rationale, regional actors perceive the United States to be in a league of its own in this area; U.S. forces are clearly the partner of choice in HA/DR.

Second, many of these countries—including Algeria, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Serbia, and Vietnam—have deeply rooted and doctrinally enshrined traditions of nonalignment. They are not interested in giving signals of formal military alliance with any outside powers. This nonalignment approach, sometimes combined with mixed recent histories of interacting with the United States, establishes strict limits on what some countries are willing to do with the United States in the security sphere. The sum of these first two lessons is that, in the realm of security cooperation, it will be essential for the United States to meet its partners where they are rather than try to force types or levels of collaboration with which other countries are uncomfortable.

Third, one significant U.S. advantage in security cooperation is exercises; in particular, there are many of them, and, more importantly, they are high quality and sophisticated. Some involve training for generic combat situations, while some are focused on nonmilitary activities. One collective message of the case studies is that an important aspect of intensified competition in security cooperation will be looking to see where the USAF can build on this foundation in three areas: increasing the quantity of aircraft that participate in some exercises; adding new air elements to existing exercises that do not have significant air components; and developing new multilateral exercises for air components, especially around themes of HA/DR and maritime domain awareness.

Fourth, our interviews confirm the critical importance of personalities in shaping the security relationships in many developing countries. In Malaysia, the Philippines, Algeria, Serbia, and elsewhere, specific favorable or hostile individuals exercise a disproportionate effect on security cooperation prospects. This points again to the importance of IMET programs as an avenue to relationship-building over time, as well as to the possible utility of a conscious strategy for identifying key up-and-coming individuals and building relationships.

Fifth, our research points to the potential risks embodied in observing the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. Unless waivers are granted, this legislation could cause issues with partners who are Russian arms clients. Indonesia, India, Egypt, and Algeria all fear that they could be subject to related sanctions, which could have a chilling effect. This is in fact an example of a broader problem: When the United States continually resorts to sanctions, it makes it an unreliable partner in the eyes of some, especially autocratic countries. Uncertainty about U.S. reliability and long-term staying power was a consistent theme in the interviews.

Sixth and finally, a less strategic insight is that many of these countries employ U.S.-made transportation aircraft, particularly the C-130. This provides opportunities for USAF engagement in areas of combined training, maintenance and logistics support, and potential upgrades. Especially because these aircraft could be used in HA/DR and other nonmilitary roles, engaging through such platforms can be more politically acceptable than arms sales or training ties in combat aircraft.

Findings and Recommendations

The analysis described in this report produced several major findings and recommendations. Broadly speaking, the upshot of the research is encouraging: Security cooperation remains a realm of powerful competitive advantage for the United States and its allies, although there is significant room for improvement—in specific strategies aimed at key countries, multilateral coordination with allies and partners, and enhanced U.S. security cooperation programs. Russia and China have substantial and, in some cases, growing security cooperation portfolios, but they remain orders of magnitude less ambitious than parallel U.S. (and even, in most cases, EU) programs and often face significant constraints.

To emphasize once again, in this study, we did not consider the effectiveness of security cooperation programs in reaching their goals. That is a distinct, complex issue that has been the subject of numerous other studies. We also did not attempt to demonstrate the measurable effect that security cooperation programs are having on the competition or to validate a causal model of such effects. Rather, we focused on the places, types of programs, and scope of security cooperation activities by the three primary competitors (the United States, Russia, and China), as well as security cooperation providers Australia, Japan, India, and key countries in Europe. Even in attempting to estimate the size and scope of these programs, we faced limits in available information. We did, however, gather sufficient evidence to provide a portrait of the basic conceptual ideas behind many of these security cooperation programs (or the lack thereof), the broad magnitude of the programs in critical categories, apparent trends in growth, and the leading security cooperation partners for each country. On the basis of this information, we were able to develop several primary findings, described next. Later, we discuss our recommendations for the U.S. approach in this domain.

Primary Findings

Neither China nor Russia has a formal doctrine or strategy for security cooperation. Neither country publishes a statement of security cooperation strategy or maintains formal catalogs of security cooperation activities. Both manage somewhat ad hoc programs through a variety of ministries, agencies, and offices. Especially in China's case, economic investment, aid, and loans, rather than military activities, are much more central to Beijing's global campaign to gain strategic advantage.

Russia's and China's security cooperation profiles are very different. Russia is a leading arms merchant, accounting for 21 percent of global arms transfers from 2014–2018, second behind the United States. Russia also has significant security cooperation ties beyond arms sales in former Soviet countries, although even there it faces competition from the United States, European nations, and China. Russia is an established provider of education and personnel exchanges; is more active than China in military exercises; and is attempting to grow its influence in the Indo-Pacific, Middle East, and Africa. China, on the other hand, is a relatively minor arms seller, accounting for 5.2 percent of global arms transfers in 2014–2018 (although it is gaining in some areas, such as unmanned systems). It has far less of a historical posture in global security cooperation than Russia does. China's advantage is that its security cooperation activities are integrated for synergistic

effect with economic relationships, security-related civilian technology sales, and diplomacy. China has a more comprehensive power basis and need not rely on security cooperation alone to gain influence.

Russia and China enjoy some comparative advantages over the United States with some clients. Neither country typically sets any political or ethical preconditions on cooperation, and they can offer cheaper (but still decent-quality) products and competent military training and engagement. Russia's military is now battle-tested in Ukraine and Syria, which appeals to some clients. China nests its security cooperation offers in sometimes compelling packages of economic and political engagement. And both countries take advantage of anti-U.S. feelings in certain countries.

Nonetheless, the United States and its partners and allies have the dominant role in global security cooperation. Despite significant recent hype about Russian and Chinese influence-seeking through security cooperation, the data show that security cooperation remains an area of U.S. strategic advantage in scope, quality, and multilateral alignment. U.S. military aid totals dwarf those of Russia and China. The United States has many formal alliances and deep and long-standing partnerships, which result in mutual benefit and collective defense arrangements that Russia and China cannot expect from their partners. Many widely publicized Russian and Chinese security cooperation activities remain relatively small. For example, although Russia sold an average of slightly more than \$1 billion per year in arms to Africa in 2013–2017, Russia's military training and engagement programs there involve only a few million dollars per country. And our research confirms that U.S. equipment and training are widely perceived as being of higher quality, though more expensive and sometimes requiring far longer waiting times, than equipment and training offered by Russia and China. The United States provides superior sustainment capabilities and invests in institutional capacity-building to help partners support their own programs over the long term. For most countries, the United States remains the preferred security cooperation partner.

Persistent commitments leave the U.S. security cooperation portfolio somewhat misaligned to the demands of the strategic competition, even if legacy commitments continue to serve important U.S. interests. Many U.S. security cooperation activities are still overwhelmingly directed at the Middle East and South Asia. Between 2014 and 2018, for example, CENTCOM employed 60 percent of U.S. security aid, and INDOPACOM employed only 2 percent. Over the same period, CENTCOM spent 25 times more than INDOPACOM on military capacity-building. Much of U.S. aid has been directed to capacity-building programs in Afghanistan and Iraq. This has begun to change with some new programs, and the United States still has important security interests in these regions. But, as of 2019, the United States was still sending a majority of its security cooperation dollars in key categories to nations that are not central to the competitions with either Russia or China.

The strategic competition is playing out primarily in day-to-day contests in the space below the level of armed conflict. U.S. security cooperation programs must address this space and support the United States' broader geopolitical goals of reassurance, capacity-building, relationship maintenance, and partner engagement.

U.S. partners and allies are major players in security cooperation; multilateral coordination is essential to obtaining the full value of U.S. security cooperation programs. In recent studies on Chinese and Russian security cooperation initiatives as compared to those of the United States, the role of other providers—notably, Australia, India, Japan, and EU members—is typically left out. But each has significant and growing security cooperation efforts targeted to the strategic competition, and these programs offer significant opportunities for synergies with U.S. efforts. Australia has its Pacific Step Up program, funded at \$AUD 2 billion, to compete with China for influence specifically in the Pacific Islands, as well as security cooperation activities in Southeast Asia. Japan is engaging its region under a Free and Open Indo-Pacific program. Part of that effort involves 26 capacity-building programs (up from six in 2012) funded at more than 500 million yen. India's security cooperation profile remains modest, but the country is boosting its activities to compete with China in neighboring countries, such as Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Most of all, leading countries in the EU

constitute a massive security cooperation provider. These programs create significant and growing opportunities for multilateral coordination.

Many critical countries are determined to avoid taking sides in the emerging strategic competition, and U.S. security cooperation strategies will have to respect this fact. Most countries in Southeast Asia, India, and even some long-standing U.S. partners (e.g., Egypt) are unwilling to become formally aligned with one or another side in the competition. Especially in Asia, many countries are concerned about Chinese influence, but none is prepared to take steps that indicate a more formalized alliance with the United States. This fact continues to place significant constraints on the security cooperation activities possible with non-ally partners.

The countries using security cooperation as a tool in strategic competition have not made their efforts generalized or global but, for the time being, are focused on a handful of countries. Neither Russia nor China is on track to become a truly comprehensive, global competitor in security cooperation activities any time soon. The real challenge is more specific and targeted and involves several focus countries where two or more of the competitors are engaged on the security side and are cultivating influence. This analysis has highlighted several countries that are particularly central to security cooperation competitive dynamics: Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, and the Pacific Island states with active militaries. Most of those nations have significant and, in some cases, very large air services with which the United States could expand collaboration.

There is not necessarily a competition in security cooperation per se, and security cooperation activities among major rivals are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Our analysis in this study suggests that U.S. security cooperation activities seldom *directly* compete with those of U.S. rivals, other than through those activities' contribution to overall influence. Many of the case studies reveal that the United States engages in significant levels and types of security cooperation with countries that are pursuing similar activities with Russia, China, or both. There are few cases in which Russian or Chinese security cooperation prevented or obstructed parallel U.S. activities (although arms sales could be seen as an exception). Security cooperation is best viewed as one piece of a much larger competition for influence; security cooperation activities themselves are usually not zero-sum.

The major barriers to U.S. security cooperation's competitive standing are well known—high prices, long delays, and extensive and unpredictable conditions and constraints. Our research, including field research in six of the eight case-study countries, confirmed that the cost of U.S. systems, especially major combat systems, and the extensive delays in securing export licenses and other permissions for security cooperation programs are a significant roadblock to greater partnership. A related lesson is that, although there is an important strategic rationale to indirect sanctions programs, such as the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, they work to undercut the U.S. ability to sustain security cooperation programs with key countries. Major partners, especially those with some historical relationship with U.S. rivals, can never be sure when they will suddenly face a demand to end all military relations with the rival as the price for continued U.S. security cooperation. This tension raises an important strategic question going forward: What is more important to the United States—the ability to punish Russia, Iran, and others through indirect sanctions or the reputation as a consistent and reliable partner?

Recommendations

Next, we offer some implications of our findings and recommendations for U.S. strategy in the security cooperation domain. But, first, it is critical to understand the context for these recommendations: We assume that the United States and specifically the USAF have extensive security cooperation programs, strategies, and country-specific plans, supported by detailed analysis from country teams. Our analysis was not designed to make recommendations at a program-specific or classified level. In this section, we highlight the larger

implications and useful policy directions, both for DoD as a whole and for the USAF, which build on or suggest advances or modifications to the current overall approach.

Develop targeted programs for the priority countries in the competition over security cooperation. In the larger contest of security cooperation strategies, an obvious step is to begin with the most-significant countries at the fulcrum of the competition. This would suggest a rapid, high-level reexamination of current plans for the countries examined in this report, both in general and within the USAF. In each case, our research pointed to several areas of mutual interest with the partner countries, as well as some specific requests.

Table 7.1 lists countries that emerge from this analysis as being critical focal points of security cooperation competition going forward. The six countries represent an ultimately qualitative judgment based on a combination of two broad sets of criteria. First is the result of our analysis of the seven measures listed in Chapter Six that we used to identify candidates for deep-dive analysis. Second is the result of our comparative analysis of the security cooperation activities of the United States, Russia, China, and other security cooperation providers. The result is a set of countries that are strategically significant, are seeing a contest for influence and alignment, and are engaged in security cooperation relationships with multiple major providers.

This list is not exhaustive. Our methodology cannot demonstrate that this list represents the sum total of countries where the competition in security cooperation will be significant or where the United States will need to place priority emphasis. Thus, it is a starting point rather than a final determination. Our methodology does not allow fine-tuned distinctions among these potential priority countries, which, in any event, could change over time. As a result, the list is offered in alphabetical order rather than any priority order.

Develop expanded programs for security cooperation in nonmilitary areas. Because most countries examined for this study prefer to hedge rather than take sides in the strategic competition, the United States will often have more success in deepening ties during peacetime in areas that do not appear to imply direct coordination for possible conflict. Both the general analysis and our case studies suggest that the United States should concentrate on the following types of security cooperation activities:

- HA/DR, including exercises, training, equipment transfers, and maintenance support focused on HA/DR missions (e.g., assistance maintaining transport aircraft)
- support for partner peacekeeping operation activities and exercising
- domain awareness capabilities, especially for the maritime regions of Asia, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities and transparency initiatives
- medical operations support, capacity-building, and assistance
- more and more-sophisticated multilateral exercises hosted by the United States or regional partners.

TABLE 7.1
Priority Countries in the Security Cooperation Competition

Country	Leading Focus Areas of Security Cooperation Competition
Algeria	Limited training and advising programs, personnel exchanges
Egypt	Arms sales and transfers, official visits, personnel exchanges, exercises and joint operations
Indonesia	Arms sales and transfers, official visits, personnel exchanges, military education, exercises, training and advising
Malaysia	Arms sales and transfers, exercises, official visits, personnel exchanges, military education, training
Thailand	Official visits, exercises, personnel exchanges, military education, equipment support and maintenance
Vietnam	Arms sales and transfers, exercises

These categories point to specific USAF security cooperation activities that would make important contributions to high-value, high-impact security cooperation programs, given the constraints of the current strategic context. Table 7.2 lists such opportunities.

Our analysis suggests that—given the focus of day-to-day competition and the significant constraints imposed by regional partners—expanded security cooperation activities will be most feasible and beneficial if targeted at objectives short of preparing for major contingencies. Yet many of these lower-level security cooperation activities can also play a critical role in building the sinews of close, interoperable partnerships that can be called upon in crisis or war. The potential spaces for security cooperation should be thought of as divided into three bins:

- one focused entirely on nonmilitary goals (such as training for peacekeepers in a nation with very modest military capabilities)
- one focused on building a base for high-end contingencies (such as arms transfers of advanced systems or exercises designed around a theater war scenario)
- one that represents an area of opportunity at the overlap of the first two bins.

TABLE 7.2
U.S. Air Force Security Cooperation Opportunities

Opportunity	Description
Symbolic engagement has significance.	Do not underestimate the importance of official visits, exchanges, and dialogues, especially at the senior level (e.g., USAF Chief of Staff).
Support functions can build strong relationships.	Provide support for maintenance, operations, upgrades, and technical training related to transport aircraft and mobility assets under HA/DR and peacekeeping operations (e.g., Thai, Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian C-130s).
HA/DR activities can be a useful lead element.	Deepen investment in the scope and number of air component HA/DR exercises, perhaps partly justified by intensifying concerns about the impact of climate change (specifically with India and Indonesia). Develop a concept of operations for such exercises to achieve the maximum possible effect on operational goals: interoperability, communications alignment, and relationship-building.
Domain awareness is a shared priority.	Emphasize the development of air assets and concepts to enhance maritime domain awareness. Focus exercises on the goal, develop multilateral working groups to pursue in air components, and look to enhance the air component of maritime domain awareness exercises (e.g., Maritime Fulcrum).
Enhancing USAF exercises (aircraft and partner participation) can build capacity and relationships.	Increase the number of USAF aircraft participating in specific exercises with partners (e.g., Cope Tiger with Thailand, Cope Taufan with Malaysia). Propose additional multilateral exercises focused on air interoperability in nonmilitary scenarios—for example, an exercise hosted by Thailand under the guise of the Five Power Defence Arrangements that emphasizes Malaysia's participation and ties together key actors in Southeast Asia, such as Australia, Vietnam, and Indonesia.
The State Partnership Program is an effective venue for cooperation.	Coordinate with the National Guard State Partnership Program in its air component activities to identify opportunities for enhanced presence and partnership. For example, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Serbia, Thailand, and Vietnam are all current members.
More investments in education and exchanges can improve partner capacity and interoperability.	Enhance funding and billet availability for PME exchanges at various levels; for example, expand the number of Indian participants, and restore or boost IMET activities with Thailand. Invest in English-language training courses in the officer, senior noncommissioned officer, and specialist components of partner air forces where this is a barrier (e.g., Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand).
Greater agility in arms sales can build more and more-reliable relationships.	Focus on upcoming arms purchase milestones with key partners to demonstrate an evolving, competitive, and flexible approach to arms sales and transfers.

This sweet spot in the level of security cooperation will differ from one partner to another. It may change over time. But reaching the right balance can and should be a major focus of U.S. security cooperation strategy. Working with partners to the maximum degree of their comfort level and designing that collaboration to achieve the greatest combination of impact on both day-to-day competition and potential major combat operations is the best way forward. Appearing to make unilateral decisions about the required types and degree of security cooperation activities—and, in the process, pushing allies and partners to do more than they are comfortable with—is likely to be counterproductive in the long term.

Research new ways to streamline U.S. policy for security cooperation activities. There are avenues to making U.S. security cooperation programs even more attractive, if the U.S. government, including Congress, wants to prioritize that goal. The United States could make a strategic choice to become a more streamlined and agile security cooperation partner. This would require changes to U.S. legislation, policy, and practice, and the details of those reforms are beyond the scope of this analysis. However, our research confirms that, absent such changes, the United States will continue to be handicapped in the security cooperation competition, and competitors will use U.S. restrictions and delays to gain footholds in key countries.

Combine security cooperation activities with engagement strategies. Because the security cooperation competition is part of a larger competition for influence in target states, security cooperation activities must be nested in broader U.S. competitive strategies. China employs security cooperation as one of many tools, usually led by economic trade and investment, to build a comprehensive portfolio of influence in target countries. Those strategies could push out U.S. security cooperation programs even if the security cooperation activities are competitive. To have a security cooperation portfolio that achieves its objectives of building influence and deepening partnerships that help achieve U.S. goals, the United States will increasingly have to combine its security cooperation activities with engagement strategies, including economic, diplomatic, and informational efforts.

In sum, we conclude that the strategic competition is escalating in security cooperation across the board. But in terms of the scope of security cooperation, its quality, and the level of engagement with recipient countries, the United States remains in a class by itself. Moreover, the countries running a close second to the United States are U.S. allies—notably, France and the United Kingdom. The dominance of hedging and nonalignment strategies among many critical target states in the competition means that the risk of a fundamental realignment—becoming a Russian or Chinese ally or client state—is very small.

Nonetheless, Russia's and China's activities in security cooperation have been increasing in some categories in recent years, and both countries clearly aspire to peel off U.S. partners where possible and gain influence. The United States and the USAF have means at their disposal to engage in this competition more effectively and keep security cooperation as a major U.S. competitive advantage.

Requirements for Further Research

As noted in Chapter One and this chapter, any comprehensive assessment of the role of security cooperation in the larger strategic competition is limited by several constraints on the available information. Several related areas would be promising subjects for further research to gain a deeper understanding of the basic data and causal relationships.

In particular, we identified at least three areas in which more information would be valuable. The first area is information on the strategies that govern security cooperation. There is some open-source information on this issue, but significant gaps exist in our understanding of Russia's and China's goals, objectives, priorities, and strategic concepts for security cooperation. The available information we were able to discover for this effort suggests that such goals and concepts remain embryonic, but further research could usefully improve our understanding of their intentions and strategies.

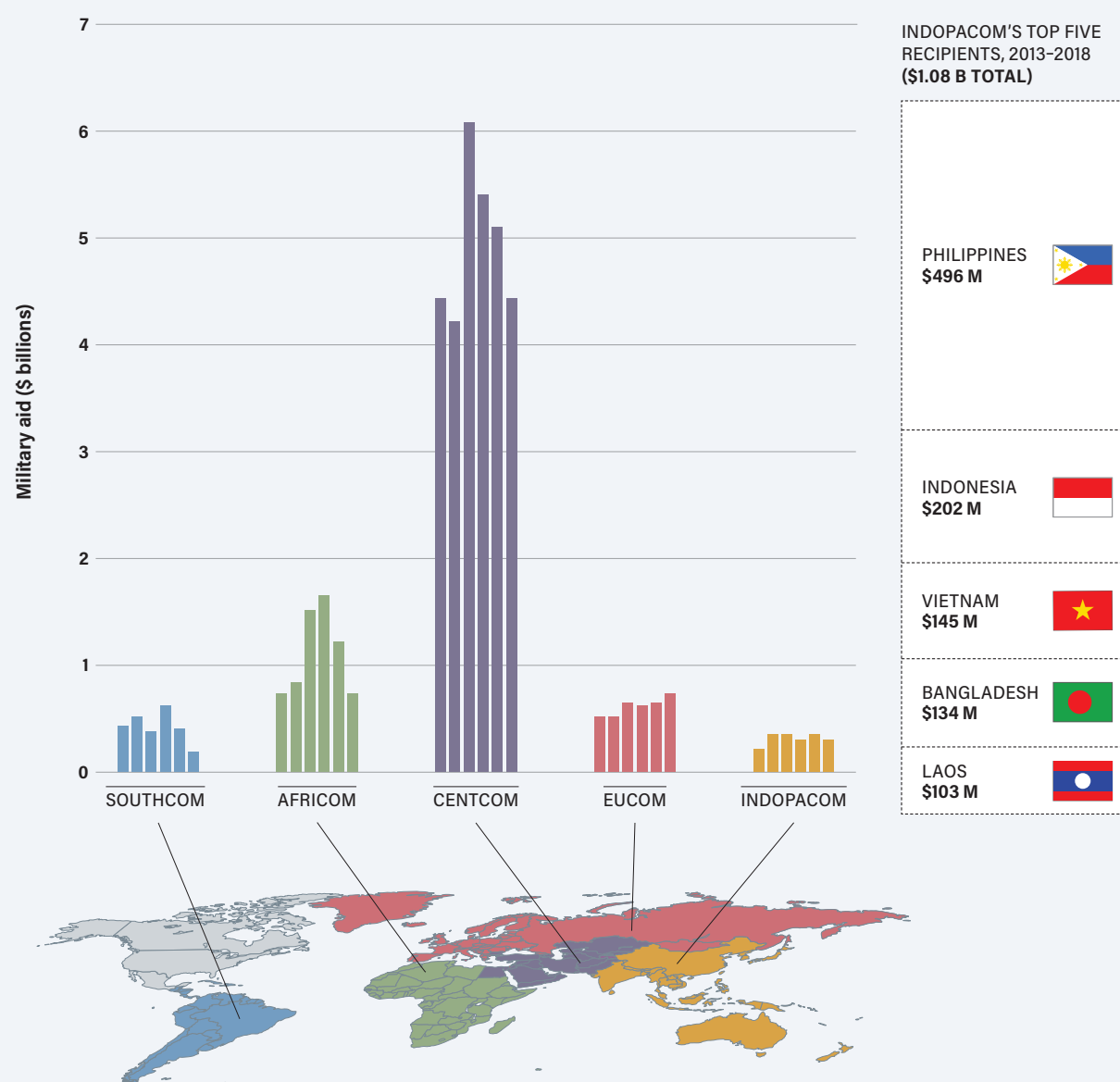
Second, the causal relationships between security cooperation and key competitive outcomes remain unclear. The effectiveness of security cooperation in general is a contested and imperfectly understood topic to begin with; understanding precisely what competitive benefits major powers get from security cooperation would be an exceptionally difficult analytical challenge. The risk of confusing correlation with causation, and the difficulty of disentangling many variables contributing to major competitive outcomes, would be very high. To evaluate the relative utility of security cooperation activities in the competition, however, the United States will want to get the best understanding of these topics possible.

Third and finally, our study pointed to the need for better data collection on baseline Russian and Chinese security cooperation activities. As noted in previous chapters, the available information remains uneven and often anecdotal. It was sufficient for the purposes of this initial snapshot, but to make a more comprehensive assessment over time, it will be important to have more-reliable sources of data on these issues.

Security Cooperation Data for the United States

The figures in this appendix illustrate summary statistics for U.S. security cooperation activities. The figures are based on author-compiled data from multiple sources (e.g., Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2017; Security Assistance Monitor, undated-b; SIPRI, undated-d; U.S. Agency for International Development, 2020); see Chapter Two.

FIGURE A.1
Overall U.S. Military Aid, by Combatant Command, 2013–2018



NOTE: Each bar indicates the total for each year from 2013 to 2018. CENTCOM's totals exclude Afghanistan (\$4 billion annually), and EUROM's totals exclude Israel (\$3 billion annually). NORTHCOM is excluded because there is no related U.S. aid in that AOR. AFRICOM = U.S. Africa Command; B = billion; M = million.

FIGURE A.2

U.S. Spending on Military Capacity-Building Programs, by Combatant Command, 2013–2018

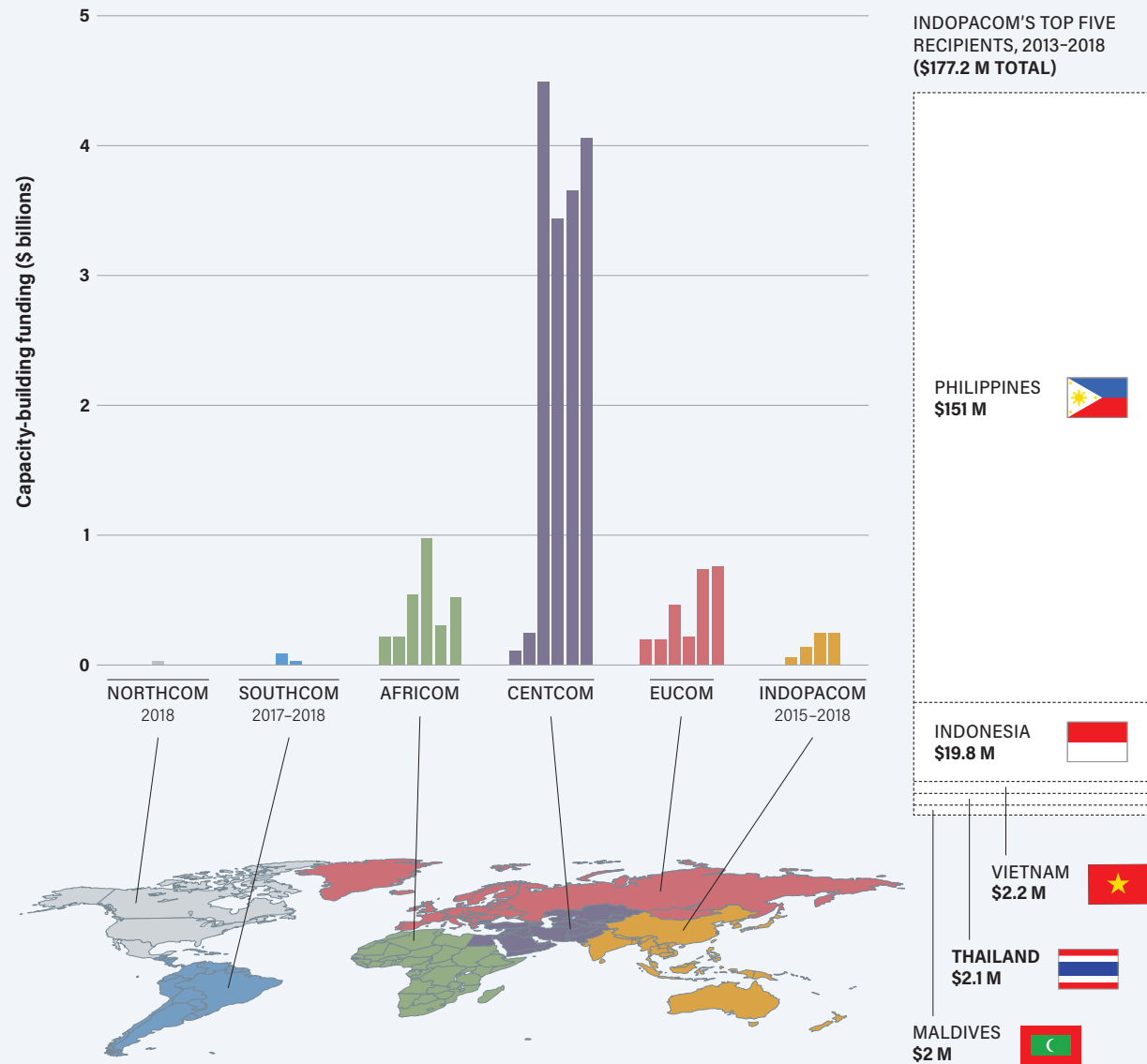


FIGURE A.3

U.S. Arms Sales and Transfers, by Combatant Command, 2013–2018

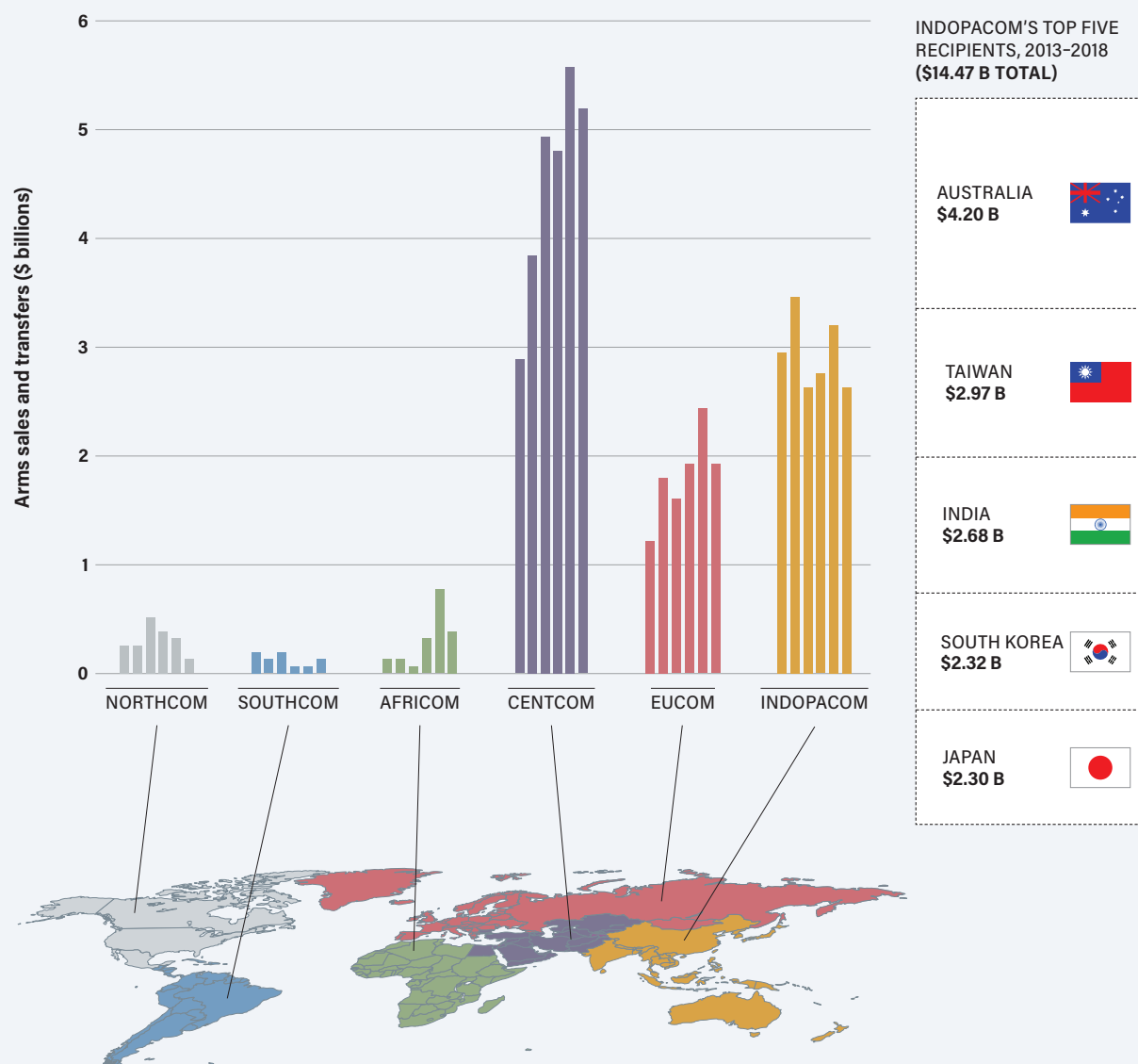
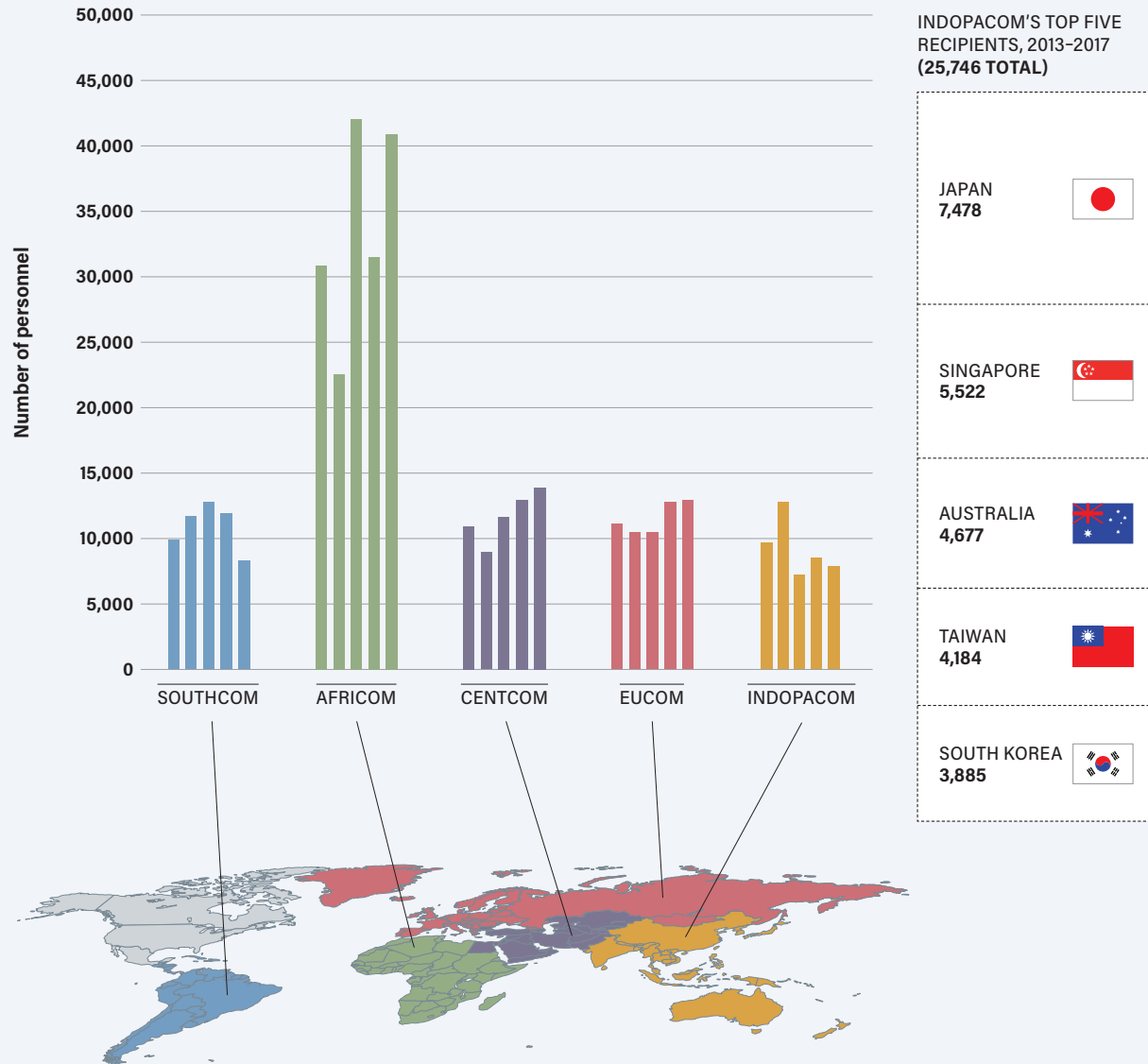


FIGURE A.4

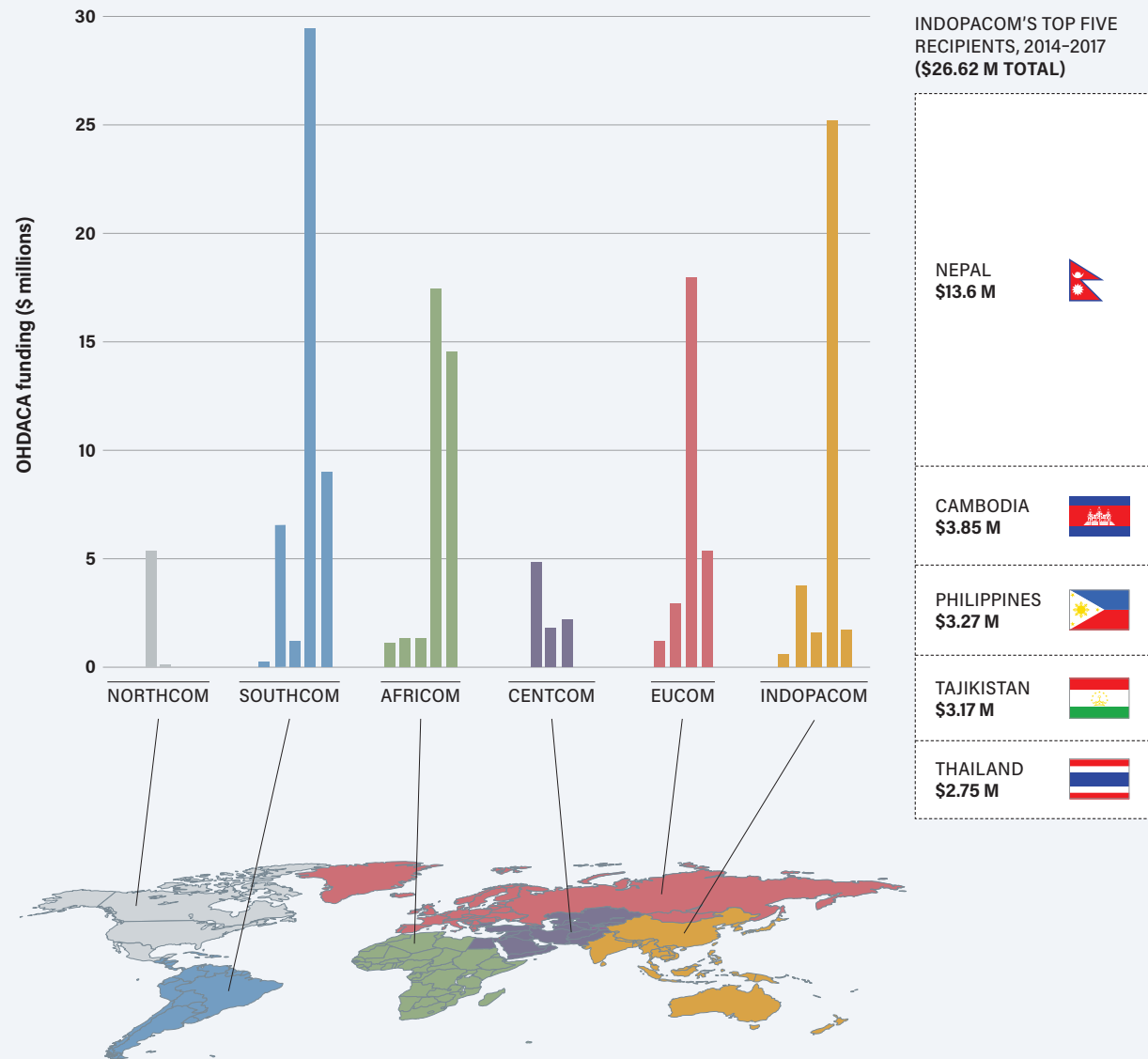
Number of Foreign Personnel Receiving U.S. Military Education and Training, by Combatant Command, 2013–2017



NOTE: Each bar indicates the total for each year from 2013 to 2017. NORTHCOM is excluded because there is no related U.S. aid in that AOR.

FIGURE A.5

U.S. Spending on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Activities, by Combatant Command, 2014–2018



NOTE: These data reflect spending through the Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) program. Data on OHDACA spending do not present a comprehensive view of U.S. HA/DR efforts. Reported distributions account for just some of the total OHDACA obligations in 2014–2016. Each bar indicates the total for each year from 2014 to 2018.

FIGURE A.6

U.S. Spending on Institutional Capacity-Building Programs, by Combatant Command, FY 2016

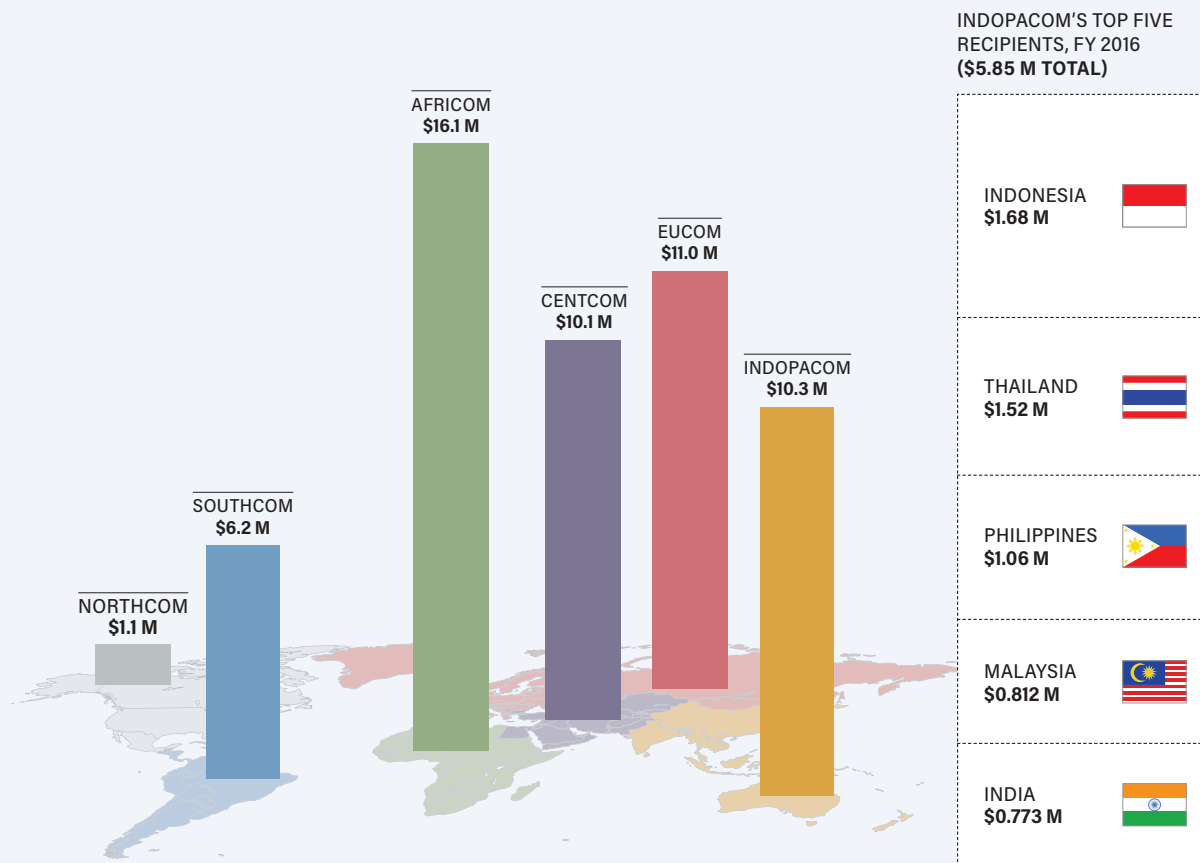
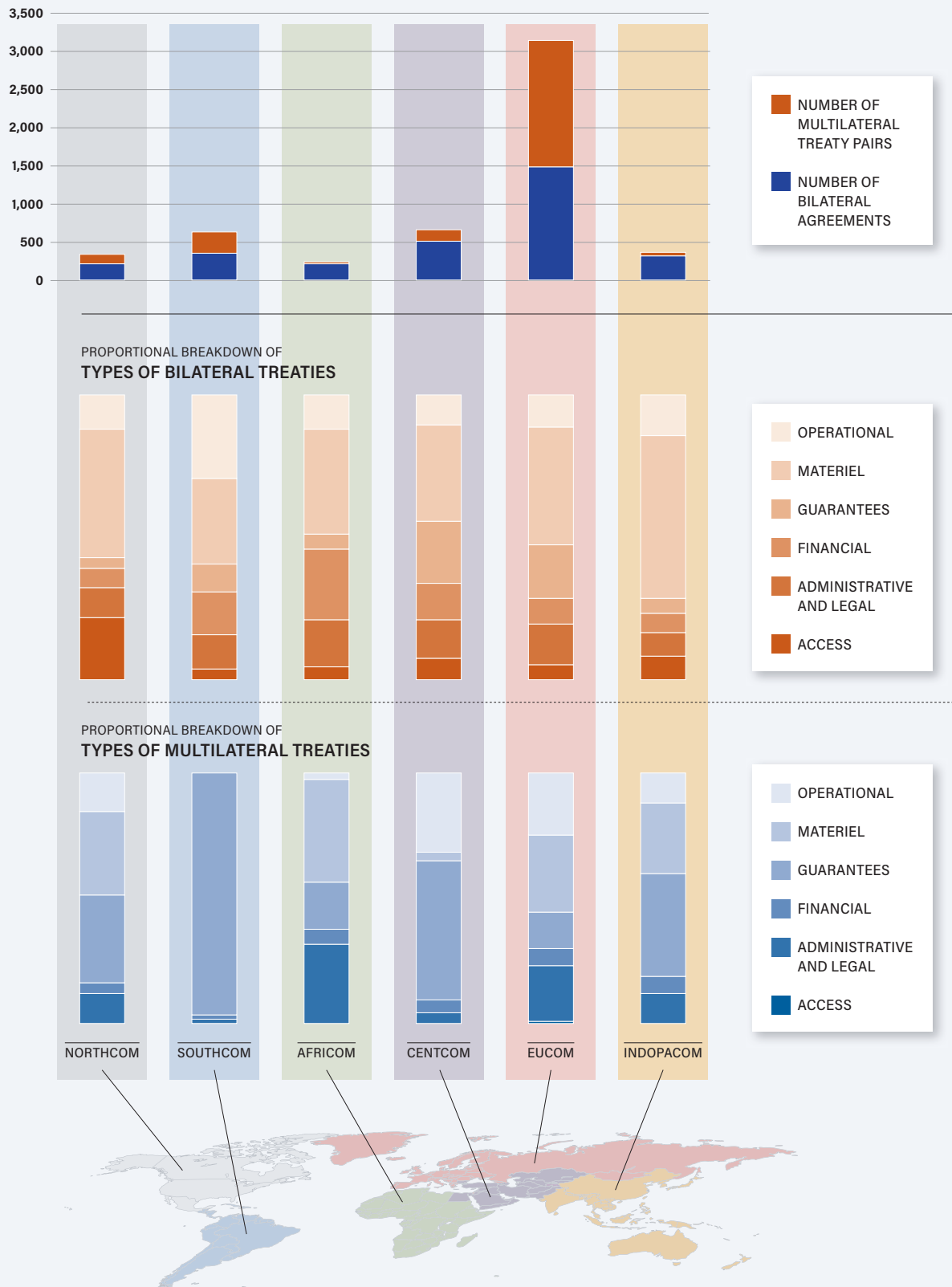


FIGURE A.7
Number of U.S. Access-Related Agreements, by Combatant Command, as of 2014



Security Cooperation Data for Russia, China, and European Providers

The figures and one table in this appendix illustrate summary statistics for the security cooperation activities of Russia, China, and European providers. Unless otherwise noted, the figures are based on author-compiled data from multiple sources (e.g., Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, undated; Harold et al., 2019; Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2020; SIPRI, undated-a); see Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

FIGURE B.1
Russian Military Aid via Arms Transfers (Unpaid Gifts), by Recipient Country, 2013–2018

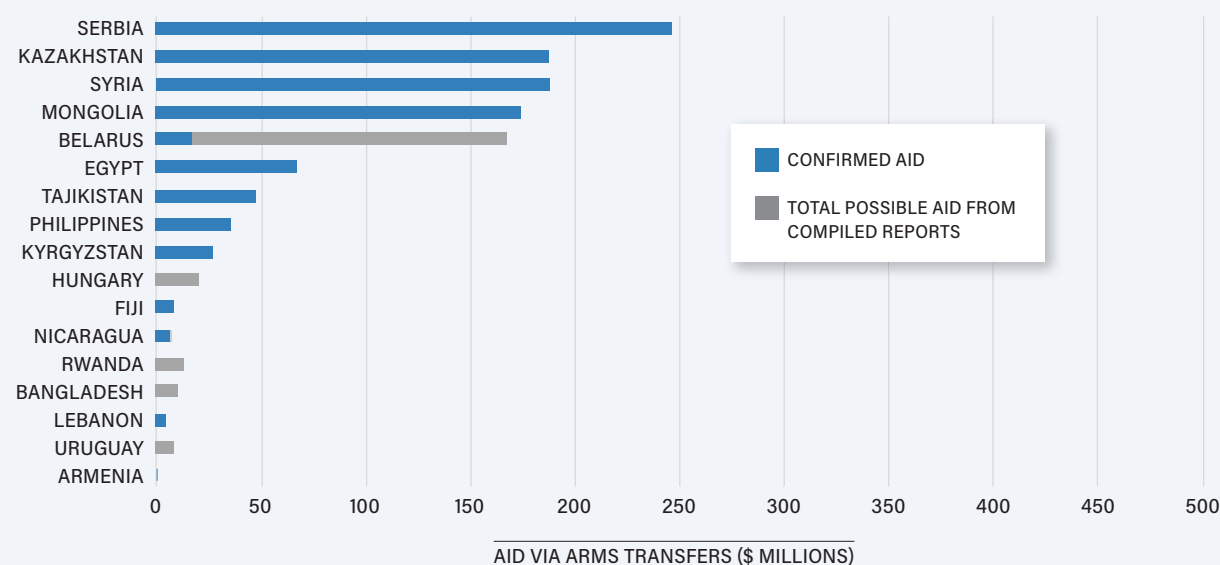


TABLE B.1
Major Russian Military Aid Packages, 2013–2018

Recipient	Aid (Promised or Delivered)
Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,000 automatic Kalashnikov rifles to the Afghan Interior Ministry in 2015
Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~4 Su-30K fighter ground attack (FGA) aircraft delivered in 2017–2018
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 T-90s tank in 2016 as a gift for coming in 2nd place in a Russian tank competition • Credit worth \$200 million in 2015 for arms purchases over the next 13 years • Credit worth \$100 million with a 3% interest rate in 2017 for arms purchases in 2018–2022
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of shells, missiles, and military technology in 2017
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 340 BTR-80 armored personnel carriers (APCs) in 2016–2017 to support UN peacekeeping operations (financed by Russia and the UN) • ~11 Mi-8MT or Mi-17 transport helicopters in 2015–2017 (financed in part by a \$1 billion Russian credit)
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 S-300PMU1 or SA-20A SAM systems in 2015–2016 • 1 Yak-52 Trainer aircraft in 2015
Central African Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light weapons (pistols, artillery, and rocket launchers) in 2018
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$50 million in credit for the purchase of arms in 2018
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~10 Moskit or SS-N-22 anti-ship missiles in 2015–2016 • 1 Project-1241 (<i>Tarantul</i>) fast attack craft in 2016 • Various equipment and weapons in 2017
Eswatini (former Swaziland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weapons, maintenance, and other military assistance in 2017
Fiji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AK-101s, RPK-201s, 7.62-mm PK machine guns, RPO-As, and RPG-7Bs worth approximately \$9 million in 2016
Gambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various military equipment in 2017
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Mi-8Ts in 2014
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 SU-30MK2s via an export credit of \$399.5 million in 2013 • 11 Su-35 FGA aircraft ordered in 2018 (\$570 million paid in commodities and 35% offsets, delivery from 2019)
Iraq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-72B tanks, TOS-1As, and armored BREHM-1s in 2015 • Radio-technical support system to one of Iraq's military airports in 2015 • 5 Zenit ZU-23-2s and 19,000 rockets and light arms to Iraqi Kurds in 2015–2016 to fight the Islamic State • 4 Su-25s from Russian Air Force reserves in 2016
Lebanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5 million in military aid for the Lebanese Internal Security Forces in 2018
Kazakhstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~5 S-300PS or SA-10B SAM systems in 2015 • ~200 5V55U or SA-10 SAM systems in 2015 • 160 rockets for 3RS S-300PS in 2016
Kyrgyzstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~10 D-30 122-mm towed guns in 2015 • 60 BTR-70 APCs in 2015–2017 • 2 An-26 transport aircraft in 2017
Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable mine-sweeping and mine-detecting devices given free of charge to the Laos army by Russian specialists in 2018
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light arms and grenades in 2013 to be used to counter terrorism

Table B.1—Continued

Recipient	Aid (Promised or Delivered)
Mongolia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~100 T-72A tanks (secondhand, modernized) in 2012–2015 • ~10 BTR-70 APCs (secondhand, rebuilt to BTR-70M) in 2015
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military equipment, spare parts, and components in 2017
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AK-103s, AK-105s, Kords, AGS-30s, GP-34s, SVD-S, PKPs, RPK-74Ms, and PP-19-01s (all rifles, machine guns, or grenade launchers) to the Namibian Navy in 2016
Nicaragua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 An-26 transport aircraft in 2018 • Modernized BTR-70M armored transports
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,000 AKM assault rifles, 1 million rounds of ammunition, 5,000 steel helmets, and 20 Ural 4320 military trucks
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Mi-17 helicopters for the Rwandan Armed Forces in 2014 • Various weapons and military equipment in 2016
Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 MiG-29A fighter aircraft in 2017 • 5 MiG-29S FGA aircraft in 2017 • 30 T-72S tanks and 30 BRDM-2 amphibious patrol vehicles in 2016
Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various weapons and military equipment, as well as military technical assistance, in 2018
Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development for the Sudanese Armed Forces in 2018
Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~10 T-90S tanks in 2015 • ~25 T-62 tanks in 2017 • ~10 BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles in 2017 • ~36 M-30 122-mm towed guns in 2016–2017 • ~200 48N6 or SA-10 SAMs in 2018 • 3 S-300PMU1 or SA-20 SAM systems in 2018 • Other military supplies and Kamaz, Ural, and TOS-1A trucks in 2015
Tajikistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~26 BTR-70 APCs in 2016 • ~4 BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles in 2017 • ~3 BTR-70 APCs in 2017 • ~2 BTR-80 APCs in 2017 • ~3 D-30 122-mm towed guns in 2017 • ~2 Mi-24V or Mi-35 combat helicopters in 2017 • ~2 Mi-8T transport helicopters in 2017 • 3 T-72B tanks in 2017 • Military-technical assistance to secure the border with Afghanistan in 2015
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms in 2018
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian credit worth \$750 million in 2015 for purchasing arms in 2015–2016
Uruguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Ural-4320 trucks in 2018 to be deployed as the Uruguayan contingent of UN forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zenit rocket complexes and Buk-M2E air defense missile system in 2015 • Mobile complex for maintenance and equipment repairs for ground forces provided by Rosoboronexport in 2017
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions for weapons and delivery of spare parts in 2017
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weapons in 2015

SOURCES: Data compiled by authors from press reports, journals, and databases, including Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies' Aviation Explorer; Russian journal *Eksport vooruzhenii*, Nos. 102–139, available at Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, undated; Russian newspapers *Kommersant* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*; Russian news agency TASS; SIPRI; the Swedish Defense Research Agency; the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; and the *Washington Post*. See Chapter Three.

FIGURE B.2

Overall Chinese Military Aid, by Recipient Country, 2013–2018

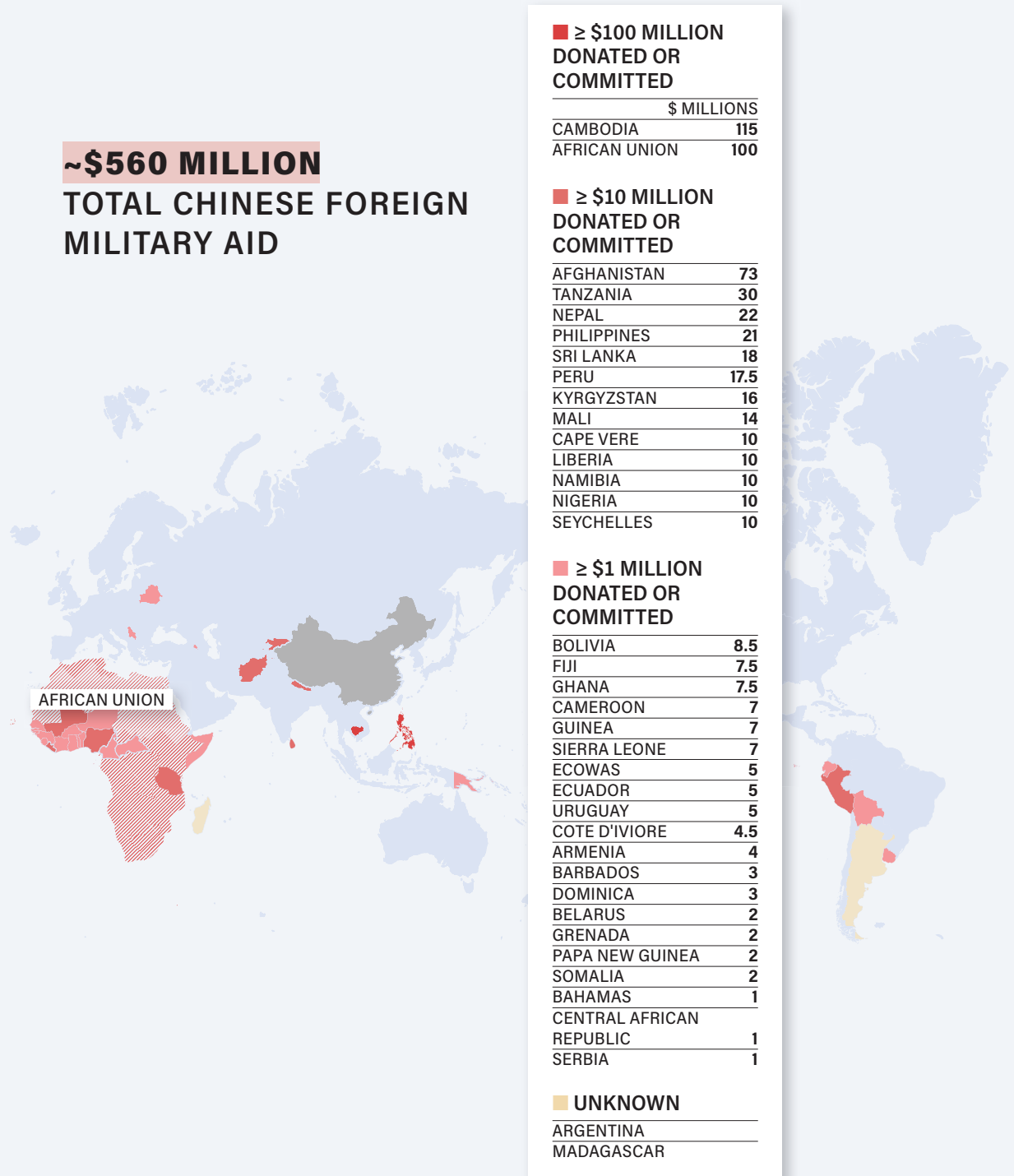


FIGURE B.3
Summary Statistics on Russian and Chinese Arms Sales

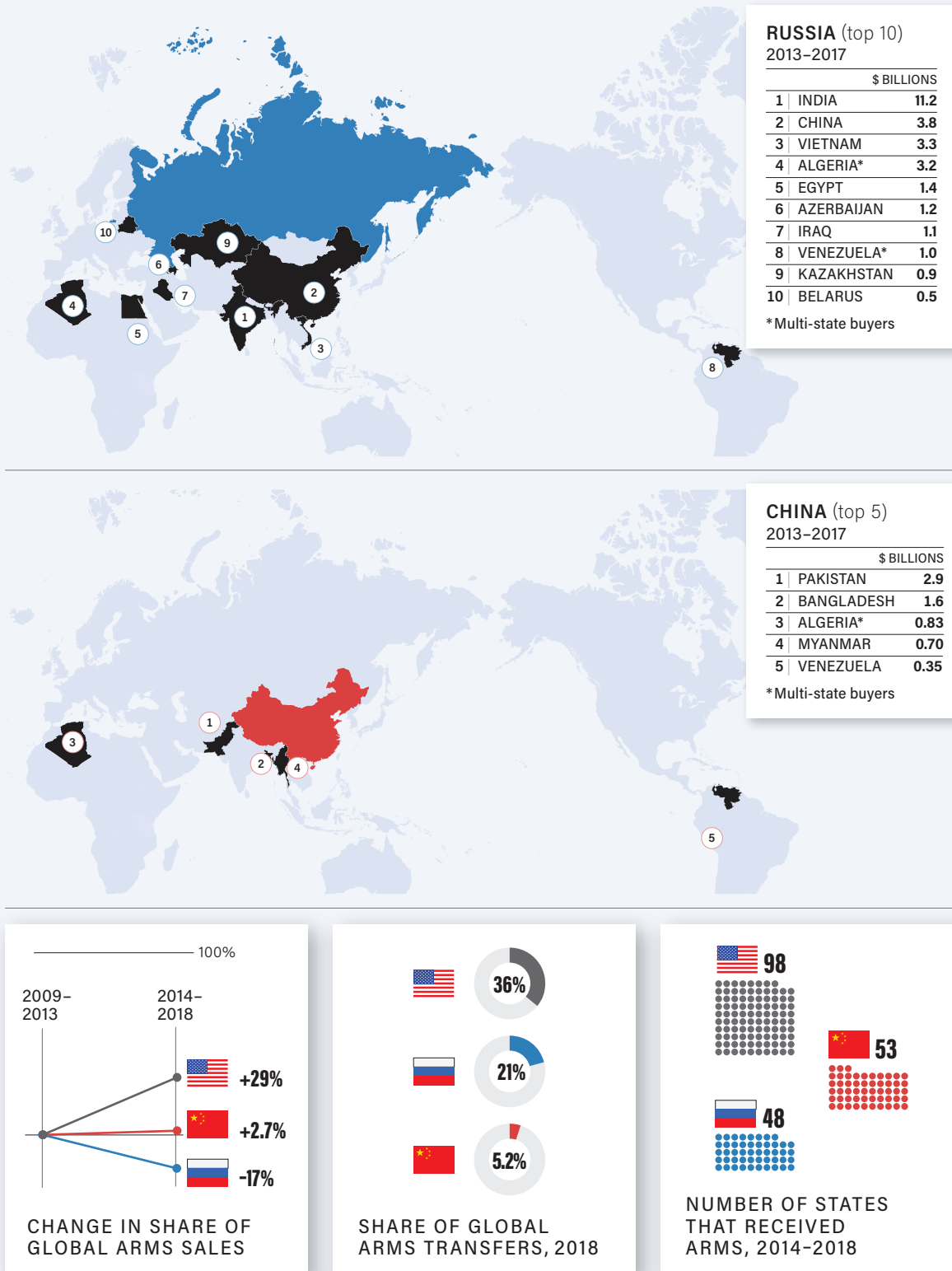
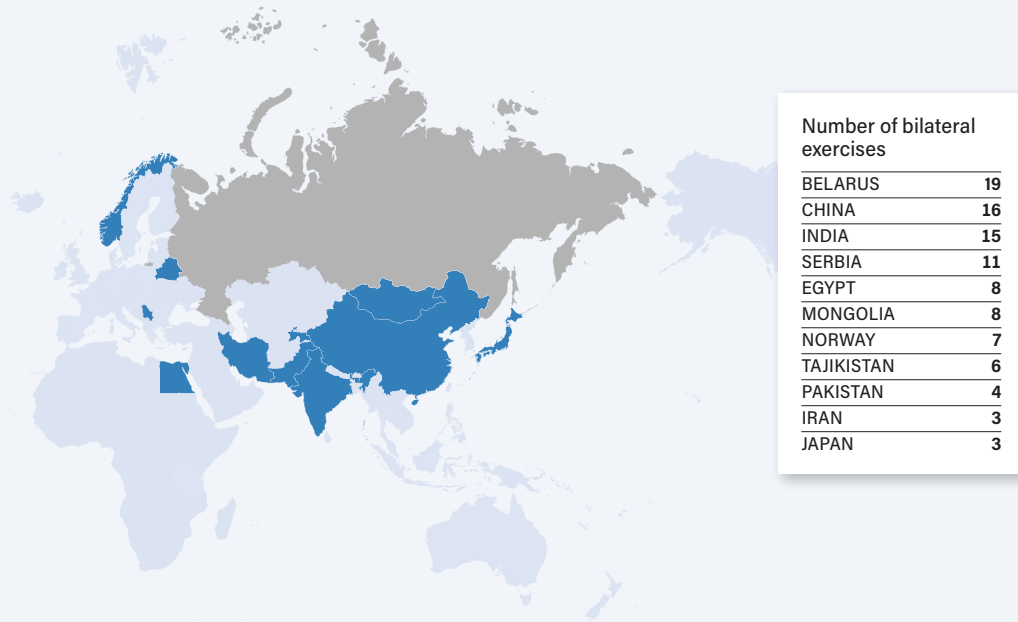


FIGURE B.4

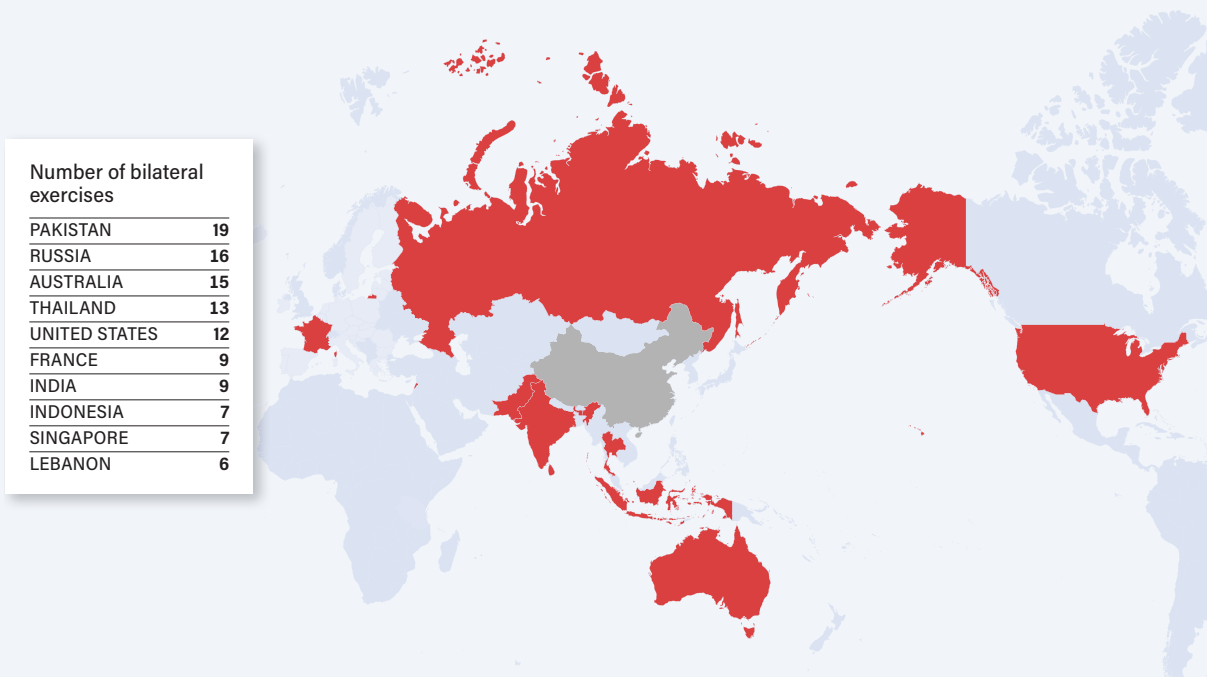
Top Ten Partners for Russian and Chinese Bilateral Military Exercises, 2013–2018



RUSSIA

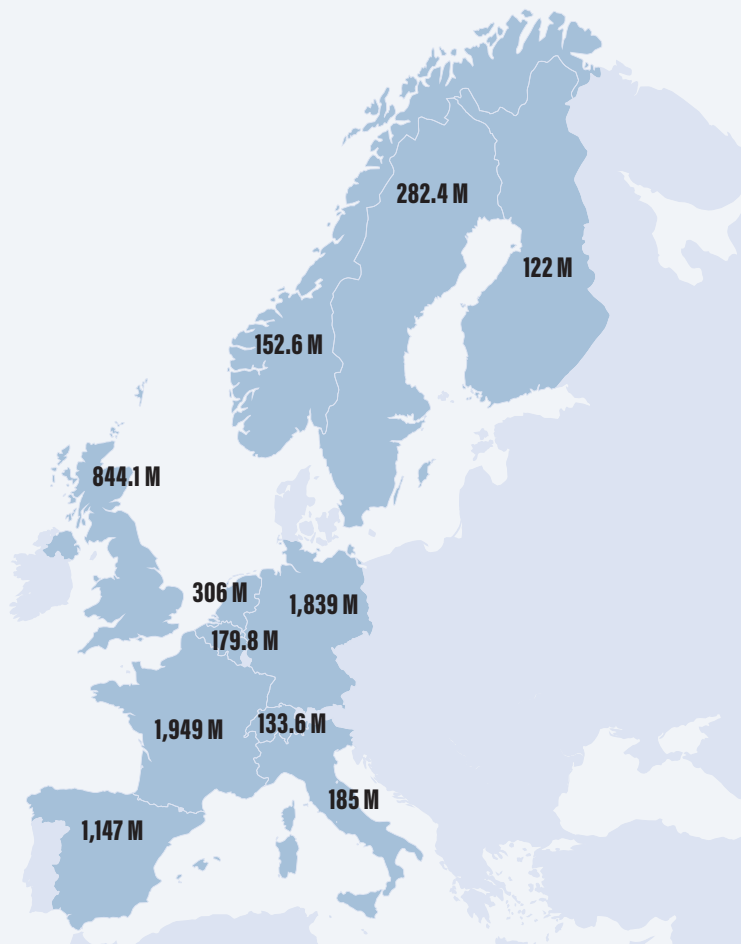
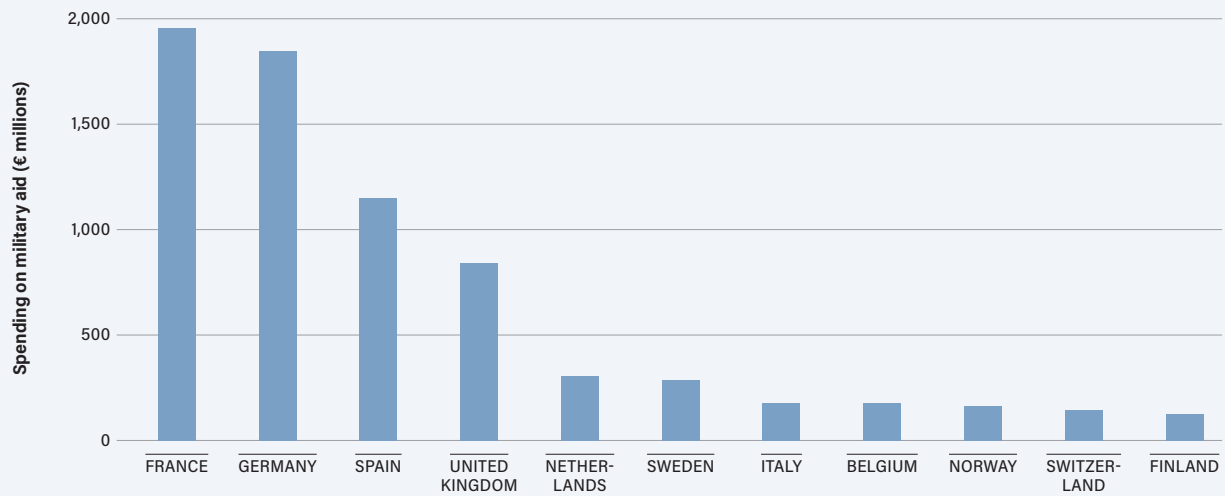


CHINA



NOTE: There are 11 partners listed for Russia because Iran and Japan are tied for tenth.

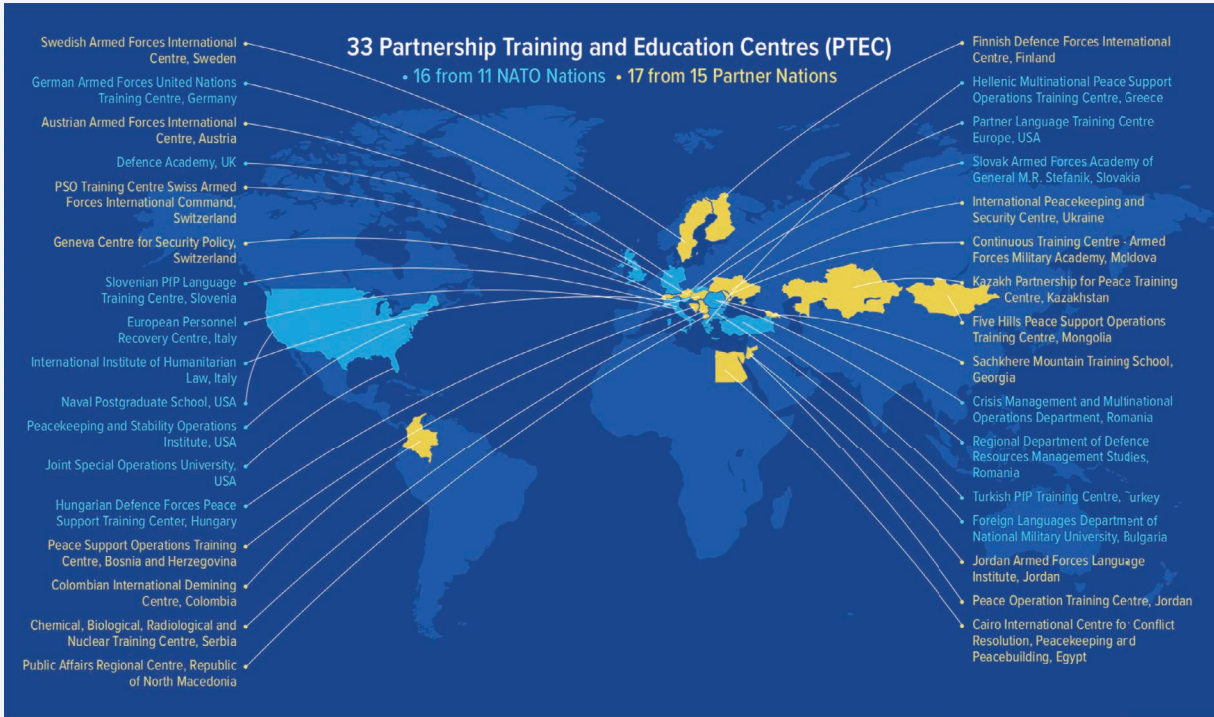
FIGURE B.5
Top European Spenders on Military Aid, 2017



NOTE: This figure reports spending in euros. France and Germany were by far the largest European providers of foreign military aid in 2017 (the most recent year with available data) and were also the largest spenders over the 2013–2017 period.

FIGURE B.6

NATO Partnership Training and Education Centres in Non-NATO Countries

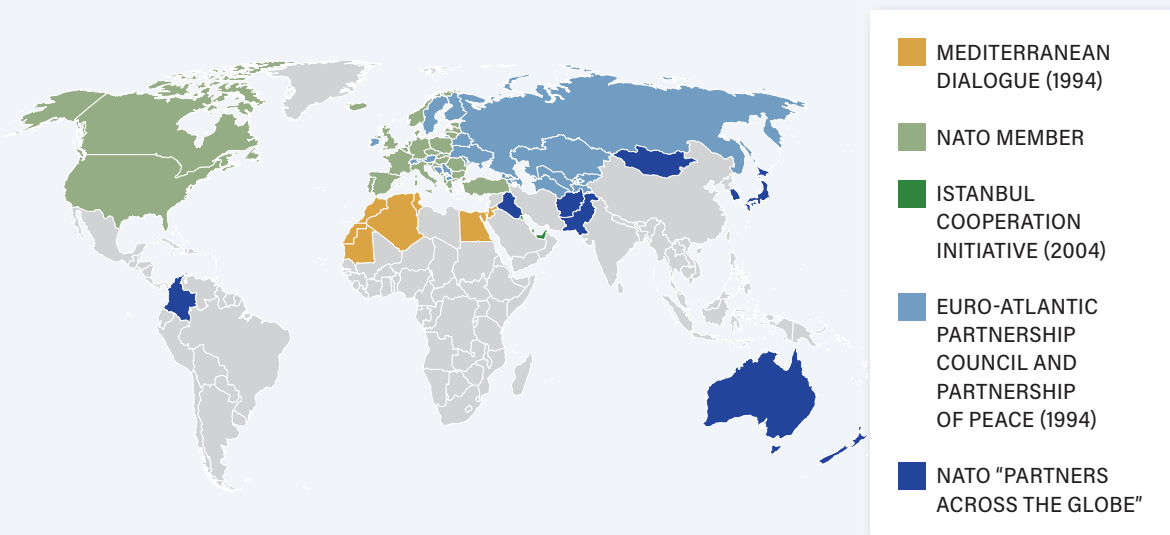


SOURCE: Allied Command Transformation, undated.

NOTE: PfP = Partnership for Peace; PSO = Peace Support Operations.

FIGURE B.7

NATO Members and Partners



SOURCE: NATO, "Partners," webpage, last updated March 27, 2020.

NOTE: Years in parentheses indicate the year those programs were introduced.

FIGURE B.8

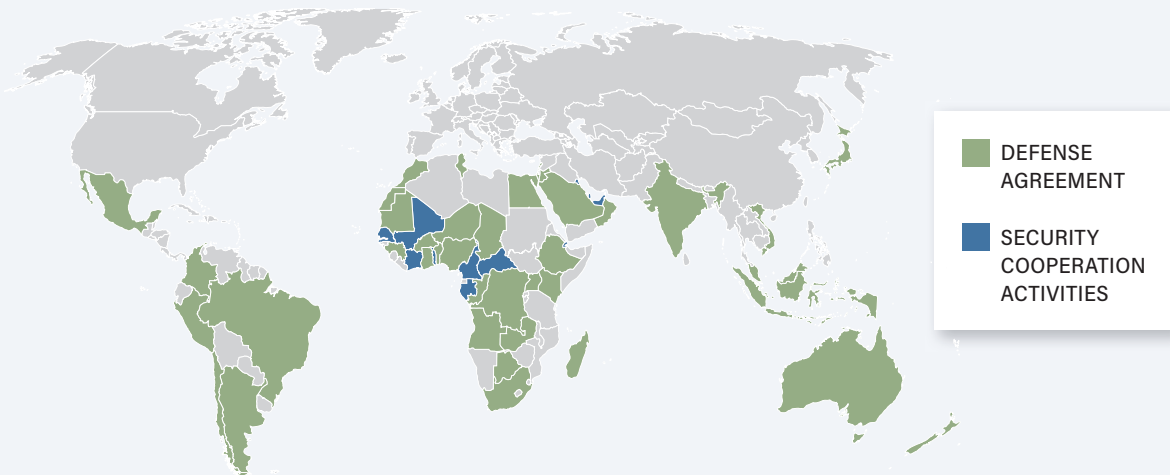
Membership in Selected NATO Security Cooperation Programs

DEFENCE AND RELATED SECURITY CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE					ENHANCED PARTNER STATUS
IRAQ					
COLUMBIA		GEORGIA		AUSTRALIA FINLAND SWEDEN	
		MOLDOVA	TUNISIA	JORDAN	
BUILDING INTEGRITY INITIATIVE	AFGHANISTAN KYRGYZSTAN MAURITANIA	ARMENIA NORTH MACEDONIA SERBIA UKRAINE	AZERBAIJAN KAZAKHSTAN MONGOLIA	AUSTRIA BAHRAIN IRELAND JAPAN REPUBLIC OF KOREA MOROCCO	
	DEFENCE EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA		INTEROPERABILITY PLATFORM	

SOURCES: NATO, "Partnership Interoperability Initiative," webpage, last updated June 7, 2017b; NATO, 2018b; NATO, "Building Integrity," webpage, last updated February 15, 2019b; and NATO, "Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP)," webpage, last updated March 5, 2019c.

FIGURE B.9

France's Defense Partners Worldwide



SOURCES: French Republic, *White Paper on Defence and National Security*, Paris, 2013, pp. 37 and 54; Directorate General for International Relations and Strategy, "Afrique du Nord, Moyen-Orient," French Ministry of Armed Forces, last updated February 14, 2019a; Directorate General for International Relations and Strategy, "Afrique subsaharienne," French Ministry of Armed Forces, last updated February 14, 2019b; Directorate General for International Relations and Strategy, "Amérique latine," French Ministry of Armed Forces, last updated February 14, 2019c; Directorate General for International Relations and Strategy, "Asie," Ministry of Armed Forces, last updated February 14, 2019d; Abdoulaye Diarra, "Mali: L'accord de défense avec la France enfin signé," *L'indépendant-Bamako*, July 17, 2014.

Abbreviations

AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AOR	area of responsibility
APC	armored personnel carrier
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
B	billion
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
DCS	Direct Commercial Sales
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
EU	European Union
EUCOM	U.S. European Command
FGA	fighter ground attack
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	gross domestic product
HA/DR	humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
IMET	international military education and training
INCLE	International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement
INDOPACOM	U.S. Indo-Pacific Command
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M	million
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command
OHDACA	Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid
PACAF	Pacific Air Forces
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PME	professional military education
RMAF	Royal Malaysian Air Force
RTAF	Royal Thai Air Force
SAM	surface-to-air missile
SCS	South China Sea
SDF	Self-Defense Forces
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SOFA	status of forces agreements
SOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Military)
UN	United Nations

USAF	U.S. Air Force
VAD-AF	Vietnam Air Defence – Air Force
VPA	Vietnam People’s Army

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In this study, RAND researchers examined the current role of security cooperation efforts as a tool in the emerging strategic competition among the United States, Russia, and China. The researchers did not assess the effectiveness or measure outcomes of security cooperation efforts but rather sought to identify how, where, and to what degree the three major competitors—plus Australia, Japan, India, and several countries in Europe—are using security cooperation. To answer this question, the team gathered all available data on the programs of the major countries that lead and usually fund security cooperation activities, examined the national security strategies and official statements of those countries to discover the intent and approach of their security cooperation efforts, and conducted case studies of major junior partners in (or recipients of) security cooperation efforts to see how the competition is playing out on the ground. The researchers found that security cooperation is a growing area of competition; that the United States and its allies enjoy a significant competitive advantage in this space; and that U.S., and particularly U.S. Air Force, security cooperation programs should have a geopolitical and an operational focus.

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