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Diversification: Middle States, Security Institutions, and the Shadow of Great Power Rivalry

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science and International Affairs

by

Brian L. Willis

Committee in charge:

Professor Stephan Haggard, Chair
Professor David Lake, Co-Chair
Professor Tai Ming Cheung
Professor Kevin Lewis
Professor Nico Ravanilla

2022

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University of California San Diego

2022

DEDICATION

To Matthew, Emmitt, Makenna, and Ethan, for always being up for the next adventure.

And especially Melanie, for making our adventure so incredible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADMM	Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers' Meeting
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CARAT	Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training
CNAS	Center for a New American Security
DCA	Defense Cooperation Agreement
DCAD	Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset
DOD	Department of Defense
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ERGM	Exponential Random Graph Model
GWDegree	Geometrically Weighted Degree
GWESP	Geometrically Weighted Edge-Wise Shared Partner
GWDSP	Geometrically Weighted Dyad-Wise Shared Partner
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
IMET	International Military Exchange and Training
INTERFET	International Force East Timor
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JDCC	Joint Defense Cooperation Committee
JMSDF	Japanese Maritime Self Defense Forces
JSDF	Japan Self Defense Forces
MBA	Military Bases Agreement
MCMC	Markov Chain Monte Carlo

MDT	Mutual Defense Treaty
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSP	National Security Policy
PHIBLEX	Philippine Amphibious Landing Exercises
PRC	People's Republic of China
SAOM	Stochastic Actor-Oriented Model
SCS	South China Sea
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
TCA	Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement to Address Security Issues in the Maritime Areas of Common Concern
TERGM	Temporal Exponential Random Graph Model
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNTS	United Nations Treaty Series
VFA	Visiting Forces Agreement

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The views expressed in this dissertation are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the United States Government.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Diversification: Middle States, Security Institutions, and the Shadow of Great Power Rivalry

by

Brian L. Willis

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and International Affairs

University of California San Diego, 2022

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How do “middle” states respond to intensifying great power rivalry, and what role do security institutions play in the strategies of middle states? In answering these questions, I address two gaps in the literature. First, traditional theories of alignment—balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging—each focus on a middle state’s relations with the competing great powers. Yet they fail to address how middle states interact among themselves. The second gap concerns the role of security institutions in the strategies of middle states. Balancing and bandwagoning emphasize the role alliances play as states respond to shifting distributions of power. Yet since the end of the Cold War, alliances have remained relatively stagnant and few new alliances have been formed. New “anarchic” forms of security institutions have emerged,

including defense cooperation agreements (DCA), institutionalized defense dialogues, and reoccurring combined military exercises. However, these forms of security institutions currently find no part in existing theories of alignment. I introduce a theory of diversification to describe how middle states respond to shifting distributions of power and intensifying great power rivalry. Rather than just align with one of the competing great powers through bandwagoning or balancing, or engage with both by hedging, middle states also seek to diversify by strengthening security ties among themselves. Using an updated dataset of all DCAs between middle states in the Indo-Pacific, and novel datasets of all institutionalized defense dialogues and combined military exercises in the region, I show the central role these security institutions play in the strategies of middle states as they respond to growing Chinese power and intensifying U.S.-China rivalry. Using statistical, network, and detailed case study approaches, I show that middle states who face a significant threat from the rising power, have a weak commitment to alliance, are militarily capable, or who are economically developed, are more likely to employ a diversification strategy. I also show that as middle states seek to diversify, they are more likely to form a security partnership with middle states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, share a common security partner, or who face a common adversary.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, security institutions have proliferated throughout the Indo-Pacific.¹ Multilateral security organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and regular security dialogues such as the Shangri-La Dialogue and Beijing Xiangshan Forum, have come to play a prominent role in the regional security landscape, and much has been written about the multilateralization of security in Asia.² Yet this focus on pluralism belies the tremendous growth in bilateral security cooperation among states in the region. Since the end of the Cold War, over 300 bilateral defense cooperation agreements (DCA) have been signed and over 150 institutionalized defense dialogues have been established between states in the region.³ Institutionalized combined military exercises have also become increasingly common, with more than 180 formalized bilateral exercises taking place in the region on an annual or biennial basis (Figure 1.1).

¹ For the purposes of this study, I use the term “Indo-Pacific” to refer to the region that includes East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Oceania states of Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea.

² For example, see: Amitav Acharya, “Security Pluralism in the Asia-Pacific: Reshaping Regional Order,” *Global Asia* 11, no. 1 (March 2016); Edward Kolodziej, “The Multilateralization of Regional Security in Southeast and Northeast Asia: The Role of the Soviet Union,” *Pacific Focus* 6 (February 13, 2008): 5–37; Robert S. Ross, “Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia,” *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 355–395; Amitav Acharya and Evelyn Goh, eds., *Reassessing Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Competition, Congruence, and Transformation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

³ I use the term ‘institutionalized’ to describe defense dialogues and combined military exercises to that have been formalized between states and occur on a regular (e.g., annual or biannual), rather than an ad hoc basis.

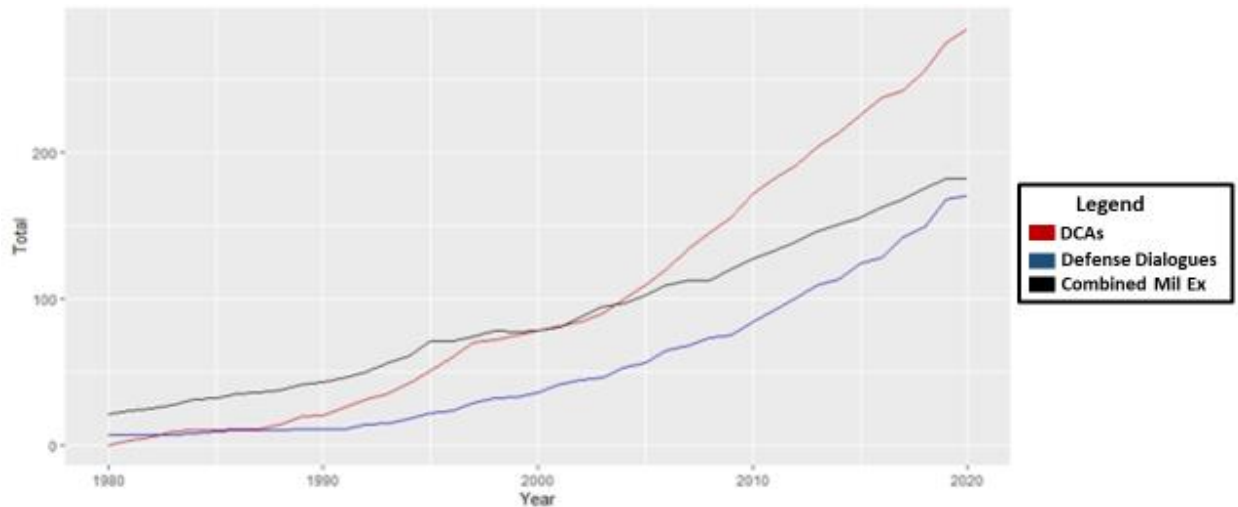


Figure 1.1: Total DCAs, Defense Dialogues, and Combined Military Exercises between Indo-Pacific States (1980-2020)

Each of these forms of security institutions are important mechanisms states use to advance their national security and foreign policy objectives. DCAs, which are “formal bilateral agreements that establish institutional frameworks for routine defense cooperation,” are the primary way states institutionalize security relations with their defense partners. As of 2010, more pairs of countries were bound by DCAs than alliances.⁴ DCAs are also the primary mechanism through which states expand existing security ties. For instance, following the signing of the enhanced Agreement on Defense Exchanges and Security Cooperation between China and Singapore in 2019, the Singapore Ministry of Defense described the agreement as reflective of the two states’ “bilateral confidence in each other and a willingness to deepen defence ties” and a sign that bilateral defense cooperation between the two sides would “be stepped up significantly.”⁵ Institutionalized defense dialogues, which are regularized formal

⁴ Brandon J. Kinne, “Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network,” *International Organization* 72, no. 4 (ed 2018): 799–837.

⁵ Singapore Ministry of Defense, “Singapore and China Step Up Defence Cooperation Through Enhanced Agreement on Defence Exchanges and Security Cooperation,” October 20, 2019, https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2019/October/20oct19_nr; Aqil Haziq Mahmud, “Singapore, China to boost defence cooperation, engage in larger military exercises,” *Channel News Asia* (May 29,

exchanges between states' armed forces and/or ministries of defense, are also an important mechanism through which states deepen security cooperation and signal the closeness of security relations. Institutionalized defense dialogues serve as venues for states to coordinate defense and foreign policy, share intelligence, coordinate bilateral exercises and training events, facilitate defense industrial cooperation, as well as other areas important to bilateral security relations.⁶ For example, through the annual Australia-Malaysia High Level Committee on Defence Cooperation, which was established in June 2018, the two countries have expanded counter-terrorism cooperation, defense industrial cooperation, joint sustainment and maintenance operations, and increased the number of service members serving in each other's country.⁷ Institutionalized combined military exercises are also an important mechanism states use to expand defense cooperation and strengthen military capabilities, serving as a regular interaction between states' armed forces that strengthens bilateral military familiarity and interoperability. For instance, the Indian Navy described the newly established *Indian Navy-Vietnam Peoples' Navy Bilateral Exercise* as "a significant step in further strengthening mutual confidence and interoperability."⁸ I describe each of forms these security institutions in more detail in Chapter Two.

2019), <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/singapore-china-boost-defence-cooperation-military-exercises-881846>.

⁶ I use the term 'institutionalized' to describe defense dialogues and combined military exercises to that have been formalized between states and occur on a regular (e.g., annual or biannual), rather than an ad hoc basis.

⁷ Australia Department of Defence, "Joint Statement - Malaysia-Australia High Level Committee on Defence Cooperation," 25 June 2018, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/statements/joint-statement-malaysia-australia-high-level-committee-defence>; Australia Department of Defence, "Malaysia-Australia Joint Statement on Defence Cooperation," September 25, 2019, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/lreynolds/statements/malaysia-australia-joint-statement-defence-cooperation>.

⁸ Ankit Panda, "India, Vietnam Conclude Second Iteration of Bilateral Naval Exercise off Cam Ranh Bay," *The Diplomat* (April 22, 2019), <https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/india-vietnam-conclude-second-iteration-of-bilateral-naval-exercise-off-cam-ranh-bay/>.

Even more remarkable than the sheer growth in the number of these security institutions in the Indo-Pacific is their emerging pattern of institutionalization (see Figure 1.2). In 2010, the U.S. was by far the most dominant actor in the regional security network in terms of network centrality and strength of military forces in the region. While many states in the region have maintained, and in some cases strengthened, their security relations with the U.S., they have also increased their security ties to China by signing broad DCAs and establishing regular senior security dialogues and combined military exercises. Yet in addition to strengthening their security ties with both the U.S. and China, states in the region are also strengthening ties among themselves. While the U.S. and China alone accounted for nearly three out of every four DCAs signed between Indo-Pacific states from 1980-2009, they accounted for only 17 percent of DCAs signed in the last decade. Similar trends are reflected in the regional bilateral defense dialogue network. Whereas the U.S. and China accounted for over half of all senior bilateral defense dialogues established from 1980 to 2009, they accounted for less than one-third of those established from 2010-2020.⁹ The regional security network has grown increasingly complex, and Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam have emerged as central players in the network.

⁹ I consider a senior level defense dialogue one in which the Defense Minister (or Deputy Minister) or Chief of the Armed Forces (or Vice Chief) from at least one of the countries participates in the dialogue.

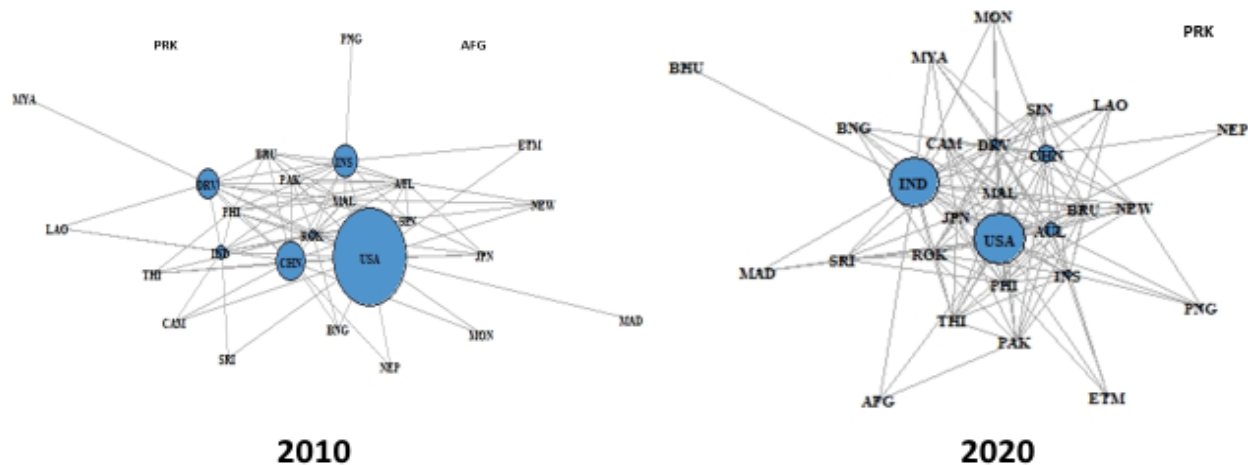


Figure 1.2: Indo-Pacific DCA Network (2010 and 2020)¹⁰

What accounts for the rise and observed patterns of security institutionalization in the Indo-Pacific? More broadly, what do these patterns of security institutionalization tell us about how “middle states” respond to intensifying great power rivalry and the role security institutions play in the strategies of middle states? I use the term “middle states” to refer to secondary states who have close economic and/or security relations with two competing dominant powers.¹¹ In the Indo-Pacific, many states have long-standing security ties to the U.S. and close economic ties to China. As these states seek to maintain positive engagement with both the U.S. and China, they are increasingly caught in the middle of intensifying great power rivalry. For the purposes of this study, I use the term middle states to refer to all states in the region other than the U.S. and China.

¹⁰ Node scale is relative to betweenness scores.

¹¹ I adopt the term ‘middle states’ from G. John Ikenberry, “Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia,” *Political Science Quarterly* 131, no. 1 (2016): 9–43. My use of the term ‘middle states’ is not to be confused with the term ‘middle powers,’ which has loosely been used to describe states who are neither classified as great nor major powers, but are capable of deploying a variety of instruments of national power to influence the position of great powers and defend their own national security interests. See Dong-min Shin, “A Critical Review of the Concept of Middle Power,” *E-International Relations*, December 4, 2015, <https://www.e-ir.info/2015/12/04/a-critical-review-of-the-concept-of-middle-power/>.

Traditional theories of International Relations are challenged to explain this growth of security cooperation among middle states. When confronted with intensifying great power rivalry, traditional theories assert that states either balance by aligning with the established power against the rising power, or bandwagon by aligning with the rising power.¹² Scholars also assert that states sometimes hedge by pursuing engagement with both rival powers while avoiding close alignment with either.¹³ Despite the differences in what these theories predict concerning the alignment strategies of less powerful states, they share one thing in common—their focus on a relatively weaker state’s relations with the competing great powers. Yet what each of these theories fail to address is how middle states interact among themselves under conditions of growing great power rivalry.¹⁴

The security literature is also challenged to explain the types of security institutions that are proliferating in the Indo-Pacific. Current theories of alignment emphasize the role alliances play in how a state responds to shifting distributions of power. Yet since the end of the Cold

¹² Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, Ill: Waveland Press, 2010); Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Hans J. Morgenthau, Kenneth W. Thompson, and W. David Clinton, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006).

¹³ Darren J. Lim and Zack Cooper, “Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia,” *Security Studies* 24, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 696–727; Evelyn Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies* (East-West Center, 2005); Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability,” *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (December 1, 2005): 145–167; Cheng-Chwee Kuik, “How Do Weaker States Hedge? Unpacking ASEAN States’ Alignment Behavior towards China,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 100 (July 3, 2016): 500–514; Van Jackson, “Power, Trust, and Network Complexity: Three Logics of Hedging in Asian Security,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 14, no. 3 (September 1, 2014): 331–356; Denny Roy, “Southeast Asia and China: Balancing or Bandwagoning?” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 2 (2005): 305–322.

¹⁴ For the purposes of this study, I use the term ‘alignment’ to refer to a formal or informal security relationship between two or more states that involves mutual expectations for some degree of policy coordination and/or cooperation on security issues in the future. While other scholars have used a similar definition to refer to alliances (see especially Barnett and Levy, 1991), alliances are only a formal subset of the broader phenomenon of alignment. See Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy, “Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73,” *International Organization* 45, no. 3 (1991): 369–395; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); Glenn H. Snyder, “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut,” *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): 103–123.

War, alliances worldwide have remained relatively stagnant, and few new alliances have been formed.¹⁵ In the Indo-Pacific, no new alliances have been formed since the early days of the Cold War, despite growing U.S.-China rivalry. Long-standing U.S. allies such as the Philippines and Thailand have sought to distance themselves from their alliance with the U.S. China has even forsworn alliances, referring to them as a “relic of the Cold War” and calling for a “new model of security partnerships.”¹⁶ Rather than turn to alliances, great powers and middle states alike have turned to other forms of security institutions to advance their security interests, including DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises. However, these forms of security institutions currently find no part in our existing theories, and the security literature remains focused on alliances.

I seek to address both these gaps in the literature in this dissertation. I argue that under intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, security institutions have become a primary arena for great power competition. Both the U.S. and China have proposed competing visions for the regional security order and are seeking to gain support for their respective visions through strengthening their security ties with states throughout the region. This competition for influence has led the U.S. and China to seek security partnerships with such improbable partners as Palau, East Timor, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Yet focusing on the competition-fueled motives of the great powers as the primary cause of the growth of security institutions misses the underlying driver of their proliferation. I argue that under the shadow of intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, states in the region have largely avoided traditional strategies of balancing and bandwagoning in favor of

¹⁵ Douglas Gibler, *International Military Alliances, 1648-2008* (Washington, DC, CQ Press, 2009).

¹⁶ People’s Republic of China, *China’s National Defense in the New Era* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the PRC, July 2019); People’s Republic of China, *China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the PRC, January 2017).

strategies that avoid alignment and maximize autonomy. While many middle states are hedging by pursuing varying degrees of security engagement with both the U.S. and China, middle states are doing more than just hedging. Middle states are also strengthening security ties among themselves. I refer to this as *diversification*, which I define as increasing the quantity and quality of a state's security partnerships to reduce the risk of overdependence on a single partner. It is this strategy of diversification, enabled by the institutional design characteristics of DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises, that is driving the proliferation of security institutions in the Indo-Pacific. More broadly, diversification, and these more limited forms of security institutions, are central to the strategies of middle states as they seek to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy under the shadow of intensifying great power rivalry.¹⁷

Similar to scholars' use of the term hedging, I borrow the term diversification from finance to describe this distinct strategy of middle states. As a financial investment strategy, diversification refers to a risk management strategy that seeks to reduce portfolio risk by investing in a variety of non-perfectly correlated assets.¹⁸ As a middle state strategy, diversification involves increasing the quantity and quality of a state's partnerships to reduce the risk of overreliance on a single partner. While diversification can be pursued across the economic, political, or security spheres, I focus on diversification in the security sphere to align with the original conceptions of balancing and bandwagoning. In diversifying their security relations, middle states expand their sources of support for improving their military capabilities,

¹⁷ I define autonomy as "a state's ability to determine its own policies." See James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (1991): 909.

¹⁸ Harry Markowitz, "Portfolio Selection," *The Journal of Finance* 7, no. 1 (1952): 77–91.

reduce their vulnerability to coercion, increase the number of partners they are able to call on to meet security challenges, and expand their sources of diplomatic support. Each of these outcomes strengthens the security and autonomy of a middle state in the face of competition among great powers to exert their influence.

In developing a theory of diversification, I explain which types of states are most likely to diversify and which pairs of states, or dyads, are more likely to form a security partnership when they diversify. As seen in the Indo-Pacific DCA network, states are not forming security agreements to the same extent, and states are not just forming security agreements with every other state. Using statistical, network, and detailed case study approaches, I show that middle states who face a significant threat from the rising power, have a weak commitment to alliance, are militarily capable, or who are economically developed are more likely to employ a diversification strategy. I also show that as middle states seek to diversify, they are more likely to form a security partnership with middle states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, share a common security partner, or who face a common adversary.

To demonstrate the prominence and patterns of diversification, I focus on the responses of Indo-Pacific states to growing U.S.-China rivalry. As described above, security institutions, such as DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises have proliferated throughout the region. These forms of security institutions constitute my primary operationalizations of middle state diversification behavior throughout this dissertation.

A fundamental question concerning these forms of security institutions, especially when they are established between less powerful states, is do they even matter? I argue that in many cases, these forms of security institutions do in fact matter, and have an important influence on regional security and stability. The extent of security cooperation between partner states who

form these institutions can certainly vary, ranging from large-scale, high-end war-fighting exercises between the Australian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, to natural disaster response coordination discussions and drills between the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and People's Army of Vietnam. Yet even at their most basic level, the existence of a DCA, institutionalized defense dialogue, or regular military exercise between two states signals a basic level of shared security interests, an expectation of mutual gain, and a willingness to commit to and strengthen defense cooperation.

These forms of institutionalized security cooperation can also strengthen bilateral and regional diplomacy, build shared identity constructs, and provide a framework for future, more in-depth forms of security cooperation and combined operations.¹⁹ Importantly, in coordinating defense policy, conducting combined military training, and increasing defense industrial cooperation, middle states advance their military capabilities in ways that can make low-cost coercion efforts by an aggressor state less likely to succeed. For example, combined maritime surveillance exercises and information sharing between Malaysia and the Philippines increases the maritime domain awareness of both states in the disputed South China Sea (SCS), making it more difficult for another state to infringe on either states' sovereignty undetected. Moreover, defense industrial cooperation between India and the Philippines advances the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) ability to respond to challenges against its sovereignty, and the Philippines' recent acquisition of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles from India is a significant boost to Philippine military capabilities and deterrence.²⁰ Lastly, complex security ties among

¹⁹ Scott W. Harold et al., *The Thickening Web of Asian Security Cooperation: Deepening Defense Ties Among U.S. Allies and Partners in the Indo-Pacific* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019).

²⁰ Kiran Sharma and Cliff Venzon, "Philippines Set to Be First Buyer of India-Russia Cruise Missile," *Nikkei Asia* (November 22, 2020), <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Philippines-set-to-be-first-buyer-of-India-Russia-cruise-missile>; Xavier Vavasseur, "Philippines and India Sign Deal Paving the Way for

middle states also increases the number of potential participants in any dispute. Even if states do not have formal commitments to each other through an alliance, close security partners may be willing to offer each other diplomatic, economic, or even limited military support, such as geographic access or equipment, during a conflict. If a potential aggressor state is less confident in its ability to confine a conflict to a bilateral setting, it may have a moderating impact on aggressive behavior and serve as a deterrent to future aggression. Especially in view of rapidly growing security cooperation across the entire region, these forms of security institutions do matter to regional security, even when these institutions are established between less powerful states.

1.1 Methodology

To demonstrate the proliferation and patterns of diversification, I use an updated dataset of all DCAs signed between Indo-Pacific states from 1980 to 2020 and introduce two novel datasets of all known institutionalized defense dialogues and combined military exercises in the region established between 1980 and 2020. In compiling the Indo-Pacific DCA dataset, I build on the Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset (DCAD), which identifies all known DCAs signed throughout the world from 1980 to 2010.²¹ I update the DCAD to include all DCAs signed between states in the Indo-Pacific through the year 2020, as well as refine the DCAD to include omitted agreements.²² In total, I identify 316 DCAs signed between Indo-Pacific states

BrahMos Missile Procurement,” *Naval News* (March 8, 2021), <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/03/philippines-and-india-sign-deal-paving-the-way-for-brahmos-missile-procurement/>.

²¹ Brandon J. Kinne, “The Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset (DCAD),” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(4), 2019: 729-755.

²² For this study, I include all countries in East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Oceania states of Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. I also include the United States. This includes a total of 28 countries: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Maldives, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, North Korea, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea,

from 1980-2020, including 116 DCAs signed between 2011 and 2020. In compiling the institutionalized defense dialogue dataset, I identify 163 bilateral defense dialogues, including 92 held at the senior level. To identify combined military exercises in the region, I focus on identifying all formalized combined military exercises that occur on a regular (i.e., annual or biennial) basis. While existing military exercise datasets identify the occurrence of individual combined exercises, my interest is in identifying those exercises which states have agreed to conduct on a regular basis, which I view as a signal of a greater commitment to a bilateral security relationship and to future cooperation.²³ I identify 201 institutionalized bilateral combined military exercises established between states in the region from 1980 to 2020.

These datasets provide an important contribution to advancing the study of interstate security relations and our understanding of current Indo-Pacific security dynamics. Numerous scholars have conducted valuable research analyzing security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Much of this work is qualitative, focused on describing and analyzing security ties between certain states. For example, many studies focus on describing a specific bilateral or multilateral relationship, such as Japan's security relations with South Korea, or security cooperation among ASEAN states. Few studies, however, attempt to analyze security ties across many states or the across the region as a whole. Even fewer incorporate network tools or quantitative methods into their analysis. The lack of research analyzing region-wide security dynamics or incorporating network and quantitative methods leaves a significant gap in our understanding of interstate security ties in the Indo-Pacific. The datasets I introduce in this dissertation not only advance

the People's Republic of China, The Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States.

²³ Jordan Bernhardt, "Introducing the Joint Military Exercise Dataset," (2020), working paper; Vito D'Orazio, "International Military Cooperation: From Concepts to Constructs," Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA. (2013).

future qualitative research that will be able to draw on the specific security agreements and activities that I identify in the datasets, but also lay the foundation for future quantitative research that will further our understanding of evolving regional security dynamics.

Several recent policy-focused studies have made important contributions to analyzing the growth of security cooperation among Indo-Pacific states. Each of these studies are largely qualitative, focusing on identifying and analyzing security cooperation among a selection of states in the region. The most comprehensive of these studies is the RAND Corporation's 2019 study entitled *The Thickening Web of Asian Security Cooperation: Deepening Defense Ties Among U.S. Allies and Partners in the Indo-Pacific*. The study examines the drivers and consequences of greater intraregional defense cooperation by analyzing security cooperation between seven Indo-Pacific states: Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam. The authors' methodological approach is primarily qualitative, drawing on official statements and state publications, media reports, and subject matter expert interviews to review the various forms of defense cooperation between the specified countries and identify each state's primary motives for strengthening intra-regional security cooperation.²⁴ The study highlights states' diverse motivations for expanding regional security cooperation, citing concerns of growing Chinese power as the primary motivation for states to deepen security cooperation. The study also highlights a desire to reinforce the existing U.S.-centered regional security order as an important motivation for several states, especially Australia and Japan, to expand regional security cooperation. The authors also identify burgeoning defense industrial development costs, national identity considerations, domestic factors, and the growth of regional

²⁴ To characterize levels of security cooperation between the assessed countries, the study specifically identifies the existence of high-level defense/foreign policy dialogues, arms sales and transfers, acquisition and cross-servicing agreements, defense co-production and co-development, training and military exercises, and intelligence sharing agreements between the assessed countries.

norms as an important explanation for expanding intra-regional security cooperation. The study concludes with several considerations for U.S. policy and regional strategy.

The RAND study builds on a similar, though less comprehensive, study released by the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in 2013, entitled *The Emerging Asia Power Web: The Rise of Bilateral Intra-Asian Security Ties*. The CNAS study examines the growth of security ties among six Indo-Pacific states: Australia, India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam. Similar to the RAND study, the approach is largely qualitative, focusing on identifying forms of defense cooperation between the assessed countries, including high-level defense official visits, defense agreements, joint operations and exercises, foreign military assistance, and arms sales. Based largely on expert interviews, the authors identify these countries' growing regional security cooperation efforts as primarily a response to uncertainties surrounding the rise of China and the future role of the U.S. in the region. The study also highlights the rise of non-traditional security challenges and the desire of some states to play a larger role in regional and global affairs as an important contributor to increased security cooperation. The authors conclude by offering several policy recommendations for U.S. policymakers and military leaders.

The findings of this dissertation complement the RAND and CNAS studies, as well as other studies focused on Indo-Pacific security. This dissertation also advances our understanding of Indo-Pacific security dynamics in several important ways. In particular, this dissertation's incorporation of quantitative and network methods sheds light on factors influencing the formation of security institutions across the region as a whole, and identifies variation in security institution formation at the regional-level. Moving beyond a focus on a single state or smaller subset of states also allows for the development of a broader theoretical framework that explains

the differences in the proliferation of security institutions across the region and the variance in their proliferation between different states.

In my adoption of quantitative methods, I also recognize the potential shortcomings of their application to the topics explored in this dissertation. As previously described, not all DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, or regularized combined military exercises are alike. The scale and scope of security cooperation that takes places within these agreements varies not only from dyad to dyad, but also from year to year. In this way, these institutions are not unlike alliances, which have received extensive quantitative treatment in the security literature.²⁵

Alliances vary from highly active partnerships with firm defense pledges, such as the U.S.-Japan alliance and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to alliances which lie dormant and are subject to uncertainty about their continued relevance, such as China's alliance with North Korea. Quantitative methods tend to treat all occurrences of an event or phenomenon as equal, which is not fully accurate in comparing the extent of security cooperation between states who share one of these forms of security agreements. However, the intent of the quantitatively-derived findings in this dissertation is not to demonstrate which states share the closest security ties, or which states are balancing against or bandwagoning with China, but to demonstrate the growing prominence of these forms of security institutions, and identify which states and dyads are most likely to form them. What is lost in explaining individual agreements and a specific

²⁵ For example, J. David Singer and Melvin Small, "Formal Alliances, 1815-1939: A Quantitative Description," *Journal of Peace Research* 3, no. 1 (1966): 1-32; Brett Leeds et al., "Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944," *International Interactions* 28, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 237-260; Michael W. Simon and Erik Gartzke, "Political System Similarity And The Choice of Allies: Do Democracies Flock Together, or Do Opposites Attract?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 4 (December 1, 1996): 617-635; Skyler J. Cranmer, Bruce A. Desmarais, and Justin H. Kirkland, "Toward a Network Theory of Alliance Formation," *International Interactions* 38, no. 3 (July 1, 2012): 295-324; Anessa L. Kimball, "Political Survival, Policy Distribution, and Alliance Formation," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 4 (July 1, 2010): 407-419.

bilateral security relationship is gained in considering the totality of security institutions that have proliferated in recent years.

As described above and as will be further explained in this dissertation, these forms of security institutions are in many cases significant arrangements that involve a considerable investment of state resources for their implementation and continuation. Yet even at their most basic level, the existence of these forms of security institutions between a dyad signals the significance that both states place in the bilateral security relationship and a desire to strengthen security cooperation. These institutions also provide a framework for the development of further, more extensive cooperation, and can lead to closer security ties overtime. Moreover, by incorporating each of these forms of security institutions—DCAs, defense dialogues, and combined military exercises—rather than just one, I increase the validity of the study’s findings by capturing a more complete picture of growing security cooperation among middle states. I view the datasets of these different forms of security institutions as complementary, with each providing information concerning a different aspect of the evolving regional security cooperation network. States may form one of these cooperative arrangements with another state, or may form all three. An annual bilateral defense dialogue and combined military exercise may be part of a DCA, or may be separate agreements formed between states as their defense relationship progresses. Alternatively, a regular bilateral defense dialogue or a limited combined military exercise may lead to the signing of an extensive DCA that seeks to broaden a dyad's defense relationship. Each of these forms of security institutions shed light on a slightly different aspect of growing security cooperation among states in the Indo-Pacific, highlighting that in some cases the networks overlap, and in some cases are distinct. Despite these differences, however, the

underlying theme of growing security cooperation among middle states shines through in each network.

While quantitative methods on their own are inadequate to analyze evolving security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific, they certainly have a part in explaining regional security. By incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods, I aim to expand our understanding of regional security dynamics in this critical region and complement the existing largely qualitative literature.

1.2 Conclusion

In this dissertation, I challenge several traditional lenses and assumptions common to the field of International Relations. First, by focusing on the strategies and preferences of middle states, I reverse the literature's traditional focus on major powers. For example, in outlining his theory of international politics, Waltz states "a general theory of international politics is necessarily based on the great powers" as "the units of greatest capability set the scene of action for others as well as themselves."²⁶ Following Waltz's lead, theories of international relations tend to pay scant attention to interstate interactions that don't directly involve the great powers.²⁷ Yet as seen in the proliferation of security institutions among middle states in the Indo-Pacific, the security relations of the great powers only tell half the story. Understanding how middle states interact among themselves offers a much richer understanding of how states respond to intensifying great power rivalry. These interactions have important implications for the security and autonomy of middle states. They also have important implications for the emerging regional

²⁶ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 73.

²⁷ Christine Ingebritsen, Iver Neumann, Sieglinde Gstöhl, and Jessica Beyer, eds, *Small States in International Relations* (University of Washington Press, 2006).

security order and the policies and strategies of the great powers. As stated by Keohane, “if Lilliputians can tie up Gulliver, or make him do their fighting for them, they must be studied as carefully as the giant.”²⁸

Second, I show the prevalence of security cooperation, even in a region that is home to several prominent conflicts and active territorial disputes. Due to the security dilemma, the prospects for cooperation in security affairs is traditionally assumed to be “impoverished.”²⁹ However, the regularity with which states are signing DCAs, establishing senior defense dialogues, and conducting combined military exercises demonstrates that security cooperation is indeed possible, and even desirable for middle states who derive substantial benefits from these arrangements. Lastly, I show that the literature’s traditional focus on alliances is inadequate to understand the current nature of great power rivalry and the strategies of middle states. More limited forms of security institutions are important elements of Washington’s and Beijing’s national security strategies, and both states are investing considerable resources into forming these institutions with middle states. These institutions are also important features of middle states’ strategies to respond to intensifying great power rivalry, and middle states derive significant benefits from these institutions. Alliances will certainly continue to play an important role in evolving U.S.-China rivalry, but seeking to understand the nature of the evolving rivalry without considering other forms of security institutions will result in an incomplete understanding of the conflict.

²⁸ Robert O. Keohane, “Lilliputians’ Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics,” *International Organization* 23, no. 2 (1969): 291–310.

²⁹ Charles Lipson, “International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs,” *World Politics* 37, no. 1 (1984): 1–23; John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 5–49.

As the middle state strategy of diversification strengthens the security and autonomy of middle states and increases the complexity of the regional security network, there are important implications for U.S. policy. I describe these implications in depth in Chapter Six, but highlight several implications here. First, U.S. officials have long proclaimed the U.S. as the region's "preferred security partner," but this position is increasingly being challenged not only by China, but also Australia, India, Japan, and Indonesia, among others.³⁰ While growing middle state security cooperation with China and other states has the potential to reduce U.S. opportunities for influence, increasing security cooperation among middle states largely works to the benefit of the U.S. and aligns with its long-term national interests. As security cooperation among middle states increases, close U.S. allies Australia, Japan, and South Korea are becoming increasingly central in the regional security network. The preferences of these states largely align with those of the U.S., and their increasing influence reinforces a regional order friendly to U.S. interests. Additionally, even limited middle state security cooperation with China can have positive benefits for regional development and stability, and the U.S. should welcome China's contributions to advance middle state's military modernization. Lastly, while statesmen and senior military leaders may see defense cooperation with middle states as "paying it forward," DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises offer no guarantees of airfield or port access, troop commitments, or logistic support in a future contingency. Accordingly, U.S. military leaders and planners should evaluate their expectations

³⁰ R. Clarke Cooper, U.S. Department of State FPC Briefing, "America as the Security Partner of Choice: Highlights of 2019 and a Look Ahead to 2020" (January 15, 2020), <https://www.state.gov/america-as-the-security-partner-of-choice-highlights-of-2019-and-a-look-ahead-to-2020/>; R. Clarke Cooper, U.S. Department of State, "America as the Partner of Choice" (October 31, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/america-as-the-partner-of-choice/>; U.S. Department of Defense, "Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region," (Washington, D.C., June 1, 2019); Charles Hooper, "Defense Security Cooperation Agency Chief on the Value of Partnerships," *Defense News*, December 2, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/outlook/2019/12/02/defense-security-cooperation-agency-chief-on-the-value-of-partnerships/>.

concerning the degree of support they expect to receive from Indo-Pacific states in the event great power competition turns to conflict. As U.S. military leaders and policy makers design policies and strategies focused on long-term competition with China, they must also account for how the diversification strategies of middle states are shaping the regional security order and impacting U.S. regional interests.

This dissertation's organization proceeds as follows. In Chapter Two, I develop a theory of diversification that describes how middle states strengthen security cooperation among themselves to increase their security and preserve their autonomy under the shadow of great power rivalry. I show the central role DCAs, defense dialogues, and combined military exercises play in the diversification strategies of middle states, and derive hypotheses concerning which types of states will be more likely to diversify, and with whom they will be more likely to form a security partnership. In Chapter Three, I give context to my theory by describing the current dynamics of U.S.-China competition in the Indo-Pacific, and demonstrate the prominence of diversification as middle states respond to intensifying U.S.-China rivalry. Using network analysis, I show that states in the region are not just hedging by pursuing security cooperation with both the U.S. and China, but are diversifying through strengthening security ties among themselves. In Chapter Four, I empirically test the theoretical hypotheses developed in Chapter Two, showing which types of middle states are more likely to diversify, and with whom they are more likely to form a security partnership. In Chapter Five, I conduct a detailed case study of the Philippines to demonstrate the factors driving diversification at the state level. I contrast the limited diversification behavior of the Aquino administration, who held a firm commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance, to the extensive diversification behavior of the Duterte administration, who holds a weak commitment to the alliance. In Chapter Six, I conclude with a

discussion on the implications to U.S. policy and strategy of increasing regional security network complexity and middle state diversification, as well as their implications for the future regional security order.

CHAPTER 2. MIDDLE STATES AND DIVERSIFICATION

When confronted with intensifying great power rivalry, traditional theories of International Relations present middle states with a stark choice: align with the rising power or side with the established status quo power. Scholars refer to these two strategies as bandwagoning and balancing. More recently and largely motivated by Asian states' responses to the rise of China, scholars have also developed the concept of hedging, which is often cast as an alternative to the conventional strategies of balancing and bandwagoning. Rather than align with one great power against the other, hedging is often viewed as a middle position between balancing and bandwagoning that seeks to pursue engagement with both rival powers to preserve options for future alignment. In this chapter, I provide a brief review of the balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging literature. In outlining these theories, I highlight their conventional focus on a middle state's relations with the competing great powers. I describe how this limited view of how a middle state responds to great power rivalry overlooks the manifold relations middle states form among themselves as they seek to navigate a highly uncertain environment marked by shifting balances of power.

To address this gap in the literature, I introduce a theory of how middle states interact among themselves under the shadow of great power rivalry. Rather than just balance against or bandwagon with one of the dueling great powers, or seek to maintain positive relations with both through hedging, middle states also seek to strengthen relations among themselves. In strengthening security relations with each other, middle states reduce their dependence on a single source for support in strengthening their military capabilities, reduce their vulnerability to coercion, increase the number of partners they are able to call on to meet security challenges, and expand their sources of diplomatic support. Each of these outcomes strengthens the security and

autonomy of a middle state in the face of competition among great powers who seek to exert their influence. I refer to this as *diversification*, which I define as increasing the quantity and quality of a state's security partnerships to reduce the risk of overdependence on a single partner. While diversification can be pursued across the economic, diplomatic, and security spheres, I focus on diversification in the security sphere to align with the original conceptions of balancing and bandwagoning.

In the proceeding chapter, I begin by briefly reviewing the extensive literature on balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging. Rather than providing an exhaustive review of each of these theories, I focus on the conventional emphasis each of these theories place on a middle state's relations with the competing great powers. I then introduce the concept of diversification, and explain how middle states seek to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy under conditions of great power rivalry through partnering with other middle states. I describe that while alliances are the preferred security institutions of balancing and bandwagoning states, the alignment obligations of alliances are too constraining for diversifying states who seek to preserve their autonomy and limit their security dependence on a single power. I then describe the recent emergence of more "anarchic" forms of security institutions, such as defense cooperation agreements (DCA), institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises. The institutional design characteristics of these arrangements make them optimal forms of security institutions for diversifying and hedging states who seek to strengthen their security while preserving their autonomy.

I then derive several hypotheses concerning which states are more likely to diversify, and which pairs of states are more likely to form security partnerships as they seek to diversify. In brief, I anticipate that states who face a significant security threat from the rising power or who

have a weak commitment to alliance will be more likely to diversify. I also anticipate a states' ability to diversify is conditioned on its attractiveness as a security partner, and the militarily stronger and more economically developed the state, the more likely it is to pursue a diversification strategy. As states diversify, I hypothesize that middle states who have similar foreign policy preferences or who are close economic partners will be more likely to form a security partnership than dyads who do not share these characteristics. I also anticipate that states who face a common adversary or who share common security partners will be more likely to form a security partnership. I close by explaining how understanding the manifold relations middle states form among themselves can broaden our knowledge of how middle states respond to intensifying great power rivalry. Through this understanding, we can gain greater insight into the future trajectory of U.S.-China great power competition, and how this competition will affect the middle states who sit between the two dueling great powers.

2.1 Middle States and Theories of Alignment

2.1.1 Balancing

According to balance of power theory, states benefit from a relatively equal distribution of power in the international system. As the rise of a dominant power poses a threat to the security of less powerful states, states will join together—especially with other major powers—to balance against the more powerful state.¹ Scholars refer to this as balancing, or aligning with the weaker against the more powerful.² The traditional example of balancing is given by

¹ Hans J. Morgenthau, Kenneth W. Thompson, and W. David Clinton, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006), 179-189; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126-128.

² Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 72-107.

Thucydides, who describes how during the Peloponnesian War the lesser city states of Greece joined forces with Sparta against the rising Athens.³ Waltz asserts that “secondary states, if they are free to choose, flock to the weaker side, for it is the stronger side that threatens them. On the weaker side they are both more appreciated and safer.”⁴

In *Origins of Alliances*, Walt offers a refinement of balance of power theory, asserting that rather than balance against power, states under most conditions balance against threat. Threats, he describes, are an aggregate function of power, geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions. In his survey of alliance formation in the Middle East during the mid-twentieth century, Walt finds states tend to balance rather than bandwagon.⁵

Walt’s finding, which supports Waltz’s theory, is grounded in the assumption that states prioritize security above all other interests. Waltz states: “In anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power...The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system.”⁶ In other words, balancing is the behavior of satisfied states who prefer the status-quo.

More precisely, the balancing literature defines aligning with the weaker side to counter the more powerful side as external balancing. Waltz defines external balancing as “moves to strengthen and enlarge one’s own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one,” which he contrasts with internal balancing, or “moves to increase economic capability, to increase military

³ Thucydides, Robert B. Strassler, and Richard Crawley, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 310-317.

⁴ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 127.

⁵ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

⁶ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126.

strength, to develop clever strategies.”⁷ In the balancing literature, external balancing almost exclusively takes the form of alliance formation.⁸ For example, Schweller defines external balancing as “the creation or aggregation of military power through...the forging of alliances to prevent or deter the territorial occupation or the political and military domination of the state by a foreign power or coalition.”⁹ Kang refers to external balancing as “forging countervailing military alliances with other states against the threat.”¹⁰ Brooks and Wohlforth also define external balancing in reference to alliances, defining the term as the aggregation of capabilities with other states through alliance formation.¹¹

In forging security alliances, the balancing literature almost exclusively focuses on major powers. In the balancing process, major powers align with or balance against each other to maintain a general equilibrium of power. Less powerful states may form alliances with a major power, but it is the major power who serves as the “nuclei” of counter-rising power alliances.¹² As major powers possess the economic capacity and military strength needed to counter the capabilities of a rising power, it is the major powers who carry the necessary weight to shift the scale of power in the desired direction. It is for this reason that Brooks and Wohlforth declare “the core axiom of balance of power theory—the most influential in the realist canon—is that

⁷ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 168-188. Waltz views internal balancing as more “reliable and precise” than external balancing as it reduces uncertainty concerning the strength and commitment of alliances.

⁸ Ross, “Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China”; James D. Morrow, “Arms versus Allies: Trade-Offs in the Search for Security,” *International Organization* 47, no. 2 (1993): 207–233.

⁹ Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9

¹⁰ David C Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 51.

¹¹ Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, “Hard Times for Soft Balancing,” *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 76

¹² Inis L. Claude, “The Common Defense and Great-Power Responsibilities,” *Political Science Quarterly* 101, no. 5 (1986): 725.

great powers will develop and mobilize military capabilities sufficient to constrain the most powerful among them” (emphasis added).¹³ Though weaker states may enter a coalition alongside other less powerful states, the coalition is ultimately anchored by a great power.

2.1.2 Bandwagoning

In contrast to balancing, bandwagoning refers to joining forces with the stronger side.¹⁴ States may seek alignment with the stronger side to secure a patron who can ensure their security or to secure favorable treatment and a share of the spoils of conflict should one’s patron emerge victorious.¹⁵ Italy joining forces with Germany in WWII is a commonly cited example of bandwagoning. In contrast to Waltz, Walt argues that weak states are more likely to bandwagon than strong states for two reasons: weak states “are more vulnerable to pressure” and “can do little to determine their own fates.”¹⁶

Whereas balancing and bandwagoning are often positioned as opposite positions motivated by the same goal, Schweller asserts the two strategies are often motivated by very different reasons. Rather than security as a state’s primary interest, as assumed by Walt and Waltz, Schweller adopts the classical realist assumption that some states also seek to expand their power.¹⁷ Whereas balancing states seek to “maintain their positions in the system” and to preserve the status quo, bandwagoning states seek to expand their territory, increase their power,

¹³ Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 22.

¹⁴ In *Origin of Alliances*, Walt defines bandwagoning as “aligning with the source of danger” (p. 17). Schweller discounts this definition as too narrow in scope, which restricts cases of bandwagoning only to situations where a state faces a grave threat to its security. See: Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit.”

¹⁵ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126; Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit.”

¹⁶ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 173.

¹⁷ Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), 95-96.

and alter the status quo in their favor.¹⁸ By not incorporating the assumption that some states seek more than just security, Schweller argues previous scholars systematically “stack the deck in favor of disproportionately finding balancing over bandwagoning behavior.”¹⁹ Formal analysis of a state’s choice between bandwagoning and balancing also weighs in favor of bandwagoning. Though aligning with the stronger state reduces the bargaining position of the weaker state relative to its coalition partner, aligning with the stronger state increases its probability of being on the winning side, thus increasing its chances of there being any spoils of victory to bargain over.²⁰

By its nature, bandwagoning says little about a less powerful state’s relations with other less powerful states. Bandwagoning requires a relatively weaker state to align with a dominant power in order to secure its protection or a share in the potential spoils of victory. Similar to balancing, less powerful states may form part of a larger coalition of bandwagoning states, but each of these bandwagoning states ride on the coattails of the dominant power. As with balancing, alliances are the preferred security institution of bandwagoning states. Only through formally stating one’s commitment to stand by its powerful patron in conflict does a less powerful state clearly manifest its allegiance and secure the security and economic benefits that accompany bandwagoning.

The relative frequency with which states balance or bandwagon is a topic long debated in the literature.²¹ Yet regardless of whether a state chooses to bandwagon or balance, its strategy is

¹⁸ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126.

¹⁹ Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit”, 79.

²⁰ Robert Powell, “Bargaining Theory and International Conflict,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, no. 1 (2002): 1–30.

²¹ For example, see Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit”; Randall L. Schweller, “New Realist Research on Alliances: Refining, Not Refuting, Waltz’s Balancing Proposition,” *The American Political Science Review*, no. 4 (1997): 927–930; Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*; Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, “Chain Gangs and Passed

fundamentally a decision to align with one of the competing great powers in an emerging conflict. Neither of these theories provide significant insight into the relations between middle states as they seek to respond to emerging great power conflict. Yet such neglect is deliberate. In conventional balance of power theory, the actions of non-major powers are downplayed as either insignificant or superfluous to a parsimonious theory of international politics. As described by Waltz, since the actions of less powerful states are primarily shaped by the actions of powerful states, “a general theory of international politics is necessarily based on the great powers.”²² See Figure 2.1 for a simplified network depiction of balancing and bandwagoning.

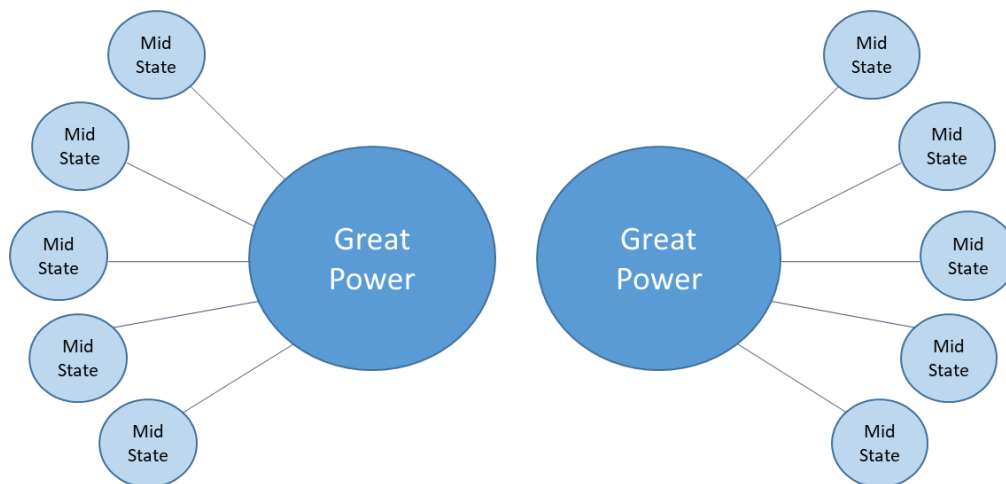


Figure 2.1: Balancing and Bandwagoning

Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity,” *International Organization* 44, no. 2 (1990): 137–168; Adam P. Liff, “Whither the Balancers? The Case for a Methodological Reset,” *Security Studies* 25, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 420–459; David C. Kang, “Hierarchy in Asian International Relations: 1300-1900,” *Asian Security* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 53–79; Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, “Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally against the Leading Global Power?,” *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 7–43; Steven R. David, “Explaining Third World Alignment,” *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (1991): 233–256; Stephen Van Evera, “The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War,” *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984): 58–107.

²² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 73.

2.1.3 Hedging

As an alternative to balancing and bandwagoning, scholars in recent years have proposed the concept of hedging. In finance, hedging refers to a risk management strategy that seeks to offset portfolio risk by taking opposite positions in related assets.²³ In International Relations, hedging is often portrayed as a middle position between balancing and bandwagoning along a continuum of alignment.²⁴ As a middle state strategy, hedging states pursue engagement with both competing great powers while avoiding close alignment with either, seeking to maximize gains while preserving options for future alignment.²⁵ See Figure 2.2 for a simplified network depiction of hedging.

²³ Barry Brindley, ed., *A Dictionary of Finance and Banking*, 4th ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²⁴ Lim and Cooper conceptualize hedging as a costly security strategy involving a trade-off between alignment and autonomy. Balancing and bandwagoning are opposite each other along a continuum of alignment that signals low degree of ambiguity. Hedging falls between balancing and bandwagoning, but is separated from these concepts by its high degree of ambiguity. See: Darren J. Lim and Zack Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia," *Security Studies* 24, no. 4 (2015): 696–727; See also Cheng-Chwee Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore's Response to a Rising China," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (2008): 159–185; Cheng-Chwee Kuik and G. Rozman, "Light or Heavy Hedging: Positioning Between China and the United States," Washington, DC: *Korea Economic Institute of America* (2016); John D. Ciorciari and Jürgen Haacke "Hedging in International Relations: An Introduction." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* vol. 19 (2019): 367–374; Cheng-Chwee Kuik, "How Do Weaker States Hedge? Unpacking ASEAN States' Alignment Behavior towards China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 100 (July 3, 2016): 500–514; Evelyn Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies* (East-West Center, 2005).

²⁵ Adam P Liff, "Unambivalent Alignment: Japan's China Strategy, the U.S. Alliance, and the 'Hedging' Fallacy," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19, no. 3 (2019): 453–491.

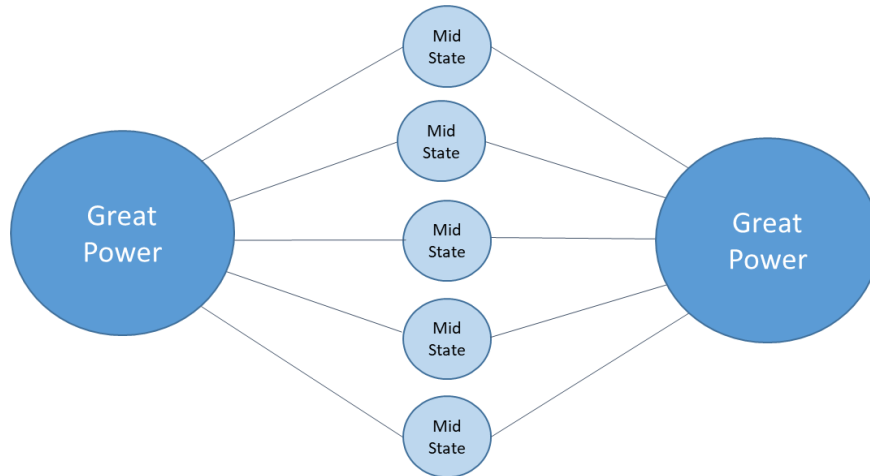


Figure 2.2: Hedging

Largely in reaction to states' responses to the rise of China, the concept of hedging gained prominence in the International Relations literature in the early 2000s. Since its inception, the concept of hedging has been used rather loosely to describe the range of state behaviors that seek to manage risk in a highly uncertain environment. Goh defines hedging in terms of alignment avoidance, characterizing hedging as “a set of strategies aimed at avoiding (or planning for contingencies in) a situation in which states cannot decide upon more straightforward alternatives such as balancing, bandwagoning, or neutrality.”²⁶ Kuik identifies hedging as the deliberate pursuit of counteracting policy positions, namely return maximizing and risk contingency measures. He defines hedging as “a behavior in which an actor tries to mitigate risks by pursuing multiple policy options, which would produce mutually counteracting effects, under the situation of high-uncertainties and high-stakes.”²⁷ Other scholars have used the term to describe a state's adoption of a mixed strategy of economic and diplomatic engagement with a rising power while pursuing more traditional balancing measures in their security policy.²⁸

²⁶ Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge*.

²⁷ Cheng-Chwee Kuik, “The Essence of Hedging.”

²⁸ For example, see Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-pacific Stability,” *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (December 1, 2005): 145–167; Kuik, Cheng-Chwee, “The Essence of Hedging.” Ø

In contrast, other scholars argue for a more narrow conceptualization of hedging, contending hedging should focus on a state's security policies and "should not include costless activities that do not require states to face trade-offs in their security choices."²⁹ As a result of the term's broad use, scholars often draw competing findings regarding which states could be classified as hedging, including those studies which adopt a similar conceptualization of the term.³⁰ As decried by Lim and Cooper, depending on which definition of hedging scholars adopt, "all states in East Asia (with the exception of North Korea) are hedging."³¹

This expansive use of the term has led several scholars to raise concerns of concept stretching and propose refined frameworks to conceptualize hedging.³² This includes efforts to more clearly distinguish hedging from traditional strategies of nonalignment and balancing. Similar to hedging, nonalignment seeks to preserve autonomy by maintaining neutrality between competing powers. However, whereas nonalignment tends to shun any form of cooperation with a great power that could be perceived as alignment, hedging involves the active pursuit of mutually counteracting actions and lesser forms of alignment with both competing great powers.³³

Tunnsjø, "U.S.-China Relations: From Unipolar Hedging to Bipolar Balancing", in R.S. Ross and Ø., Tunnsjø (eds), *Strategic Adjustment and The Rise of China: Power and Politics in East Asia*, pp. 41–68. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017.

²⁹ Darren J. Lim and Zack Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia," *Security Studies* 24, no. 4 (2015): 696–97.

³⁰ Jürgen Haacke, "The Concept of Hedging and Its Application to Southeast Asia: A Critique and a Proposal for a Modified Conceptual and Methodological Framework," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 375–417.

³¹ Lim and Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging": 697.

³² See Haacke, "The Concept of Hedging and Its Application to Southeast Asia"; Liff, "Unambivalent Alignment: Japan's China Strategy, the U.S. Alliance, and the 'Hedging' Fallacy"; Alexander Korolev, "Shrinking Room for Hedging: System-Unit Dynamics and Behavior of Smaller Powers," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 419–452; Lim and Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging."

³³ Kuik, "How Do Weaker States Hedge? Unpacking ASEAN States' Alignment Behavior towards China"; Kuik and Rozman, "Light or Heavy Hedging."

Distinguishing hedging from balancing has proven more challenging. This is in part due to the common view of hedging as a mixed strategy of balancing and engagement, with some scholars using terms such as ‘indirect balancing’ or ‘soft balancing’ to describe the behavior of hedging states to manage the security risks posed by a rising power.³⁴ Several scholars have proposed that while balancing implies efforts to explicitly counter a clearly identified security threat, hedging involves security measures designed to guard against security risks that have not yet materialized into a clear threat.³⁵ While the theoretical distinction is useful, the line between security threats and security risks is often unclear. Moreover, political leaders are often cautious to publicly identify another state as a threat in fear of extinguishing any remaining peaceful or beneficial aspects of the bilateral relationship. Publicly identifying another state as a threat also risks provoking aggressive actions or inciting an arms race.³⁶ For this reason, some view hedging as a more useful concept for analyzing state decision making prior to the outbreak of conflict, whereas balancing and bandwagoning are more useful for analyzing decisions during wartime. Korolev argues the viability of hedging is dependent on the intensity of system-level competition among great powers. As competition intensifies, the space for hedging shrinks, forcing less powerful states to pursue the less ambiguous strategies of balancing and bandwagoning.³⁷

³⁴ Kuik, “The Essence of Hedging”; Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge*; Evelyn Goh, “Hierarchy and the Role of the United States in the East Asian Security Order,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 8, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 353–377.

³⁵ Korolev, “Shrinking Room for Hedging: System-Unit Dynamics and Behavior of Smaller Powers”; Haacke, “The Concept of Hedging and Its Application to Southeast Asia”; Denny Roy, “Southeast Asia and China: Balancing or Bandwagoning?” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 2 (2005): 305–322; John D. Ciorciari, “The Variable Effectiveness of Hedging Strategies,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 523–555.

³⁶ Robert F. Trager, “Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Communication Matters,” *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 2 (May 2010): 347–368.

³⁷ Korolev, “Shrinking Room for Hedging: System-Unit Dynamics and Behavior of Smaller Powers.”

Despite the contested nature of the term's conceptualization, at its core, hedging involves a tradeoff between the benefits of alignment and the loss of autonomy. Hedging states forgo the security and material benefits that accompany close alignment with a powerful partner, such as extended deterrence, capability aggregation, and reduced military spending, in order to maximize autonomy and freedom of action. However, alignment can also be costly.³⁸ Effective alignment requires partner states to sacrifice a degree of autonomy to coordinate policies and strategies, which may necessitate concessions and adoption of non-ideal policies by one or both partners.³⁹ Under the shadow of great power rivalry, alignment also sacrifices the benefits that may have been gained by maintaining positive relations with the other great power. Aligning with one side is likely to draw the ire of the other, who may now pose a greater threat to one's security than it would had the state remained neutral. For example, South Korea's 2016 decision to host U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile batteries was severely criticized by China who viewed the batteries as weakening its own nuclear deterrence. In response, China pursued a comprehensive coercive campaign against South Korea across economic, diplomatic, cultural, and cyber fields to pressure Seoul to reverse its decision.⁴⁰ Middle states thus face an alignment dilemma—align and increase one's security at the expense of autonomy, or delay or avoid alignment to preserve one's autonomy while foregoing the benefits of alignment.

³⁸ Darren J. Lim and Rohan Mukherjee, "Hedging in South Asia: Balancing Economic and Security Interests amid Sino-Indian Competition," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 493–522; Lim and Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging."

³⁹ James D. Morrow, "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?" *Annual Review of Pol. Science* 3 (2000): 63–83; Michael F. Altfeld, "The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test," *Western Political Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1984): 523–544; James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (1991): 904–933.

⁴⁰ Ethan Meick and Nargiza Salidjanova, "China's Response to U.S.-South Korean Missile Defense System Deployment and its Implications," *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission: Staff Research Report*, (July 26, 2017).

The alignment dilemma at the heart of hedging leads to the predominant conceptualization of hedging that focuses almost exclusively on a middle state's relations vis-à-vis the competing great powers. Within this conceptualization, middle states' relations with other middle states are downplayed as scholars focus on comparing a state's interactions with one great power to its interactions with the other. I provide several examples from several of the most frequently cited articles on hedging to demonstrate. In the context of current U.S.-China competition in Asia, Lim and Cooper describe hedging most "typically" as referring to "engaging heavily with China on both economic and political levels while retaining or building security links with the United States to encourage its continued presence as a regional stabilizer."⁴¹ Goh characterizes hedging as avoiding alignment with either competing great power while pursuing positive engagement with both. She describes the two most common elements of Southeast Asian states' hedging strategies as "strong engagement with China, and facilitation of a continuing U.S. strategic presence in the region to act as a counterweight or balance against rising Chinese power."⁴² Similarly, Medeiros describes the behavior of most states in Asia as hedging in that they are "seeking positive relations both with Beijing and Washington."⁴³ Kuik's conceptualization of hedging also focuses on middle states' relations with the U.S. and China, stressing middle states' pursuit of counteracting policy positions directed towards the great powers as central to their hedging strategies.⁴⁴ Likewise, Jackson characterizes the hedging strategies of Southeast Asian states as the pursuit of "dual-track, proportionate

⁴¹ Lim and Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging", 724.

⁴² Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge*, viii.

⁴³ Medeiros, "Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability", 159.

⁴⁴ Kuik, "How Do Weaker States Hedge?"; Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging."

engagement” with the U.S. and China.⁴⁵ Roy also primarily conceives of hedging in terms of middle states’ relations with the competing great powers, identifying ““low-intensity balancing’ with the United States against China along with efforts to maintain a working relationship with Beijing” as the principal components of hedging.⁴⁶ As seen, the current literature most typically conceives of hedging as a triangular relationship between a middle state and the competing great powers.

To be sure, with such a broad and diverse conceptualization of hedging within the literature, some scholars have described the efforts of middle states to broaden relations with states other than the competing great powers as a manifestation of hedging. However, the focus of these scholars is primarily on a middle state’s relations with extra-regional major powers. For example, Roy describes attempts by ASEAN states to establish links with “large outside powers” such as India and Japan to serve as counterweights to Chinese influence as hedging.⁴⁷ Goh’s concept of “omni-enmeshment”, which she defines as the process by which a state engages another state to draw it into deep involvement in the region, also focuses on engagement with other major powers.⁴⁸ While some scholars do discuss the interactions of middle states with states other than the competing great powers within the context of hedging, these authors’ primary focus is on a middle state’s relations with the competing great powers, and shed little light on the myriad of security links middle states form among themselves as they respond to intensifying great power competition.

⁴⁵ Jackson, “Power, Trust, and Network Complexity: Three Logics of Hedging in Asian Security.”

⁴⁶ Roy, “Southeast Asia and China”, 306

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Evelyn Goh, “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies,” *International Security* 32, no. 3 (2007): 113–157; Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge*.

2.1.4 Diversification

As the preceding discussion makes clear, dominant conceptions of balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging each focus on a middle state's relations with the competing great powers. Yet they fail to address how middle states interact with each other in response to intensifying great power rivalry. To be sure, a middle state's interaction with the great powers has significant influence on its security and economic well-being. But focusing solely on a middle state's relations with the great powers overlooks an important aspect of how middle states respond to the increasing likelihood of conflict between great powers. Rather than align with one of the great powers through balancing or bandwagoning, or engaging both through hedging, middle states may also seek to strengthen relations among themselves to increase their security and preserve their autonomy. I refer to this strengthening of security ties with other middle states to reduce the risk of overdependence on a single partner as diversification.

As a financial investment strategy, diversification refers to a risk management strategy that seeks to reduce portfolio risk by investing in a variety of non-perfectly correlated assets.⁴⁹ As a middle state strategy, diversification involves increasing the quantity and quality of a state's security partnerships to reduce its reliance on a single partner. In expanding and strengthening their security relations, middle states increase their security and strengthen their autonomy. See Figure 2.3 for a simplified network depiction of diversification.

⁴⁹ Markowitz, "Portfolio Selection."

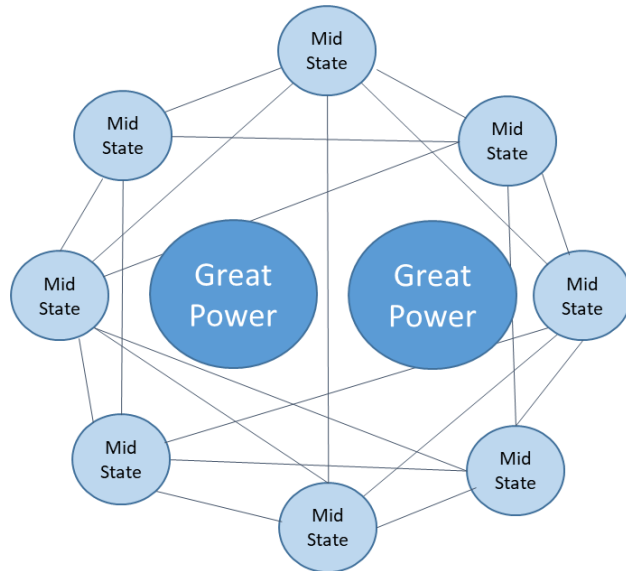


Figure 2.3: Diversification

Whereas balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging focus on a middle state's relations with the competing great powers, diversification focuses on a middle state's relations with other middle states. However, diversification is not necessarily mutually exclusive from either of these strategies. States who balance against a rising power by aligning with the status quo great power may also diversify by strengthening their ties with other states. States concerned of abandonment by their great power ally may be particularly likely to seek to bolster their security through cooperating with other partners. Diversification is particularly common among hedging states. As hedging states avoid close alignment with either competing great power, they seek to bolster their security through other means. In addition to internal balancing, they may also cooperate with other middle states to bolster security in ways that are independent from the competing great powers.

An illustrative example may be helpful in demonstrating how middle states seek to expand security ties with other middle states to strengthen their security and autonomy while reducing their reliance on a single partner. Singapore is often cast as the quintessential hedging

state in Southeast Asia.⁵⁰ Singapore's security ties with the U.S. are particularly close, and in 2005 the two countries signed the *Strategic Framework Agreement* which supports a myriad of regular cooperative security activities and provides the U.S. military broad access to Singaporean port and airfield facilities.⁵¹ In 2015, Singapore agreed to host four rotationally deployed U.S. Navy littoral combat ships at its Changi Naval Base. Singapore also sends over 1,000 Singapore Armed Forces members to the U.S. each year for advanced fighter aircraft and helicopter pilot training.⁵² At the same time, Singapore maintains close economic and diplomatic relations with China. China is Singapore's largest trading partner and was the first ASEAN state to establish direct commercial and trade relations with China in the 1960s.⁵³ In recent years, Singapore's relations with China have also expanded to the security sphere, and in 2019, the two countries signed an enhanced version of their 2008 *Agreement on Defense Exchanges and Security Cooperation* that establishes a regular ministerial-level defense dialogue, Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), mutual logistics support arrangement, and expands bilateral military exercises.⁵⁴

Yet Singapore's deepening relations with the U.S. and China are only one aspect of Singapore's response to intensifying U.S.-Sino rivalry. As Singapore has strengthened its

⁵⁰ Kuik, Cheng-Chwee, "The Essence of Hedging"; Lim and Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging."

⁵¹ Emma Chanlett-Avery, "Singapore: Background and U.S. Relations" *Congressional Research Service*, Report no. RS20490, July 26, 2013.

⁵² US State Department, "U.S. Security Cooperation With Singapore," <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-singapore/>.

⁵³ Chia Siow-Yue, "China's Economic Relations with ASEAN Countries" in Joyce Kallgren et al. eds., *ASEAN and China: An Evolving Relationship* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 189-214; Chin Kin Wah, "A New Phase in Singapore's Relations with China," in Joyce Kallgren et al. eds., *ASEAN and China: An Evolving Relationship* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 274-91; Organization of Economic Cooperation, "Singapore (SGP) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners," <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/sgp>.

⁵⁴ Singapore Ministry of Defense, "Fact Sheet: Enhanced Agreement on Defence Exchanges and Security Cooperation (ADESC)," October 20, 2019, https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2019/October/20oct19_fs.

security ties with both the U.S. and China, it has also actively sought to strengthen its ties with middle states throughout the region. Since 2000, Singapore has signed nearly two dozen DCAs with middle states in the Indo-Pacific, including Australia, Brunei, India, Japan, Indonesia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Vietnam. These include the signing of an enhanced DCA between Singapore and India in 2015 that further deepened bilateral defense cooperation, including the establishment of an annual Defense Ministers' Dialogue and the institutionalization of the *Singapore-India-Thailand Maritime Exercise*.⁵⁵ Security ties between Singapore and Australia have also deepened, including the signing of multiple DCAs which aim to expand joint training and exercises, intelligence sharing, and Singapore's access to military facilities and ranges in Australia.⁵⁶ Singapore's defense relations with Vietnam have also advanced, and in 2009 the two countries signed a broad agreement covering defense cooperation, which established an annual senior defense dialogue and regular bilateral HA/DR and counter-terrorism training. The two sides renewed the DCA in February 2022 and recommitted to expanding defense ties.⁵⁷ Whereas the traditional lenses of balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging offer valuable insight into Singapore's relations with the U.S. and China, they provide little understanding of Singapore's concerted efforts to expand and deepen security cooperation with other middle states throughout the Indo-Pacific.

⁵⁵ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Defense Dialogue Highlights Singapore-India Security Collaboration," <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/defense-dialogue-highlights-singapore-india-security-collaboration/>.

⁵⁶ Ian Chua and Aravindan Aradhana, "Singapore, Australia Expand Military Cooperation in \$1.7 Billion Deal," *Reuters*, May 6, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-singapore-military-idUSKCN0XW2FQ>; Prashanth Parameswaran, "Australia-Singapore Defense Relations in the Spotlight with New Military Training Agreement," *The Diplomat*, March 23, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/australia-singapore-defense-relations-in-the-spotlight-with-new-military-training-agreement/>.

⁵⁷ Singapore Ministry of Defense, "Fact Sheet: Singapore-Vietnam Defence Cooperation Agreement and Defence Relations," February 25, 2022, https://www.cmpb.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2022/February/25feb22_fs.

As a widely used term to describe the strategies of actors to manage risk, several scholars have proposed various theoretical concepts that share similarities with the concept of diversification I offer here. For example, Goh references “strategic diversification” in Southeast Asia as part of a process of ‘complex balancing’ that seeks to respond to growing U.S.-China competition.⁵⁸ In Goh’s framework, strategic diversification refers to actions by Southeast Asian states across the security, economic, and diplomatic spheres to increase the number of *extra-regional major powers* that have a stake in the region. Similarly, Suorsa and Thompson propose the term “omni-hedging” to describe “the diversification of states’ economic, diplomatic, and security relations with multiple regional stakeholders with the aim of achieving maximum strategic flexibility.” Like Goh, Suorsa and Thompson’s concept of omni-hedging primarily focuses on the efforts of Southeast Asian states to increase engagement with India, Japan and major European powers.⁵⁹ The concept of diversification I propose is distinct in that I focus not just on middle states’ efforts to increase security ties with extra-regional major powers, but also on the myriad of intra-regional security ties middle states form among themselves. Additionally, where these authors only provide a general description of their concept, I more fully develop the logic of diversification. I contrast diversification from traditional theories of alignment, explain how diversification strengthens the security and autonomy of middle states, identify which states are more likely to pursue diversification and with whom they are likely to diversify, and describe the security institutions through which states implement a diversification strategy.

⁵⁸ Goh, “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia.”

⁵⁹ Olli Suorsa and Mark R. Thompson, “Choosing Sides? Illiberalism and Hedging in the Philippines and Thailand,” *Panorama: Insights into Asian and European Affairs*, no. 02/2017 (2017): 63–76.

2.2 How Diversification Strengthens the Security and Autonomy of Middle States

I anchor my proposed theory of diversification in the assumption that as intensifying great power rivalry increases the likelihood of conflict and drives great powers to compete for the alignment of middle states, middle states seek to preserve their autonomy and increase security at the lowest possible cost. I assume costs can be both material costs, such as percentage of GDP allocated to defense, as well as costs to autonomy, such as those incurred through close alignment. The need to increase security is self-evident, as great power conflict is particularly threatening to the states who sit between the dueling great powers. As Belgium's experience in WWI can attest, weaker states often fall victim to the strategic and operational imperatives of the great powers. In WWI, Belgian neutrality succumbed to Germany's Schlieffen plan as Germany maneuvered to attack France. By increasing their security, middle states seek to prevent a similar fate.

Under the shadow of great power rivalry, middle states also seek to preserve their autonomy. Not only are middle states in danger of becoming the launching pad or battle ground of a great power war, but are also in danger of seeing their autonomy diminish as great powers seek to expand their influence. To gain a military advantage over their adversary, competing great powers often pursue security agreements with middle states. These agreements, including alliances, access agreements, and military aid packages, can lead to basing rights, rotational foreign military presence, and policy concessions that can infringe on the autonomy of middle states. Great power competition in the economic sphere can also diminish a middle state's autonomy, and states such as Sri Lanka and Djibouti have seen their autonomy shrink as a result of unsustainable debt incurred through China's Belt and Road Initiative.⁶⁰ Middle states may also

⁶⁰ In 2017, China secured a 99 year lease of Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka after Colombo failed to meet loan repayments to Chinese state-controlled lenders. Heavy indebtedness also appears to have played a role in China

see their autonomy decrease under a rising state's growing sphere of influence. Autonomy loss can put a middle state at greater risk of involvement in a future conflict, restrict its freedom of maneuver in responding to dynamic changes in the balance of power, and limit the ability of national leaders to pursue domestic priorities. Accordingly, in the shadow of intensifying great power rivalry, middle states seek to preserve their autonomy.

Considering Schweller's assumption that some states also seek to increase their power relative to status quo-leaning states, it is also necessary to consider the relation between revisionist states and diversification. I view diversification as a behavior of middle states to respond to the growing threat of conflict between competing great powers. Rather than seeking to expand their power, diversifying states are primarily concerned about preventing losses to their security and autonomy. As a bilateral, cooperative process repeated with multiple partners, strengthening security ties with other middle states through diversification is not very likely to expand one's power relative to other middle states. Revisionist states who seek to improve their position in the system are thus more likely to bandwagon with the stronger power than to seek relative gains through cooperating with other middle states.

As identified in the alignment dilemma, states face a tradeoff between autonomy and security in forming security agreements. While diversification does not eliminate this tradeoff, it does offer middle states an alternative path to manage this dilemma beyond the strategies of balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging. While diversification and security cooperation with other middle states may not provide the same security benefits of entering an alliance with a

gaining access to its first overseas military base in Djibouti in 2017. During Djibouti's negotiations with China in 2015 concerning port access, the ratio of Chinese debt to Djibouti GDP exceeded 113%. See Amy Cheng, "Will Djibouti Become Latest Country to Fall Into China's Debt Trap?" *Foreign Policy* (July 31, 2018); Kiran Stacey, "China Signs 99-Year Lease on Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port," *Financial Times*, December 11, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/e150ef0c-de37-11e7-a8a4-0a1e63a52f9c>.

great power, it can provide important security benefits without requiring significant sacrifices to autonomy. Diversification strengthens a middle state's security and preserves its autonomy in several important ways. I outline several of these ways below.

First, diversification reduces a middle state's dependence on a single partner for support in strengthening its military capabilities and modernizing its military. States who rely on one primary partner for military aid, training, intelligence, or weapons procurement are at risk of losing this support should the partner become unwilling or unable to continue to provide such support. For example, in 1999, the U.S. suspended military assistance and enacted an arms embargo against Indonesia in response to reported human rights violations committed by the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) in East Timor. The arms embargo and withdrawal of military assistance left Indonesia with few sources of military equipment and aid that were critical to ongoing military operations. Two decades later, senior Indonesian officials still describe U.S. military sanctions as "traumatic" and cite the embargo as continuing to drive Indonesian defense policy towards diversification, despite the resumption of U.S. military aid and weapons sales in 2005.⁶¹ In diversifying their dependence, middle states create alternate sources of military equipment (including advanced weaponry), combined training and exercises, innovative military doctrine, military aid, and intelligence. This advances a state's autonomy by mitigating dependence and expanding its space for maneuver while increase its military capabilities and overall national security.

Second, by reducing dependence on a single partner for security assistance, diversification reduces a middle state's vulnerability to coercion from a more powerful partner.

⁶¹ Scott W. Harold et al., *The Thickening Web of Asian Security Cooperation: Deepening Defense Ties Among U.S. Allies and Partners in the Indo-Pacific* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019).

Scholars have long noted that by broadening one's trading relations, states reduce their vulnerability to economic shocks and coercion from a powerful trading partner.⁶² Similarly, diversification in the security sphere makes states less beholden to a powerful partner and less vulnerable to coercive attempts by the partner to exploit dependencies in the relationship. Diversified security relations can also have autonomy-preserving effects beyond national defense. Kinne argues that due to their complex multilateral political commitments, states with many DCA partners are less vulnerable to asymmetric influences, including those enabled by bilateral loans.⁶³ Diversification of security relations preserves the autonomy of middle states not just by improving their military capabilities or increasing their number of defense partners, but by also making them less vulnerable to economic, political, and diplomatic coercion.

The recent attempt by former U.S. President Donald Trump to withhold military aid from Ukraine in exchange for personal political favors demonstrates one way powerful states attempt to leverage military assistance to coerce dependent states. In 2019, President Trump was accused of and eventually impeached for threatening to withhold \$400 million in military assistance from Ukraine in exchange for Ukraine's announcement of an investigation into corruption charges against the son of Trump's political rival, current U.S. President Joe Biden.⁶⁴ The U.S. shares an extensive defense relationship with Ukraine that is framed by several broad defense agreements, the most recent which was signed in 2016. Defense cooperation includes an annual senior level defense dialogue, co-hosting two annual multilateral military exercises, and the provision of over

⁶² Albert O. Hirschman, "Beyond Asymmetry: Critical Notes on Myself as a Young Man and on Some Other Old Friends," *International Organization* 32, no. 1 (1978): 45–50.

⁶³ Brandon J Kinne and Jonas B. Bunte, "Guns or Money? Defense Co-Operation and Bilateral Lending as Coevolving Networks," *British Journal of Political Science* (2018): 1–22.

⁶⁴ "Trump Impeachment: The Short, Medium and Long Story," *BBC News* (February 5, 2020), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49800181>.

\$1.6 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since 2014.⁶⁵ In withholding security assistance, Trump sought to leverage the extensive U.S. military relationship with Ukraine to coerce political concessions. Though Trump’s abuse of military assistance for personal political gain represents an extreme example for a democracy, the use of military aid to influence and coerce political outcomes for national purposes is far more common, if not accepted. The use of military aid to influence another state’s policies aligns with studies that show powerful states use foreign aid to buy voting compliance in the UN General Assembly.⁶⁶

Third, diversification increases the number of partners one is able to call on when faced with security challenges. Not only are diversified states less dependent on a single partner, but also have additional partners who can contribute to defending their national security interests. The benefits of greater numbers of security partners is captured in the traditional Vietnamese saying “One stick is easy to break, but many sticks are hard to break,” which Vietnamese government officials have used to motivate building defense ties with other states in response to assertive Chinese behavior in the SCS.⁶⁷ Strengthening security ties with neighboring states and regional partners can also be necessary to meet certain non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism and natural disasters. The transnational nature of these threats requires that states not only cooperate with major powers to manage these challenges, but also with proximate states.

⁶⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, “5 Things to Know About the U.S.-Ukraine Defense Relationship,” November 7, 2019, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2011746/5-things-to-know-about-the-us-ukraine-defense-relationship/>; Iain King, “Not Contributing Enough? A Summary of European Military and Development Assistance to Ukraine Since 2014,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (September 26, 2019), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/not-contributing-enough-summary-european-military-and-development-assistance-ukraine-2014>.

⁶⁶ Axel Dreher, Peter Nunnenkamp, and Rainer Thiele, “Does U.S. Aid Buy UN General Assembly Votes? A Disaggregated Analysis,” *Public Choice*, Vol. 136, No. 1/2 (2008): 139-164; Studies find that the effect of U.S. foreign aid on UN voting is most pronounced when aid is disaggregated into program aid and when aid recipients are relatively weak states with less access to private capital.

⁶⁷ Harold et al., *The Thickening Web of Asian Security Cooperation*.

Cooperation in non-traditional security areas can also facilitate cooperation in more traditional areas should another state threaten a partner's security. In partnering with other middle states, states directly address primary security threats while developing security ties that are independent of the great powers.

Lastly, strengthening security relations with other middle states can generate closer bilateral ties that may translate into greater diplomatic support during security crises. Close partner states may be able to help deescalate a conflict or support a sanctions regime against an aggressor state. Close ties with other states may also deter an adversary from taking aggressive actions that have the potential to escalate horizontally and involve other actors. Through cultivating greater diplomatic support and deterring aggressive behavior, diversification strengthens the security of middle states.

Though scholars have downplayed the significance of relations between less powerful states relative to their relations with the great powers, diversification has important implications on the ability of the great powers to exert influence over the alignment and policy decisions of middle states. Diversification strengthens the security and autonomy of middle states by reducing their dependence on a single source for support in strengthening military capabilities, reduces their vulnerability to coercion, increases the number of partners they are able to call on to meet security challenges, and expands their sources of diplomatic support. Though no single middle state partner may be able to replace the security assistance offered by a great power, ties with many smaller states can provide substantial security benefits in the aggregate. Moreover, matching the military power of a potential aggressor is often not required. In many situations, possessing a capable military response that can inflict significant costs, or generate a costly diplomatic response, may be sufficient to deter aggression.

2.3 Security Institutions of Diversifying States

While alliances are the preferred security institutions of balancing and bandwagoning states, the alignment obligations and wartime commitments of alliances make them too constraining for diversifying and hedging states who seek to preserve their autonomy. Security agreements can be powerful signals of alignment, and alliances, as described by Morrow, are “one of the strongest types of signals available in the panoply of foreign policy.”⁶⁸

For alliances to be effective, allied states must exchange costly signals of alignment. These signals may include military access agreements, the basing of allied troops, or foreign policy concessions. Failure to send these costly signals diminishes the credibility of the alliance and reduces the alliance’s deterrent value and associated security gains.⁶⁹ Yet alliance credibility often comes at the expense of autonomy and policy flexibility. For this reason, alliances are commonly conceptualized as a tradeoff between security and autonomy.⁷⁰ Gains in security are exchanged for sacrifices to autonomy and freedom of action. This is especially the case for the less powerful partner, as the more powerful ally tends to gain influence over the policy decisions of the less powerful ally in exchange for protection.⁷¹ In his farewell address of 1796,

⁶⁸ James D. Morrow, “Alliances: Why Write Them Down?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, no. 1 (June 1, 2000): 68.

⁶⁹ Using a game-theoretic model of alliance formation and war, Smith demonstrates that states “with unreliable alliances are more likely to be attacked than those with reliable alliances.” See: Alastair Smith, “Alliance Formation and War,” *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1995): 405–425. Morrow also uses a formal model to demonstrate the effect of alliance signals on an alliance’s deterrence value, finding that tighter alliances (as indicated by greater coordination and willingness to bear alliance costs in peacetime) produce stronger deterrence than loose alliances. James D. Morrow, “Alliances, Credibility, and Peacetime Costs,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38, no. 2 (1994): 270–297.

⁷⁰ See: Michael F. Altfeld, “The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test.” *Western Political Quarterly* 37 (1984):523-44; James D. Morrow, “On the Theoretical Basis of a Measure of National Risk Attitudes,” *International Studies Quarterly* 31 (1987): 423-38; James D. Morrow, “Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances.” *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (1991): 904-933; James D. Morrow, “Alliances: Why Write Them Down?”; David Vital, *The Inequality of States a Study of the Small Power in International Relations*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

⁷¹ Morrow, “Alliances and Asymmetry.”

Washington directly speaks the inherent danger of close alignment with a powerful state, urging the American people to take advantage of their “detached and distant” position in the world and avoid unnecessary attachments, entanglements, and alliances. In Washington’s words, “such an attachment of a small or weak towards a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.”⁷²

While the autonomy costs of alliances may be too costly for hedging and diversifying states who seek to preserve their autonomy, these states may still seek to form security agreements to realize the benefits of security cooperation, even if these security gains may be more limited than those derived from alliances. Rather than form alliances, diversifying and hedging states will seek to form security institutions that emphasize autonomy and flexibility. They will also prefer security institutions that limit alignment obligations and allow partners to form agreements with both competing great powers and other states. For diversifying and hedging states who seek to advance their security while preserving their autonomy, DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regular combined military exercises are optimal forms of security institutions. I discuss each of these mechanisms below.

2.3.1 Defense Cooperation Agreements

DCAs are formal agreements that establish “long-term institutional frameworks for routine bilateral defense relations,” including defense policy coordination, training, combined military exercises, exchanges, defense industry research and development, and weapons procurement.⁷³ Similar to alliances, DCAs are formal arrangements between states that specify

⁷² George Washington, “Farewell Address” (September 19, 1796), <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/>.

⁷³ Brandon J. Kinne, “The Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset (DCAD),” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64, no. 4 (April 2020): 729–55.

certain behavior and varying levels of military cooperation. Yet unlike alliances, DCAs lack formal wartime commitments. Whereas alliances are motivated by potential conflict and are designed to operate ‘in the shadow of war,’ DCAs are designed for cooperation ‘in the light of peace.’⁷⁴ As of 2010, nearly 2000 DCAs have been signed since the end of the Cold War and more individual pairs of countries, or dyads, are bound by DCAs than by alliances.⁷⁵

To illustrate the general characteristics of DCAs, I quote several excerpts from the DCA signed between Indonesia and Japan in 2015, entitled the *Memorandum between the Ministry of Defence of The Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Defense of Japan on Cooperation and Exchanges in the Field of Defence*.⁷⁶ A full text of the agreement is located in the Appendix.

Paragraph 1. Purpose: The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide a framework for promoting bilateral cooperation and exchanges based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit and full respect of sovereignty, and the respective countries' territorial integrity.

To start with, DCAs are formal bilateral agreements normally between the Ministries of Defense of each respective country and signed by respective Ministers of Defense. Second, as identified in the agreement's *Purpose*, DCAs are commonly framework agreements that establish broad commitments between parties while leaving more detailed procedures and targets to subsequent agreements and consultations.⁷⁷ As framework agreements, DCAs are often

⁷⁴ James D. Morrow, “Alliances: Why Write Them Down?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000): 63-83.

⁷⁵ Kinne, “Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network.”; Brandon J Kinne, “The Trump Administration Is Abandoning Military Partnerships,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 30, 2019.

⁷⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. “Memorandum between the Ministry of Defence of The Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Defense of Japan on Cooperation and Exchanges in the Field of Defence,” (2015), <https://treaty.kemlu.go.id/apisearch/pdf?filename=JPN-2015-0513.pdf>.

⁷⁷ Nele Matz-Lück, “Framework Agreements,” *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, vol. 4, 220–24 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

described as “legal umbrellas” for security cooperation.⁷⁸ In addition to framework agreements that seek to encompass the entirety of a dyad’s bilateral defense relations, as is the case in Indonesia’s and Japan’s 2015 DCA, DCAs may also focus on a single aspect of the defense relationship, such as intelligence sharing, joint arms development, or training and exercises. I follow the DCAD’s lead in referring to broad framework agreements as “general” DCAs, and more limited, sector-specific DCAs as “sector” DCAs.

Paragraph 1 also highlights the often highly symmetric contractual language of DCAs and the emphasis these agreements place on autonomy. The 2015 Indonesia-Japan DCA identifies the basis of bilateral defense cooperation as “equality”, “mutual benefit,” and “full respect of sovereignty and...territorial integrity.” Of all DCAs captured in the DCAD, only 3.5 percent are identified as definitively asymmetric. While this proportion rises to 8 percent if one only considers DCAs where at least one partner is a major power, the number is still relatively low compared to the frequency of asymmetry in alliances.⁷⁹ While different coding schemes make comparison difficult, the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions dataset classifies nearly 12 percent of all alliances as asymmetric in terms of reciprocity of alliance commitments, with over 20 percent of all alliances involving a major power classified as asymmetric.⁸⁰

Paragraph 2: Scope of Cooperation and Exchanges: The scope of cooperation and exchanges of this Memorandum will include:

1. Defence Ministerial Level Meetings.
2. Dialogue and consultation between the defence institutions, the Indonesian National Defence Forces (INDF) and the Japan Self Defense Forces (JSDF), and respective services through exchanges of High ranking and working level officials.
3. Cooperation between the Participants on capacity building.

⁷⁸ Kinne, “Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network.”

⁷⁹ Kinne, “The Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset.”

⁸⁰ Brett Ashley Leeds, Jeffrey M. Ritter, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, and Andrew G. Long, “Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944,” *International Interactions* 28 (2002): 237-260.

4. Exchange of information on defence institutions and matters, exchange and sharing of views and knowledge on mutual interests at various levels, particularly in the following areas:
 - a. Regional situation
 - b. Maritime security
 - c. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR)
 - d. Military medicine
 - e. Counter terrorism
 - f. Cyber defence
 - g. Regional frameworks such as ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and other multilateral defence dialogue or fora.
5. Cooperation on education and training through exchanges and visits of students, experts and researchers.
6. Promotion of cooperation between the INDF and JSDF.
7. Promotion of cooperation between the Participants in international peace cooperation activities, including cooperation between INDF Peacekeeping Center (PKC) and JSDF units and educational /research institutions, and international disaster relief activities.
8. Promotion of cooperation on defence equipment and technology including cooperation between defence industries of the two countries.
9. Promotion of cooperation on logistical support.
10. Other forms of cooperation and exchanges as may be mutually decided upon by the Participants.

Paragraph 2 of the agreement specifies the scope of cooperation covered by the DCA.

The 2015 Indonesia-Japan DCA is particularly broad, including activities such as regular defence ministerial level meetings, personnel and information exchanges, HA/DR and peace-keeping cooperation, defense industrial cooperation, and logistical support. As a framework agreement, specific cooperative events and activities are left to subsequent coordination and agreements.

Paragraph 8. Final Matters: This Memorandum will continue for a period of 5 (five) years and will automatically be extended for another 5 (five) years unless either ends it by giving written notification to the other Participant...

Lastly, DCAs are durable and tend to survive. Like the 2015 Indonesia-Japan DCA, it is common for DCAs to remain in effect for a five year period, and automatically renew unless either party abrogates the agreement. Though rare, DCAs are sometimes cancelled or fail to be

renewed. One example of a state abrogating a DCA is Indonesia's abrogation of its 1995 DCA with Australia in response to tensions arising from the East Timor crisis of 1999. Bilateral security relations between the two countries were not restored until 2006 with the signing of *The Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and Australia on the Framework for Security Cooperation*, or commonly referred to as the Lombok Treaty.

Though regular defense dialogues and combined military exercises may be specified as part of a general DCA, this is not always the case, and these mechanisms are often stand-alone agreements. The level of dialogue and scope and scale of exercises can also vary significantly among agreements. To highlight these differences and the importance of these distinct mechanisms, I distinguish between DCAs and institutionalized defense dialogues and combined military exercises.

2.3.2 Institutionalized Defense Dialogues

States may also seek to institutionalize their security relations by establishing regular bilateral defense dialogues. Defense dialogues are exchanges between states' armed forces and ministries of defense to facilitate policy coordination, information sharing, exercise and training coordination, and other areas important to bilateral security relations. Dialogues can take place at the senior level between ministers (vice ministers) of defense or chiefs (vice chiefs) of national armed forces, or can take place at the working group level between less senior officials. For instance, in 2017, Cambodia and the Philippines formally agreed to establish the bilateral Joint Defense Cooperation Committee Meeting. The inaugural meeting was held in Phnom Penh in March 2019 and attended by the Philippine Defense Undersecretary and the Cambodian Defense Ministry Secretary of State. During the meeting, the two sides discussed current and future

defense cooperation activities and regional security challenges, including cybersecurity, counterterrorism and violent extremism, and peacekeeping.⁸¹

The institutionalization of a defense dialogue through its regularization on an annual or biannual basis signals a greater commitment to a defense relationship and a greater expectation of mutual gains than do irregular, ad-hoc official visits. Raising the level of the dialogue to a more senior level sends a similar signal. Due to the significant commitment of resources required to coordinate and execute senior leader meetings and the opportunity costs involved in a senior leader's absence from normal duties, scholars have used high-level meetings and international travel as a measurement of the importance states place on a bilateral relationship.⁸² Senior defense dialogues are no exception, and reflect the axiom that "the scarcest resource in government is high-level attention."⁸³

2.3.3 Institutionalized Combined Military Exercises

Establishing regular combined military exercises is another way states institutionalize their security relations.⁸⁴ For example, in 2019, the Royal Australian Air Force and Japan Air

⁸¹ Prashanth Parameswaran, "What's in the New Philippines-Cambodia Defense Meeting?" *The Diplomat* (March 27, 2019), <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/whats-in-the-new-philippines-cambodia-defense-meeting/>.

⁸² For example, see Scott L. Kastner and Phillip C. Saunders, "Is China a Status Quo or Revisionist State? Leadership Travel as an Empirical Indicator of Foreign Policy Priorities," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2012): 163–177.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ In line with U.S. military doctrine, I use the term "combined military exercises" to refer to bilateral and multilateral military exercises. Previous scholarly work has referred to such exercises as "joint military exercises." In U.S. military doctrine, "joint" refers to military exercises and operations conducted across service branches within one country (i.e., joint naval-air force operations), while "combined" refers to exercises and operations with other countries. See U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 2021), 40; Vito D'Orazio, "War Games: North Korea's Reaction to U.S. and South Korean Military Exercises," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (2012): 275–294; Raymond Kuo and Brian Dylan Blankenship, "Deterrence and Restraint: Do Joint Military Exercises Escalate Conflict?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (July 25, 2021), 22.

Self Defense Force held their first bilateral air combat exercise, codenamed Bushido Guardian, and committed to hold the exercise on a regular basis.⁸⁵ Similar to the decision to institutionalize a defense dialogue, formalizing a combined military exercise on an annual or biannual basis signals a greater commitment to bilateral defense relations than irregular, ad-hoc exercises. Combined exercises can also be costly, as exercises often require extensive planning and a significant commitment of military resources. For smaller states, the costs of an exercise can be a significant portion of the state's defense budget.⁸⁶ By committing to regular bilateral exercises, states demonstrate the extent they value defense cooperation with the partner state and their willingness to incur the opportunity costs that could have been avoided by training unilaterally or with another partner. Bilateral combined military exercises also signal a level of commitment to bilateral relations above that signaled by joint participation in multilateral exercises. For instance, Malaysia's and Singapore's decision to initiate the annual bilateral Search and Rescue Exercise Malsing between the two countries' air forces signals a commitment to bilateral security relations beyond their joint participation in regular ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) exercises and multilateral Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) exercises.⁸⁷

Institutionalized combined military exercises can serve a number of purposes. Broadly, combined military exercises signal partners' "willingness and ability to use military force to

⁸⁵ Franz-Stefan Gady, "Australia, Japan to Hold First Joint Air Combat Exercise," *The Diplomat* (September 11, 2019), <https://thediplomat.com/2019/09/australia-japan-to-hold-first-joint-air-combat-exercise/>; Katrina Trimble, "Thank you from Japan as exercise ends," Australian Department of Defense (October 9, 2019), <https://news.defence.gov.au/international/thank-you-japan-exercise-ends>.

⁸⁶ Gary Roughead and AMTI Leadership, "The Evolving Role of Military Exercises in Asia," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (March 4, 2015), <https://amti.csis.org/the-evolving-role-of-military-exercises-in-asia/>.

⁸⁷ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Air Force Chief Introductory Visit Highlights Malaysia-Singapore Defense Cooperation," *The Diplomat* (January 27, 2020), <https://thediplomat.com/2020/01/air-force-chief-introductory-visit-highlights-malaysia-singapore-defense-cooperation/>.

achieve common objectives together.”⁸⁸ Yet the strength of this signal can vary depending on the degree of alignment between the partners and the scale and scope of the exercise. Within alliance structures where states are formally committed to the defense of an ally, exercises may be aimed at enhancing deterrence and increasing readiness against an adversarial attack. For example, prior to their restructuring in 2019 in an attempt to deescalate tensions with North Korea, the annual Key Resolve and Foal Eagle exercises between South Korea and the U.S. regularly involved over 10,000 U.S. and hundreds of thousands of South Korean troops. Exercise activities included events aimed at wartime readiness and defense against a North Korean attack.⁸⁹ Exercises outside the framework of an alliance often have more limited aims, such as increasing HA/DR readiness or increasing interoperability to counter non-traditional security threats such as terrorism or piracy.

2.3.4 Spectrum of Security Institutions

As highlighted above, modern security institutions can take a variety of forms. Not only do states maintain alliances, but form DCAs, establish institutionalized defense dialogues, and conduct regularized combined military exercises. Multilateral security mechanisms are also especially common, with such organizations as the ASEAN Regional Forum and Shanghai Cooperation Organization playing important roles in Asian regional security. A primary design characteristic along which each of these institutions vary is the extent of alignment obligations

⁸⁸ Kuo and Blankenship, “Deterrence and Restraint: Do Joint Military Exercises Escalate Conflict?”

⁸⁹ The 2016 exercises reportedly involved simulated surgical strikes on North Korea’s nuclear and missile facilities as well as Special Forces “decapitation raids” targeting North Korean leadership. See: Anna Fifield, “In Drills, U.S., South Korea Practice Striking North’s Nuclear Plants, Leaders,” *Washington Post* (March 7, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-drills-us-south-korea-practice-striking-norths-nuclear-plants/2016/03/06/46e6019d-5f04-4277-9b41-e02fc1c2e801_story.html; Franz-Stefan Gady, “Largest Ever U.S.-Korea Military Drill Focuses on Striking North Korea’s Leadership,” *The Diplomat* (March 8, 2016), <https://thediplomat.com/2016/03/largest-ever-us-korea-military-drill-focuses-on-striking-north-koreas-leadership/>.

inherent in their design and the degree of autonomy retained by each security partner (see Figure 2.4). Lake succinctly captures this variation in autonomy preservation and the extent of alignment obligations in his conceptualization of security relations as arrayed along a continuum from anarchy to hierarchy. Alignment-maximizing forms of security institutions, such as protectorates or colonies, fall toward the hierarchical end of the spectrum. In hierarchical security institutions, the dominant state exerts considerable control over the subordinate state, the autonomy of the less powerful state is minimized, and institution governance structures heavily favor the interests of the dominant member. At the opposite end of the spectrum are anarchical security institutions. In anarchical security institutions, each state retains “full residual rights of control” over their security decisions and governance structures do not constrain the policy autonomy of either state.⁹⁰



Figure 2.4: Spectrum of Security Institutions

⁹⁰ David A. Lake, *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in Its Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); David A. Lake, “Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations,” *International Organization* 50, no. 1 (1996): 1–33.

In Lake's analysis, alliances fall towards the anarchic end of the spectrum. Yet Lake's study precedes the widespread emergence of DCAs. Compared to alliances, DCAs are relatively anarchic. DCA governance structures are often limited and commitments focus on peacetime cooperation activities. This eliminates concerns of entanglement, entrapment, and abandonment that plague alliances.⁹¹ Institutionalized defense dialogues and combined military exercises are similarly anarchic. These characteristics make DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises attractive security institutions for diversifying and hedging states who seek to advance their security while persevering their autonomy. However, despite their proliferation since the end of the Cold War, and the relative stagnation of alliances, the security literature thus far has paid little attention to these forms of security institutions. Lake's analysis broadened the field's traditional focus on alliances to consider more hierarchal forms of security institutions, such as protectorates and empires. Yet as highlighted by the emergence of DCAs and the proliferation of institutionalized defense dialogues and combined military exercises, security cooperation now commonly goes the other way, towards more anarchic forms of cooperation. To advance our understanding of how middle states respond to great power rivalry, we must incorporate these forms of security institutions into our theories of middle state strategies.

⁹¹ Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 461–495; Tongfi Kim, "Why Alliances Entangle but Seldom Entrap States," *Security Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (July 2011): 350–377; Victor D. Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Winter 2009/10): 158–196; Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," *World Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 94–95; Brett V. Benson, *Constructing International Security: Alliances, Deterrence, and Moral Hazard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Douglas M. Gibling, "The Costs of Reneging: Reputation and Alliance Formation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (June 2008): 426–454; Mark J.C. Crescenzi et al., "Reliability, Reputation, and Alliance Formation," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (June 2012): 259–274; Michael Beckley, "The Myth of Entangling Alliances: Reassessing the Security Risks of U.S. Defense Pacts," *International Security* 39, no. 4 (Spring 2015): 7–48.

2.4 Diversification Hypotheses I: Who Diversifies?

The security-autonomy tradeoff inherent in the alignment dilemma provides a foundation for the incorporation of DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises into theories of middle state strategies. Under the alignment dilemma, security benefits that accompany close alignment often come at the expense of autonomy and policy flexibility. Varying international and domestic conditions can lead states to value security and autonomy differently, and states pursue different strategies based on the degree to which they value security compared autonomy. As states seek to balance their preferences for security and autonomy in response to intensifying great power rivalry, they will pursue strategies and form security institutions that align with these preferences. Balancing and bandwagoning states tend to prefer security over autonomy, opting to form alliances with powerful states to advance their security. However, such security benefits come at the expense of autonomy, and less powerful states are often forced to cede to the policy imperatives of the more powerful ally.⁹² On the other hand, hedging states tend to prefer autonomy to security, and forgo the security benefits of close alignment with a powerful partner to maximize autonomy and preserve their freedom of action. Similarly, diversifying states also tend to emphasize autonomy in their national strategies as they seek to reduce the risk of overdependence on a single security partner. Drawing on these differing preferences for security and autonomy, I derive several predictions regarding which states are likely to pursue a diversification strategy, and which states are likely to diversify to a greater extent.

2.4.1 Diversification and Security Threats

⁹² Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry."

Intensifying great power rivalry can prompt middle states to seek to increase their security. This is especially the case for states who are most threatened by the rising power. While middle states may be able to manage low-level threats on their own, unilateralism is insufficient when confronting a great power. To increase their security, middle states who face a significant threat from the rising power are likely to seek partners who can increase their military capabilities, either through balancing or diversification.

H1. Middle states who face a significant security threat from the rising power are more likely to diversify

2.4.2 Diversification and Alliance Commitment

As described, states who choose alignment over autonomy will often seek to strengthen their security by forming an alliance with a powerful patron. However, an allied state's overall commitment to alliance can vary based on leader and government preferences. Governments who are strongly committed to alliance will prioritize their state's limited defense resources towards strengthening defense cooperation and interoperability with their ally. Governments who have a weak commitment to alliance may seek to distance themselves from their ally while seeking to bolster their security and strengthen their autonomy through forming more limited security agreements with other partners.

H2: Governments who have a weak commitment to alliance are likely to diversify

2.4.3 Diversification and State Capabilities

I also anticipate a state's ability to diversify is conditioned on its attractiveness as a security partner. Militarily capable and economically developed states make attractive security partners as they increase their partner's access to superior training, innovative operational

doctrine, advanced military equipment, and models of greater organizational efficiency. In contrast, states who are militarily weak or economically less developed are usually less attractive security partners, even if they desire to diversify their security.

H3. Middle states who are militarily capable or economically developed are more likely to diversify

2.4.4 Security Cooperation between Less Powerful and More Powerful States

That military capable and economically developed states make attractive security partners is clear. Security cooperation with militarily capable and economically developed states increases a partner's access to advanced military equipment, innovative operational doctrine, and superior military training. Many DCAs also include intelligence sharing agreements, which may allow less capable states to gain access to advanced intelligence sources possessed by more capable partners. For example, Australia's defense agreements with the Philippines include provisions for intelligence sharing, which proved critical to Philippine counterterrorism operations in Mindanao in 2017.⁹³

Economically less developed states may also benefit from the economic inducements that often accompany the signing of security agreements with economically developed states. Anecdotal examples abound of states using low-interest loans, investment deals, and foreign aid to facilitate the signing of DCAs. For example, prior to signing an expansive DCA with India in 2004, Sri Lanka successfully negotiated a \$250 million concessional loan from New Delhi.⁹⁴

⁹³ Jaqueline Williams and Felipe Villamore, "Australia to Send Spy Planes to Help Philippines Recapture Marawi," *The New York Times* (June 23, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/23/world/asia/australia-philippines-planes-marawi.html>.

⁹⁴ Kinne and Bunte, "Guns or Money? Defense Co-Operation and Bilateral Lending as Coevolving Networks."

Similarly, the signing of the 2013 *Memorandum of Cooperation on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges* between Japan and Cambodia was accompanied by a ¥13.8 billion pledge in loans from Tokyo for the building of infrastructure projects in Cambodia.⁹⁵

Yet it is less clear how relatively powerful states benefit from security cooperation with less powerful partners. The interaction is certainly not costless for the more powerful state. Some states spend hundreds of millions each year in the training and development of the militaries of their less capable partners. For example, Australia's budget for its Defence Cooperation Program, which supports military training for its regional neighbors, topped \$177 million AUD in 2021.⁹⁶ The U.S. spent nearly \$9 billion in international security assistance in 2021, including \$113 million on its International Military Exchange and Training (IMET) program which directly supports the training of foreign military forces.⁹⁷ The actual costs of training foreign militaries are actually much higher, as exercise and deployment (troop and equipment) costs are separate budgetary items.

Aside from these financial costs, powerful states also incur opportunity costs for the training they may be forsaking in order to improve the defense capabilities of their less capable partner. Training and exercise activities often focus on the security needs of the less powerful state, and as differences in capabilities and proficiencies exist between partners, training and

⁹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan-Cambodia Summit Meeting," December 15, 2013, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page24e_000019.html; "Japan, Cambodia Upgrade Ties to 'Strategic Partnership'" *The Japan Times* (December 15, 2013), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/12/15/national/japan-cambodia-upgrade-ties-to-strategic-partnership/>.

⁹⁶ Australia Department of Defense, *Annual Report 20-21* (Canberra, Australia, Defence Publishing Service, 2021).

⁹⁷ This figure includes \$6.1 billion in Foreign Military Financing but excludes the costs of extensive military training programs with the US' closest allies, including NATO, Australia, and Japan. United States of America Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification Department of State Foreign Operations and Related Programs Fiscal Year 2022* (Washington, D.C., 2022), <https://www.state.gov/fy-2022-international-affairs-budget/>.

exercises necessarily occur at the level of the less capable partner. Sacrificing a portion of its own military preparedness and resources for the sake of a non-allied partner may not be problematic for the more powerful state if it faces few threats to its own security. Yet in the context of intensifying great power rivalry and the increasing likelihood of conflict, spending time and resources on diluted training focused on the security needs of a non-allied partner appears downright puzzling.

So what do strong states receive in return for subsidizing the military training of relatively weaker states? The conventional answer from the alliance literature is that weaker states sacrifice a degree of sovereignty, in the form of policy concessions, military access agreements, or the basing of foreign troops, in exchange for the military protection of the more powerful state.⁹⁸ Yet due to the institutional design characteristics of anarchic security institutions, including DCAs, autonomy loss for the less powerful state is likely to be limited.

Though stronger states may not necessarily gain basing rights or substantial political concessions through more limited forms of security institutions, it is possible for strong states to increase their political influence with their weaker partner. Increasing political influence with a security partner is a primary objective for strong states in their defense cooperation with a less powerful partner. For example, Australia's Defence Cooperation Program identifies "developing close and enduring links" with a partner state that can be used to advance Australian interests as the program's primary objective.⁹⁹ An Australian government audit of the country's Defence Cooperation Program found that "personal contacts and long-established relationships resulting

⁹⁸ James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (1991): 904–933.

⁹⁹ Australia Department of Defence, "Defence Pacific Engagement," <https://www.defence.gov.au/programs-initiatives/pacific-engagement#:~:text=Defence%20Cooperation%20Program,-The%20Defence%20Cooperation&text=The%20objective%20is%st%20maximise,and%20contribute%20to%20regional%20security>.

from [the Defence Cooperation Program] have been important to Australia’s ability to obtain speedy and sympathetic hearings in countries in Southeast Asia.” In particular, the audit highlighted the Program’s critical role in gaining support “at the highest levels” for UN-sponsored international force deployments to East Timor (INTERFET) during the 1999 East Timorese Crisis.¹⁰⁰ Relatively powerful states also benefit by familiarizing their leaders and soldiers with the unique operating environment, capabilities, forces, operational procedures, and culture of the partner state, which can pay dividends in future contingencies by facilitating access and political influence.

Militarily capable states may also influence the policies and perceptions of less capable states through the selective sharing of intelligence. As described, many DCAs include provisions for intelligence sharing, and the advanced space, cyber, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities of militarily capable states provide them access to a broad range of information that less-capable states lack, including intelligence concerning their immediate security environment. Powerful states can seek to leverage their information advantages to influence the decision-making of states who independently lack access to certain information. For example, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative (previously known as the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative) shares satellite and maritime intelligence with U.S. security partners in Southeast Asia. The initiative was introduced in 2015 in part to increase partner states’ maritime domain awareness of Chinese land reclamation and fishing within their EEZ.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Australia National Audit Office, *Defence Cooperation Program: Audit Report No.32 2000–2001* (Canberra, Australia, 2001): 42-43, <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/defence-cooperation-program>.

¹⁰¹ Ash Carter, “A Regional Security Architecture Where Everyone Rises,” May 30, 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1945>; Ronald O’Rourke, “U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Background and Issues for Congress” *Congressional Research Service*, Report no. R4278 (December, 29, 2020).

Geostrategic access is another benefit relatively powerful states may seek to gain from cooperating with less powerful states. While many DCAs do not specify access to military facilities in a partner state during contingencies as part of the bilateral agreement, DCAs frequently include acquisition and cross servicing agreements which allow partner states to provide logistic support, supplies, and services to each other's militaries. Security agreements also frequently facilitate port visits and airfield access, which familiarizes the militaries of more powerful states with operating in foreign locations. These agreements may pave the way for access during a future contingency.

Relatively powerful states may also benefit from defense cooperation with less powerful states through securing foreign market access for their defense industries. Numerous DCAs are specific to defense industry cooperation and facilitate joint research and development. South Korea's expanding defense relations appear particularly focused on growing South Korea's defense industry, and many of Seoul's defense agreements include provisions for arms purchases and technology transfers.

Relatively powerful states also use security partnerships to enhance their international prestige. Formalized security partnerships with numerous and diverse security partners demonstrates the breadth of a state's foreign policy interests, the strength of its military, and its contributions to international and regional security. For example, Japan's 2021 Defense White Paper cites its expanded international security cooperation efforts as central to its "Proactive Contribution to Peace" policy and directed at "actively contributing...to the peace and stability of the region, and the peace, stability and prosperity of the entire international community."¹⁰² Similarly, Australia's 2000 Defense White Paper cites "contribut[ing] to the efforts of the

¹⁰² Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan: 2021* (Tokyo, Japan, 2021), 346-409.

international community...to uphold global security” as one of Australia’s most important long-term strategic objectives, and cites its Defense Cooperation Program as central to this objective.¹⁰³ Powerful states are often eager to demonstrate the significance of their impact to international well-being, and aiding weaker states advance their security displays their humanitarian contributions.

Lastly, through cooperating with less powerful states on defense matters, relatively powerful states also seek to create a security environment conducive to their national interest. Japan cites its defense cooperation with Southeast Asian states as aimed at ensuring a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” that empowers states in the region to protect freedom of navigation on sea lanes critical to Japan’s economy.¹⁰⁴ Australia identifies helping to “foster the stability, integrity and cohesion” of the region as one of its most important strategic objectives, and one in which its cooperative defense agreements play a critical role.¹⁰⁵ By strengthening the security capabilities of less militarily-capable states, states seek to prevent spillover security threats that could harm their own national interests.

A summary of the costs and benefits of DCAs and other forms of limited security institutions for both less powerful and more powerful states is provided in Figure 2.5.

¹⁰³ Australia Department of Defence, *Defence 2000—Our Future Defence Force* (Canberra, December 2000), https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DefendAust/2000.

¹⁰⁴ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan: 2021* (Tokyo, Japan, 2021), 346-409.

¹⁰⁵ Australia Department of Defence, *Defence 2000—Our Future Defence Force* (Canberra, December 2000), https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DefendAust/2000.

	Less Powerful States	More Powerful States
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to superior training • Improved operational doctrine • Access to advanced military equipment • Improved military intelligence • Economic inducements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political influence • Geostrategic access • Arms sales • International prestige • Improved security environment
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential (limited) policy concessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource, opportunity costs

Figure 2.5. Security Cooperation between Less Powerful and More Powerful States

2.5 Diversification Hypotheses II: Who Diversifies with Whom?

If middle states pursue diversification to increase their security and preserve their autonomy, then middle states who diversify should be more likely to partner with certain types of states in order to maximize security gains while minimizing autonomy loss. Certain types of partners may be less likely to challenge a state’s autonomy or may be better able to contribute to a state’s security. For example, many states proclaim their desire to form security partnerships with “like-minded partners.”¹⁰⁶ In the following section, I develop several hypotheses concerning which pairs of states, or dyads, are more likely to form security partnerships as they pursue a diversification strategy.

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Department of State, “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision” (November 4, 2019); The Philippines Department of National Defense, “National Defense Strategy 2018-2022,” (2018).

2.5.1 Minimize Autonomy Loss

Depending on their design characteristics, institutions can pose a threat to the autonomy of member states.¹⁰⁷ Though the governance structures of anarchic forms of security institutions are more limited than hierarchical institutions, policy coordination mechanisms are often central components of DCAs and formalized defense dialogues. These coordination mechanisms create avenues for states to influence the policies of their partner states. Policy coordination may lead a state to make policy concessions, such as adopting a policy it would otherwise not adopt, or abandon a position it would have otherwise pursued.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, middle states who seek to minimize autonomy loss when forming security partnerships will prefer partners with similar interests, as autonomy loss is most likely to be minimized among partners whose interests are aligned. The tendency for states with similar preferences to cooperate also aligns with the network influence of homophily, in which nodes with common attributes tend to form ties.¹⁰⁹

H4. The more similar the foreign policy preferences of a pair of states, the more likely they are to form a security partnership

2.5.2 Security Partners of Security Partners

Security agreements involve sensitive national security issues, including defense policy coordination, classified information exchange, and joint weapons development. These issues have the potential to significantly influence a state's autonomy and overall national security. By

¹⁰⁷ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); Michael F. Altfeld, "The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test," *Western Political Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (December 1, 1984): 523–544.

¹⁰⁸ James D. Morrow, "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?"

¹⁰⁹ Tom A.B. Snijders, Gerhard G. van de Bunt, and Christian E.G. Steglich, "Introduction to Stochastic Actor-Based Models for Network Dynamics," *Dynamics of Social Networks* 32, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 44–60; Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Miles Kahler, and Alexander H. Montgomery, "Network Analysis for International Relations," *International Organization* 63, no. 3 (2009): 559–592; Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M Cook, "Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, no. 1 (August 2001): 415–444.

partnering with those with whom a state has a higher level of trust regarding their intentions and cooperation aims, states reduce uncertainty and concerns of autonomy loss. The existence of a common security partner between two prospective security partners may facilitate the formation of a security partnership by increasing mutual trust and reducing concerns of autonomy loss.¹¹⁰ The tendency of “friends of friends” to form security partnerships also aligns the network influence of triadic closure, in which nodes tend to form closed triangles in their network relations.¹¹¹

H5. States who share a common security partner are more likely to form a security partnership

2.5.3 Enemies of Enemies

Similar to the expectation that “friends of friends” will be more likely to form security partnerships, I also anticipate states who share a common adversary will be more likely to institutionalize their security relations. Having a common enemy can provide a powerful motivation for cooperation, and a shared security threat can provide a common basis for coordinating policy, conducting combined military exercises, sharing intelligence, and conducting joint weapons development.¹¹² Each of these activities work to strengthen the security and military capabilities of both partner states and can lay the foundation for closer future ties.

H6. States who face a common adversary are more likely to form a security partnership

¹¹⁰ Kinne, “Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network.”

¹¹¹ Snijders, van de Bunt, and Steglich, “Introduction to Stochastic Actor-Based Models for Network Dynamics”; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, “Network Analysis for International Relations.”

¹¹² Henry S. Farber and Joanne Gowa, “Common Interests or Common Politics? Reinterpreting the Democratic Peace,” *The Journal of Politics* 59, no. 2 (May 1, 1997): 393–417; Kris De Jaegher, “Common-Enemy Effects: Multidisciplinary Antecedents and Economic Perspectives,” *Journal of Economic Surveys* 35, no. 1 (2021): 3–33.

2.5.4 Close Economic Partners

The close relation between economic and security ties is thoroughly documented in the security literature.¹¹³ Security ties can foster greater economic interaction between states, and economic cooperation can cultivate shared interests among partners and motivate closer security ties. Many states in the Indo-Pacific also adopt a comprehensive conception of national security, which views economic development as closely linked to, and in some cases prioritized over, national security.¹¹⁴ Through increasing their economic power, states improve their ability to secure their autonomy. Economically powerful states are less vulnerable to economic coercion, and states with diverse economic ties are less beholden to a single trading partner. Economic strength can also be turned into military power, further improving a state's prospects for preserving its autonomy. Each of these outcomes point towards an expected positive relationship between the closeness of a dyad's economic relations and their likelihood of forming a security partnership.

H7. The closer the economic relations between a pair of states, the more likely they are to form a security partnership

2.5.5 Distinction from Previous Studies

Several of these hypotheses concerning which pairs of middle states are more likely to form a security partnership are consistent with previous studies which analyze the determinants of alliances. For example, several studies have identified a positive relation between sharing

¹¹³ Gowa and Mansfield, "Power Politics and International Trade"; Long and Leeds, "Trading for Security: Military Alliances and Economic Agreements."

¹¹⁴ Steve Chan, *Looking for Balance: China, the United States, and Power Balancing in East Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012); David C. Kang, *American Grand Strategy and East Asian Security in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

common alliance partners or having a common adversary and alliance formation.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, some studies have found that higher levels of bilateral trade have a null effect on alliance formation.¹¹⁶ As DCAs and other anarchic forms of security institutions are distinct from alliances and states may form these institutions for different purposes, it is likely that there may also be differences in which factors influence states' choices in DCA and alliance partners. These similarities and differences will be further discussed in Chapter 4 along with the empirical results.

Some of these hypotheses also overlap with independent or control variables used in Kinne's study of DCAs worldwide.¹¹⁷ In particular, Kinne explains the recent proliferation of DCAs in terms of supply and demand. Exogenous macro-level shifts in the global security environment—the end of the Cold War, growth of non-traditional security threats, and the decline of interstate war—have increased states' demand for security cooperation arrangements, but their supply is limited by states' uncertainty regarding who is a trustworthy security partner. Kinne demonstrates the influence of the network effects of triadic closure and preferential attachment in DCA formation, explaining that states will be more likely to form DCAs with states with whom they share a common defense partner and with highly central states within the network. Similar to Kinne, I anticipate dyads who share common security partners will be more likely to form a security partnership than dyads who do not share a common security partner.

¹¹⁵ Skyler J. Cranmer, Bruce A. Desmarais, and Justin H. Kirkland, "Toward a Network Theory of Alliance Formation," *International Interactions* 38, no. 3 (July 1, 2012): 295–324; T. Camber Warren, "The Geometry of Security: Modeling Interstate Alliances as Evolving Networks," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 6 (November 1, 2010): 697–709; Lai and Reiter, "Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992"; Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

¹¹⁶ Lai and Reiter, "Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992"; Camber Warren, "The Geometry of Security: Modeling Interstate Alliances as Evolving Networks."

¹¹⁷ Kinne, "Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network."

However, explaining security cooperation in the context of great power rivalry based on the tendency of states to form partnerships with the partners of their current partners appears inadequate, at best. As many middle states seek to form security partnerships with both competing great powers and with extra-regional major powers, almost all states share several common security partners. Yet all states do not form security partnerships.

Explaining DCA formation as a result of states overcoming uncertainty concerning the trustworthiness of a potential security partner based on the potential partner's DCA with another state is also limited. Such an explanation discounts the wealth of information states have concerning the suitability of potential security partners prior to a state forming a DCA with an existing partner. Bilateral trade, diplomatic exchange, and cooperation in other fields through existing agreements and institutions is also likely to influence a state's perceptions of a potential partner's trustworthiness, and these influences are likely to predate DCA formation with other states considering the relative novelty of DCAs. The relative frequency of DCAs between traditional rivals and states involved in territorial disputes also challenges Kinne's view of DCA formation as driven by states overcoming trust deficits. For example, China shares DCAs with several states with whom it currently has a territorial dispute, including India and SCS co-claimants Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

These considerations point to the need to examine other variables and constructs in explaining which states are likely to form security partnerships under the shadow of great power rivalry. The rationale for the observed relation between these variables and the formation of security partnerships also needs to be further explained. I do so throughout this dissertation in explaining the role DCAs and other forms of security institutions play in the diversification and hedging strategies of middle states. I also advance Kinne's study by considering the factors that

influence security institution formation in a specific region which faces a distinct set of security dynamics, rather than broadly examining DCAs worldwide. Moreover, rather than consider all states, I focus on defense cooperation between middle states. Lastly, where Kinne uses a dataset covering the periods 1990 to 2010 to examine his selected variables, I use an updated and refined dataset and incorporate two novel datasets that account for institutionalized defense dialogues and combined military exercises.

2.6. Conclusion

Scholars have invoked traditional theories of alignment to describe the strategies of Indo-Pacific states as they respond to intensifying U.S.-China rivalry. References to balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging are frequently used to describe the strategies of middle states to weigh their economic ties with China with their concerns of growing Chinese power and the uncertainty of U.S. commitment to the region. However, in their focus on a state's relations with the competing great powers, these theories overlook how middle states interact among themselves. In this chapter, I introduced a theory of diversification that describes how middle states seek to strengthen security ties among themselves to advance their security and preserve their autonomy in the face of great powers who seek to exert their influence. In strengthening security relations among themselves, middle states reduce their dependence on a single source for support in strengthening their military capabilities, reduce their vulnerability to coercion, increase the number of partners they can call on to meet security challenges, and expand their sources of diplomatic support.

Security institutions play a central role in the strategies of middle states to respond to shifts in the distribution of power and the growing threat of conflict. The security literature has

traditionally focused on alliances, explaining how states form alliances to respond to changes in the balance of power or the emergence of threats. Yet since the end of the Cold War and in the face of intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, alliances have remained relatively stagnant and few new alliances have been formed. New anarchic forms of security institutions have emerged, including DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises. These forms of security institutions play a central role in the diversification and hedging strategies of middle states, yet existing theories of alignment have yet to account for their emergence. In this chapter, I have described the institutional design characteristics of DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises and the role they play in the strategies of diversifying and hedging states. Whereas alliances entail heavy alignment obligations and wartime commitments that weaken the autonomy of less powerful states, these forms of security institutions allow middle states to preserve their autonomy while advancing their security, though security gains may be fewer than those realized under alliances.

Building on the tradeoff between security and autonomy inherent in the alignment dilemma and states' preferences for security and autonomy, I developed several hypotheses concerning which states are most likely to pursue a diversification strategy, and which pairs of states are more likely to form security partnerships as they seek to diversify. Before turning to empirical tests of these hypotheses in Chapter Four, I describe the current dynamics of U.S.-China great power rivalry in the Indo-Pacific. Under intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, security institutions have become an arena for great power competition. Both the U.S. and China have sought to form security agreements with states throughout the region to gain support for their proposed visions for the regional security order. In response, security ties between middle states and both the U.S. and China have multiplied throughout the region. Yet security ties among

middle states have multiplied to an even greater extent. In the following chapter, I describe the growth and current patterns of bilateral security institutionalization in the Indo-Pacific, and demonstrate how middle states throughout the region are employing a diversification strategy to respond to intensifying great power rivalry. I also demonstrate the role DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises play in the diversification and hedging strategies of middle states as they seek to advance their security while preserving their autonomy. It is the diversification and hedging strategies of middle states, rather than the strategies of the competing great powers, which are transforming the regional security architecture.

CHAPTER 3. DIVERSIFICATION IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

“If you think about the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility, our partners are a really great advantage that we have over our competitors and adversaries, namely China and North Korea...If you look at the list of people that want to be our ally and partner, we are their ally of choice — and our list is long. The People’s Republic of China...their list of partners and allies is pretty short.”

– General Kenneth Wilsbach, Commander, U.S. Pacific Air Forces
During an official visit to Palau (September 2020)¹

In the previous chapter, I described how under the shadow of great power rivalry, middle states not only seek to strengthen their ties with the dueling great powers, but may also seek to strengthen ties with each other. In strengthening ties among themselves, middle states seek to advance their security and preserve their autonomy in the face of great power conflict and the efforts of great powers to exert their influence. In this chapter, I describe how middle states in the Indo-Pacific today are pursuing diversification amid intensifying U.S.-China rivalry. As both the U.S. and China have sought to influence the alignment of middle states, middle states are increasingly turning to each other to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy.

As U.S.-China rivalry intensifies, security institutions have become an arena for great power competition. As expressed by General Wilsbach, the Commander of U.S. Pacific Air Forces, in the quote at the beginning of the chapter, security partners are viewed as a strategic advantage over one’s competitor, and both the U.S. and China have sought to position themselves as the ‘ally of choice’ for states in the region. Both the U.S. and China have proposed competing visions for the regional security architecture and have sought to shore up support for

¹ Wyatt Olson, “Pacific Air Forces Leader Eager to Take up Palau’s Offer to Build Joint Military Airfields,” *Stars and Stripes* (September 10, 2020), https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/pacific-air-forces-leader-eager-to-take-up-palau-s-offer-to-build-joint-military-airfields-1.644466?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2009.10.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief%3E/.

their respective visions and leadership within the architecture through forming security institutions with middle states. Substantial military aid and economic inducements from the U.S. and China often accompany these agreements, and most states in the region have formed institutions with both the U.S. and China.

Yet the vast majority of security agreements formed over the last decade do not involve the U.S. or China. Most security agreements signed in the Indo-Pacific since 2010 are between middle states. Whereas DCAs involving the U.S. or China accounted for nearly three out of every four DCAs signed between Indo-Pacific states from 1980-2009, they account for only 17% of DCAs signed in the last decade. Similar trends are seen in the regional bilateral defense dialogue network. Whereas the U.S. and China accounted for over half of all institutionalized senior bilateral defense dialogues formed in the region from 1980-2009, they accounted for less than one-third of those established from 2010-2020. Rather than responding to growing U.S.-China rivalry by focusing on their relations with the great powers through strategies of balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging, middle states are strengthening relations among themselves through diversification.

In contrast to the predictions of balance of power theory, most middle states, up to this point, are shunning traditional strategies of balancing and bandwagoning. Rather than choosing sides between the dueling great powers and pursuing alignment, middle states are emphasizing autonomy and foreign policy independence. Instead of forming new alliances in response to China's rapidly growing power and the threat of great power conflict, no new alliances have been formed, and states such as the Philippines and Thailand have sought to weaken their alliance ties to the U.S.

In this chapter, I demonstrate that viewing U.S.-China competition through the lenses of balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging only provide a narrow view of how states in the region are responding to intensifying U.S.-China rivalry. States are not only weighing their ties to the U.S. and China, but also their ties with other middle states. To demonstrate the prominence of diversification in the Indo-Pacific today, I describe the growth and patterns of bilateral security institutionalization throughout the region over the last three decades. I introduce three novel datasets that capture all known DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized bilateral combined military exercises between states in the Indo-Pacific, including those agreements with the U.S. Through the use of network methods and descriptive analysis, I show how diversification is shaping the evolving regional security network. I also show that rather than seeing the formation of distinct security blocs formed around one of the competing great powers, we see a regional security network that is far more complex, dense, and interconnected by the multitude of security agreements between middle states. In demonstrating the prominence of diversification in the Indo-Pacific today, I set the stage for deeper empirical testing of the hypotheses generated in Chapter Two concerning which states are more likely to diversify, and with whom they are likely to form security partnerships.

3.1 Great Power Competition and the Proliferation of Security Institutions

Since the end of the Cold War, security institutions have proliferated throughout the Indo-Pacific (Figure 3.1). Over 300 bilateral DCAs have been signed between states in the region since 1989, and all states except North Korea have signed at least one DCA. As of 2020, middle states on average have nine DCA partners, and over a third of all dyads in the region maintain a DCA. Over 150 institutionalized bilateral defense dialogues have also been established since

1989, with nearly two-thirds of these taking place at the senior level. Regularized combined military exercises have also become increasingly common, with over 180 formalized bilateral exercises taking place in the region on an annual or biennial basis. These exercises cover a broad scope of military activities, ranging from maritime patrols and HA/DR operations to anti-submarine warfare and contested island-seizure exercises.

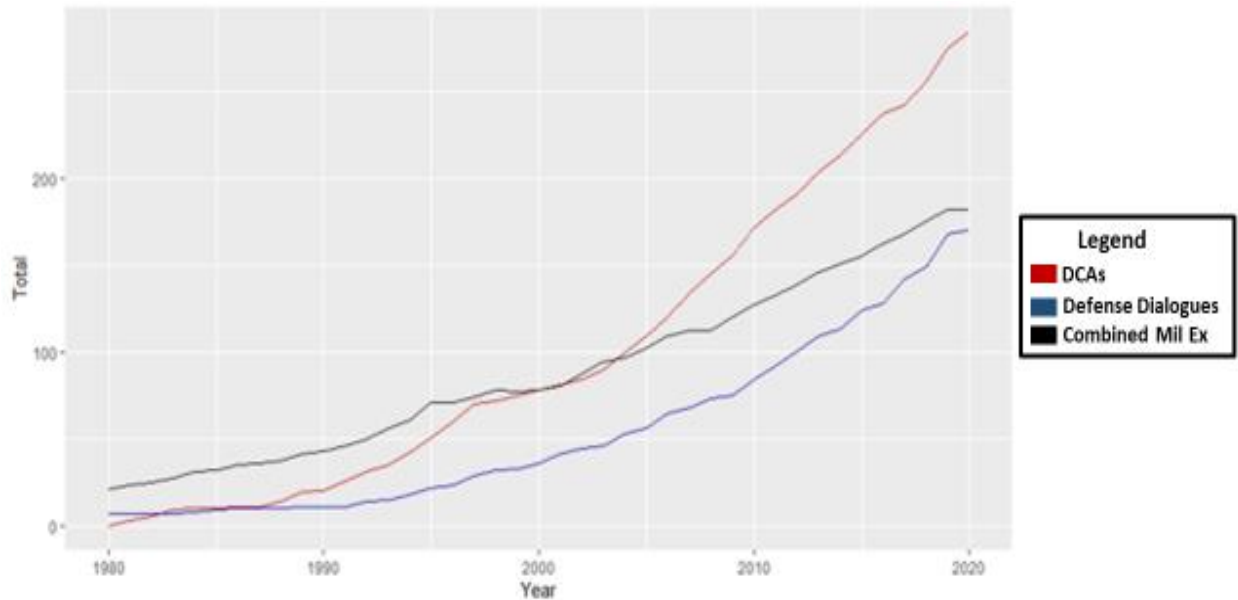


Figure 3.1: Total DCAs, Institutionalized Defense Dialogues, and Institutionalized Combined Military Exercises between Indo-Pacific States (1980-2020)

Summary statistics for each of these security cooperation mechanisms (Table 3.1) tell a similar story: security institutions have multiplied throughout the Indo-Pacific in recent years, and their proliferation is primarily due to growing security cooperation between middle states. Since 2000, the number of DCAs and bilateral senior defense dialogues between Indo-Pacific states have nearly quadrupled, and the number of bilateral combined military exercises have more than doubled. Since 2010, Indo-Pacific states have signed 116 DCAs, institutionalized 95 defense dialogues, and established 55 regular combined military exercises with other states in the region. At the same time, the average number of partners with whom a middle state forms each

of these institutions has nearly doubled. While agreements involving the U.S. and China account for part of this growth in security institutions, much of this growth is due to growing cooperation among middle states. Less than one-fifth of all DCAs signed between states in the region over the last decade involved the U.S. or China. As bilateral security institutionalization deepens in the region, states' security interests, particularly those of middle states, are becoming increasingly intertwined and interdependent. The histograms in Figure 3.2 break down the data in Table 3.1 by state, identifying the total number of DCA, senior defense dialogue, and combined military exercise partners for each state in the region (other than the U.S. and China) for the years 2000, 2010, and 2020.

Table 3.1: Indo-Pacific Bilateral Security Institutionalization

	Year	2000	2010	2020
DCAs				
Cumulative Total Signed		88	200	316
Percentage of dyads with a DCA		12.7%	23.0%	36.2%
Avg no. DCA partners per middle state		2.8	5.3	9
Bilateral Senior Defense Dialogues				
Cumulative Total		25	48	92
Percentage of dyads with a dialogue		5.3%	10.9%	19.3%
Avg no. dialogue partners per middle state		1.2	2.3	4.4
Bilateral Combined Military Exercises				
Cumulative Total		78	125	180
Percentage of dyads with a regular exercise		9.0%	13.0%	18.0%
Avg no. exercise partners per middle state		2.2	3.0	4.0

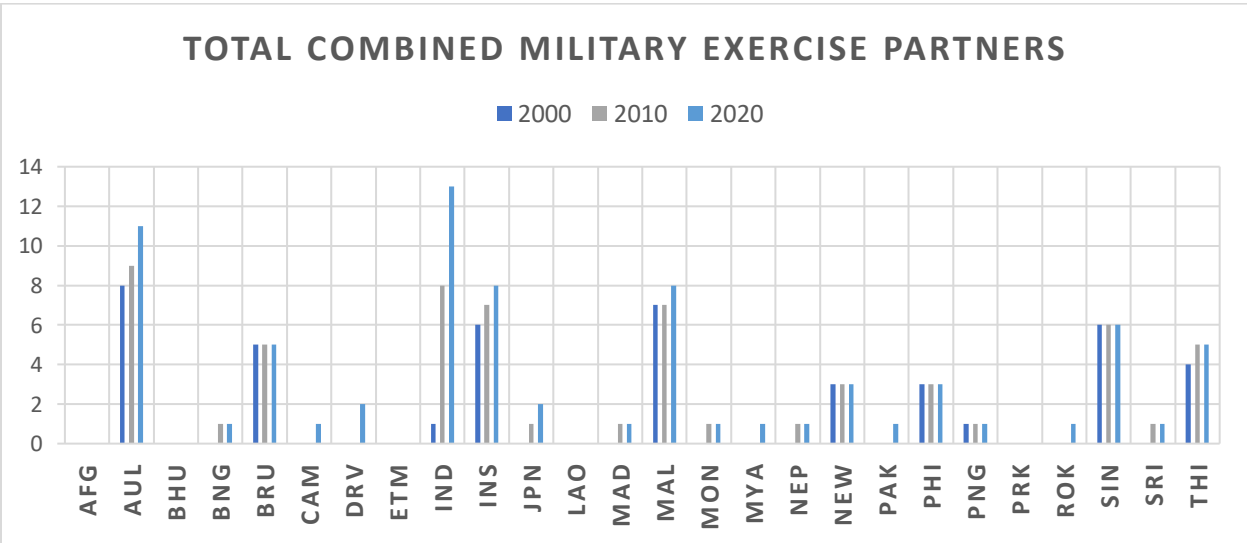
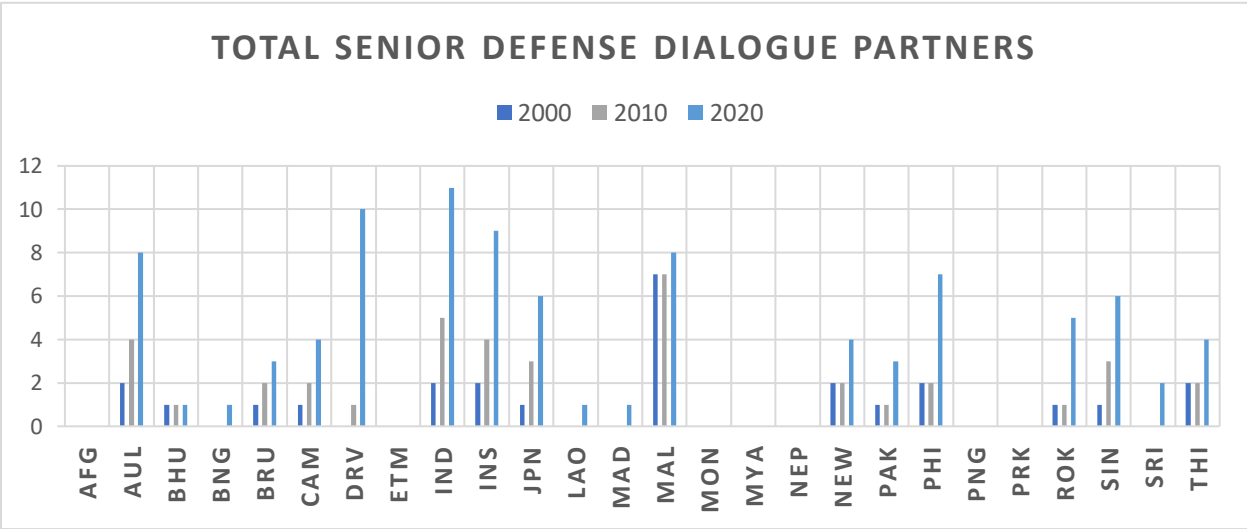
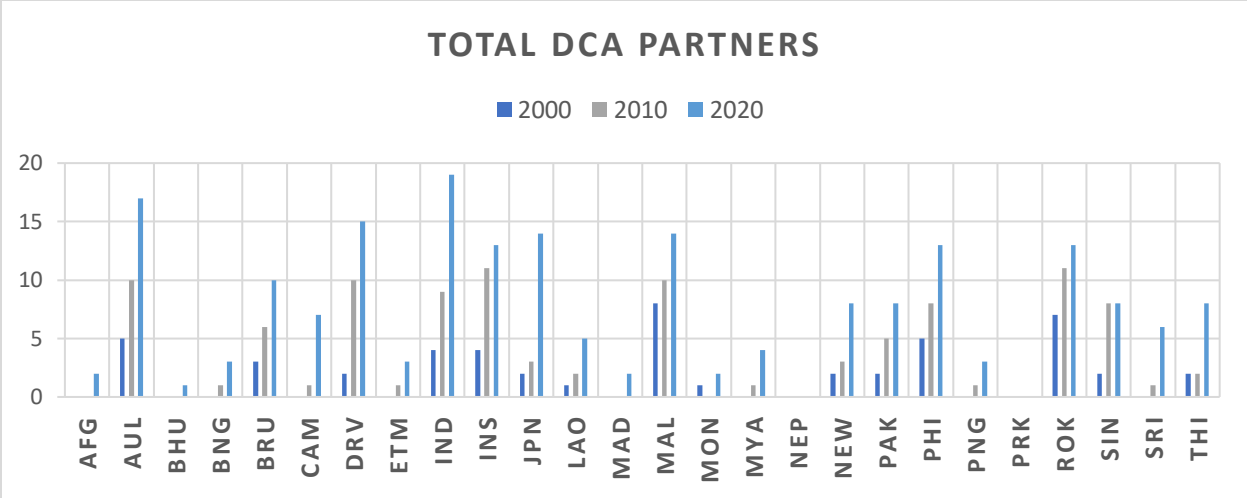


Figure 3.2: Total DCA, Senior Defense Dialogue, and Combined Military Exercise Partners (Indo-Pacific Middle States)

In addition to growing bilateral security institutionalization, multilateral security institutions have also grown in prominence. Regional security organizations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization play an increasingly important role in regional security. These organizations serve as sponsors for expanding multilateral defense exercises, such as the ADMM Plus series of maritime security and counterterrorism field exercises between the ten ASEAN members and eight partner states. Multilateral regional security dialogues, such as the Shangri-La Dialogue and Beijing Xiangshan Forum have also become increasingly prominent fixtures of the regional security architecture.

The growth of DCAs, defense dialogues, and combined military exercises stands in stark contrast to the relative stagnation of alliances. Only seven defense alliances remain in the region, dropping from a peak of thirteen during the Cold War.² Alliances that remain include the China-North Korea *Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance* and the U.S.' San Francisco system of alliances, including U.S. alliances with Australia, Japan, Pakistan, The Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. While U.S. alliances with Australia, Japan, and South Korea have grown stronger in recent years, the continued relevance of other alliances is frequently debated. Chinese scholars regularly debate the continued existence of Beijing's treaty with Pyongyang, and Beijing regularly criticizes the U.S. 'hub-and-spoke' system of alliances as a "relic of the Cold War."³ Long-standing U.S. allies such as the Philippines and Thailand have also sought to weaken their alliance relations with the U.S.

² According to the Correlates of War Formal Alliances dataset, active defense alliances where at least one signatory is an Indo-Pacific state include: U.S.-Australia, U.S.-Japan, U.S.-Pakistan, U.S.-Philippines, U.S.-South Korea, U.S.-Thailand, and China-North Korea. Previous defense alliances in the region that were initiated during or after WWII that are no longer active: Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Australia-New Zealand-United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), Russia-China, Russia-North Korea, Russia-Mongolia, Great Britain – Malaysia. See Douglas M. Gibler, *International military alliances, 1648-2008* (CQ Press, 2009).

³ Helene Cooper and Jane Perlez, "U.S. Sway in Asia Is Imperiled as China Challenges Alliances," *New York Times* (May 31, 2014); Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, vol. 1 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press Co. Ltd, 2014): 41; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson

3.2 Great Power Competition for Influence

The widespread growth of bilateral security institutions in the Indo-Pacific, and relative stagnation of alliances, takes place in the shadow of intensifying U.S.-China great power competition. Following decades of miracle economic growth, China's growing power has brought it into direct conflict with U.S. perceptions of its regional primacy. Chief among the great powers' points of contention include U.S. fears of China's intent to establish a sphere of influence in the region, including over close U.S. allies. U.S. actions to prevent the realization of these fears feed China's belief that the U.S. seeks to contain its rise and resist China assuming its perceived rightful position at the head of the regional order.

Growing U.S.-China rivalry is exemplified in both countries' competing visions for the regional security order. Across three different administrations, the U.S. has advocated for U.S. primacy in the region, centered on a broad network of strengthened alliances and security partnerships. President Obama's commitment to U.S. leadership in the region was grounded in his administration's 'rebalance' or 'pivot' to the Asia-Pacific and advocacy for a regional security order based on a "principled security network" of "like-minded" states.⁴ President Trump reiterated U.S. commitment to American primacy in the region through its commitment to a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."⁵ Just days before the inauguration of President Biden, the

Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference," December 20, 2019; People's Republic of China, *China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the PRC, January 2017); Huang, Yufan, "Q. and A.: Yan Xuetong Urges China to Adopt a More Assertive Foreign Policy," *New York Times* (February 15, 2016), <https://cn.nytimes.com/china/20160215/c15chinayan/dual/>.

⁴ Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Affairs* (October 11, 2011), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>. Ash Carter, "Remarks by Secretary Carter and Q&A at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore," *U.S. Department of Defense* (June 5, 2016), <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/791472/remarks-by-secretary-carter-and-qa-at-the-shangri-la-dialogue-singapore/>.

⁵ U.S. Department of State, "A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision" (November 4, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/a-free-and-open-indo-pacific-advancing-a-shared-vision/>.

Trump administration released a previously classified National Security Council memo, which identified “maintain[ing] U.S. primacy in the region” as a “top” interest of the U.S. The memo cites the need to prevent China from “establishing new, illiberal spheres of influence” as a “national security challenge.”⁶ Under the Biden Administration, the U.S. has continued to emphasize its commitment to strengthening America’s position as the principal power in the region and “reinvigorating and modernizing [its] alliances and partnerships.”⁷ To date, the Biden Administration’s commitment to maintaining U.S. regional primacy through strengthening alliances and partnerships is no better demonstrated than in its establishment of the AUKUS security pact with the United Kingdom and Australia, which among other provisions, provides nuclear-powered submarine technology to Australia.⁸ Under America’s vision for the regional security order, the U.S. maintains regional primacy and challenges China’s bid for regional dominance through strengthening its alliances and building security ties with a broad network of regional partners.

In place of a U.S.-centric regional security order, China under President Xi Jinping has proposed a “new regional security cooperation architecture” based on “common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable” security. Under China’s “New Asian Security Concept,” alliances, which Beijing views as based on a “Cold War mentality” and “zero-sum thinking,” are rejected as a legitimate organizational structure for regional security.⁹ In contrast to U.S. visions of

⁶ The White House, “U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific,” January 5, 2021, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IPS-Final-Declass.pdf>.

⁷ The White House, “Interim National Security Strategic Guidance,” March 3, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/>.

⁸ “AUKUS: UK, U.S. and Australia Launch Pact to Counter China,” *BBC News* (September 16, 2021), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-58564837>.

⁹ Xi, *The Governance of China*, vol. 1: 360-396; Xi, *The Governance of China*, vol. 2: 43; People's Republic of China, *China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the PRC, January 2017); Lindsey W. Ford, “Network Power: China’s Effort to Reshape Asia’s Regional

strategic primacy in the Indo-Pacific, China's vision for the regional security order views the U.S. playing a much diminished role in regional security. As advocated by President Xi in his 2014 speech to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, "it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia, and uphold the security of Asia."¹⁰

To gain support for their respective visions for the regional security order, both the U.S. and China have sought to expand and strengthen their security ties to states throughout the region. The U.S.' 2018 *National Defense Strategy* identifies long-term strategic competition with China as a principal national priority, and identifies "strengthening alliances and attracting new partners" as a distinct line of effort in its strategic approach to compete with China.¹¹ Senior U.S. leaders, in accordance with the Defense Department's *Indo-Pacific Strategy*, frequently promote the U.S. as the region's "security partner of choice," and identify its web of partnerships as a primary advantage over its adversaries.¹²

Similarly, China has advocated for "the building of partnerships" to "strengthen the political foundation for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region." To distinguish the brand

Security Architecture," *Brookings Institute* (September 14, 2020), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/network-power-chinas-effort-to-reshape-asias-regional-security-architecture/>.

¹⁰ Xi Jinping, "New Asian security concept for new progress in security cooperation," (speech, Shanghai, China, May 21, 2014), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy: Sharpening America's Competitive Edge* (Washington, D.C., 2018).

¹² R. Clarke Cooper, "America as the Security Partner of Choice: Highlights of 2019 and a Look Ahead to 2020," *U.S. Department of State FPC Briefing* (January 15, 2020), <https://www.state.gov/america-as-the-security-partner-of-choice-highlights-of-2019-and-a-look-ahead-to-2020/>; R. Clarke Cooper, "America as the Partner of Choice," U.S. Department of State (October 31, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/america-as-the-partner-of-choice/>; U.S. Department of Defense, *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region* (Washington, D.C., June 1, 2019); Charles Hooper, "Defense Security Cooperation Agency Chief on the Value of Partnerships," *Defense News*, December 2, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/outlook/2019/12/02/defense-security-cooperation-agency-chief-on-the-value-of-partnerships/>.

of Chinese security partnerships from those of the U.S., China has called for a “new model of security partnerships” built on the principles of “equality, mutual trust, and win-win cooperation.” In describing its model of security partnerships, China frequently contrasts its model to that of the U.S., which it describes as centered on alliances that target third parties.¹³

Amid U.S.-China competition for support for their proposed visions for the regional security order, security partnerships have become an arena for great power competition. Beijing’s and Washington’s efforts to sway the political alignment of Nepal offers a clear example of how U.S.-China competition fuels both states’ efforts to attract security partners. Nepal is also one of the world’s poorest and weakest countries. *Global Firepower’s* annual ranking of the world’s strongest militaries ranks Nepal 122 out of 138 countries in terms of military strength.¹⁴ Yet Nepal’s weak position has not deterred the U.S. or China from vying over Nepal’s political alignment. In addition to Nepal’s traditionally close defense relations with neighboring India, Nepal has signed DCAs with only two other countries—the U.S. (signed in 1995) and China (signed in 2018). In recent years, Nepal has come to play an integral role in the U.S.’s Indo-Pacific strategy, and the U.S. has expanded its efforts to sway the nation’s political alignment.¹⁵ With U.S. funding, the U.S. and Nepal established the *Pacific Resilience Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange Program* in 2011 to improve Nepal’s domestic HA/DR capabilities, and expanded the program in 2018.¹⁶ U.S. efforts in the defense sphere are

¹³ People’s Republic of China, *China’s National Defense in the New Era* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the PRC, July 2019); People’s Republic of China, *China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the PRC, January 2017).

¹⁴ “2020 Military Strength Ranking,” *Global Fire Power*, <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp>.

¹⁵ The U.S. State Department’s *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy* mentions Nepal no less than eight times.

¹⁶ United States Army, “U.S. Army Pacific, Nepali Army Co-Hosts Disaster Response Exercise,” https://www.army.mil/article/211615/us_army_pacific_nepali_army_co_hosts_disaster_response_exercise; U.S.

accompanied by similar economic inducements, and in 2017 Nepal received a \$500 million grant from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation aid program to advance its development and alleviate poverty.¹⁷

In light of increasingly close U.S.-Nepal ties, Beijing has elevated its efforts to strengthen ties with Katmandu. In the security realm, China and Nepal held their first military exercise in 2017 and regularized the interaction through a DCA in October 2018. The exercise, named Sagarmatha Friendship, occurs annually and focuses on strengthening the disaster relief and domestic counter-terrorism capabilities of the Nepali Army.¹⁸ Beijing has also provided generous military aid to Katmandu, and the signing of the China-Nepal DCA in 2018 was accompanied by a RMB 150 million pledge from Beijing to improve Nepal's HA/DR equipment. PRC President Xi Jinping pledged an equal sum in military aid during his visit to Nepal in October 2019, which coincided with the two countries agreeing to elevate their relations from a "comprehensive" to a "strategic partnership of cooperation."¹⁹

U.S. and Chinese efforts to sway the political alignment of Nepal through security partnerships and military aid exemplify the strategies of both states to shape the future regional security order. In the case of Nepal, both the U.S. and China have donated hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid and military assistance, and established bilateral security arrangements

Indo-Pacific Command, "Multinational Disaster Response Exercise Wraps Up in Nepal," <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/1648647/multinational-disaster-response-exercise-wraps-up-in-nepal/>.

¹⁷ Millennium Challenge Corporation, "U.S. and Nepal Sign \$500 Million Compact," September 14, 2017, <https://www.mcc.gov/news-and-events/release/release-091417-nepal-signing-event>.

¹⁸ "Nepal, China Sign MoU on Military Cooperation," *The Kathmandu Post* (October 27, 2018), <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2018/10/27/nepal-china-sign-mou-on-military-cooperation>; "Nepal, China Hold First-Ever Joint Military Exercises" *The Economic Times* (July 12, 2018), <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/nepal-china-hold-first-ever-joint-military-exercises/articleshow/58208949.cms?from=mdr>.

¹⁹ Nepal Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Joint Statement between Nepal and the People's Republic of China," (October 13, 2019), <https://mofa.gov.np/joint-statement-between-nepal-and-the-peoples-republic-of-china-2/>.

that focus on the domestic security needs of Nepal. Further examples of the U.S. and China leveraging security and economic assistance to seek political influence in recipient countries are common throughout the region. This level of great power attention to states as economically underdeveloped and militarily weak as Nepal not only provides tangible material benefits to middle states, but also demonstrates the level of commitment of both Washington and Beijing to advance their visions of the regional order through security cooperation with middle states.

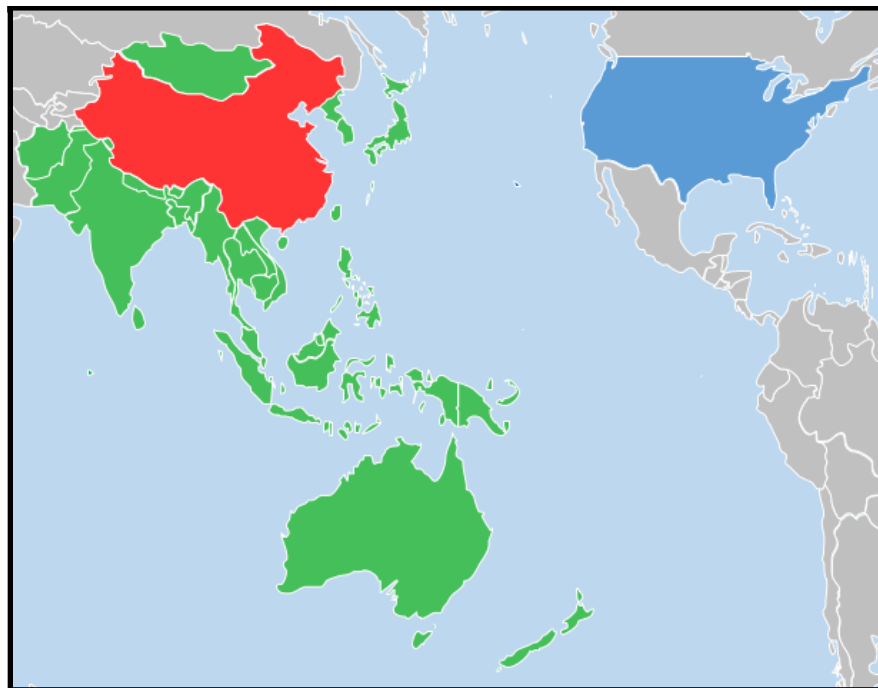


Figure 3.3: The Indo-Pacific Region

3.3 Middle State Push for Autonomy

At the same time, Nepal's experience demonstrates the paradoxical position of states who sit between competing great powers. On the one hand, great power competition can advantage middle states like Nepal who are able to skillfully leverage triangular politics to exact benefits from both great powers. Middle states may be able gain significant financial and security benefits while avoiding close alignment by playing the competing great powers off of each other.

On the other hand, great power competition has the potential to escalate to a point where the great powers are no longer willing to tolerate the hedging positions of middle states, and middle state autonomy falls victim to the expediencies of the great powers' interests. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loon articulates this ever-present concern of middle states, stating "the troubled U.S.-Chinese relationship raises profound questions about Asia's future and the shape of the emerging international order. Southeast Asian countries, including Singapore, are especially concerned, as they live at the intersection of the interests of various major powers and must avoid being caught in the middle or forced into invidious choices...Singapore and other Asia-Pacific countries...fervently hope not to be forced to choose between the United States and China."²⁰

As U.S.-China great power rivalry intensifies and both states seek to gain support for their proposed visions of the regional security order, states across the region fear being caught between the dueling great powers. Evidence suggests that middle states may already feel the constraining effects of U.S.-China rivalry on their autonomy. The two most recent *State of Southeast Asia* survey reports both identify the fear that "U.S.-China competition [would] endanger their autonomy" as a foremost concern of Southeast Asian states. Nearly three-quarters of survey respondents in both surveys identified the fear that "ASEAN is becoming an arena of major power competition and its members may become proxies of a major power" as a major concern, ranking higher than concerns of COVID-19 during the height of the global pandemic.²¹

²⁰ Lee Hsien Loon, "The Endangered Asian Century," *Foreign Affairs* (December 18, 2020), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2020-06-04/lee-hsien-loong-endangered-asian-century>.

²¹ 69.1% in 2021, 73.2% in 2020; Seah, S. et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2021* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021).

In response to growing U.S.-China competition for influence, states across the region are seeking to preserve their autonomy and assert their foreign policy independence. Themes of “non-alignment” and “foreign policy independence” pervade the national security strategies and foreign policies of states throughout the region. One prominent example is Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s efforts to distance the Philippines from its sole alliance partner, the U.S. Shortly following his inauguration in 2016, Duterte actively sought to reduce his country’s longstanding security dependence on the U.S. while building new economic and security ties with China, Japan, Russia, and other states across the region.

Vietnam also regularly reiterates its aversion to alignment in its frequent emphasis of its defense policy of “Three Nos.” First introduced in Vietnam’s 1998 defense white paper, the “Three Nos” policy states that Vietnam will not form military alliances, align with one country against another, or allow the establishment of foreign military bases on Vietnamese soil. Each subsequent defense white paper has reaffirmed Vietnam’s commitment to its “Three Nos” policy and “foreign policy of independence.” In 2019, Hanoi codified the “Three Nos” policy into law with the passage of the *2019 Law on National Defense*.²²

Cambodia, Indonesia, and Malaysia are further examples of Indo-Pacific states who have sought to maintain their autonomy amid growing U.S.-China competition for influence. In a 2018 address to the Extraordinary Party Congress of the Cambodian People’s Party, Prime Minister Hun Sen affirmed Cambodia’s commitment to nonalignment, citing “neutrality and

²² Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Ministry of National Defense, *2004 Vietnam’s National Defense in the Early Years of the 21st Century* (Vietnam, National Political Publishing House, 2004); Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Ministry of National Defense, *2019 Viet Nam National Defense* (Vietnam, National Political Publishing House, 2019); Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Ministry of National Defense, *2009 Viet Nam National Defense* (Vietnam, National Political Publishing House, 2009); Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, *Law on National Defense*, Law No: 22/2018/QH14, June 8, 2018.

nonalignment” as “the evolution of Cambodia’s foreign policy.”²³ Indonesia’s most recent defense white paper also affirms the country’s longstanding commitment to nonalignment, stating “Indonesia always supports peace, security, stability, and prosperity of the world through a non-aligned foreign policy with the principle of preserving its purity as a nonaligned country. Indonesia does not show partiality to any bloc...”²⁴ Lastly, Malaysia’s 2020 Defense White Paper cites “nonalignment and shared security” as the “basis” of its national defense strategy.²⁵ As the U.S. and China have sought to gain support for their competing visions for the regional security order, states across the region are reaffirming their commitment to autonomy and nonalignment as they seek to avoid being entrapped between the U.S. and China.

Just as the U.S. and China have sought to gain support for their competing visions for the regional security order through forming security institutions, middle states are also seeking to increase their security and preserve their autonomy by strengthening security ties among themselves. Since 2010, over 80% of all DCAs signed in the Indo-Pacific were between states other than the U.S. or China, and more than two-thirds of formalized defense dialogues established over the last decade were between middle states. Several anecdotal examples illustrate the deepening of security ties between middle states throughout the Indo-Pacific. In January 2021, Australia and Japan concluded the Reciprocal Access Agreement which provides a framework for combined military operations and allows both countries to conduct military

²³ Vannarith Chheang, “Cambodia Reasserts a Neutral Foreign Policy,” *The Khmer Times* (January 24, 2018), <https://vannarithchheang.com/2018/01/25/cambodia-reasserts-a-neutral-foreign-policy/>.

²⁴ Defence Ministry of The Republic of Indonesia, *Defense White Paper 2015* (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta, 2015).

²⁵ Malaysia Ministry of Defense, *Defence White Paper: A Secure, Sovereign and Prosperous Malaysia* (Ministry of Defence, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2020); <http://www.mod.gov.my/en/information/defence-white-paper>; John G. Ikenberry, “Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia,” *Political Science Quarterly* 131, no. 1 (2016): 9–43; David Shambaugh, “U.S.-China Rivalry in Southeast Asia: Power Shift or Competitive Coexistence?,” *International Security* 42, no. 04 (May 1, 2018): 85–127.

operations within each other's country.²⁶ In June 2015, a year after signing their first DCA, Japan and the Philippines held their first bilateral naval exercise. This marked the first time the two countries participated in a military exercise together that didn't involve the U.S.²⁷ Numerous bilateral exercises between the two countries have been held since, and leaders in both states have advocated for the approval of a VFA that would allow JSDF members to participate in exercises and contingency operations on Philippine soil.²⁸ Also in 2015, India and Australia participated in their first bilateral naval exercises. Cooperation has deepened since, and in 2020, the two countries signed two landmark bilateral defense agreements covering logistical support and defense industry research and development. Singapore and India have also taken significant steps to deepen their defense cooperation, including the signing of an enhanced DCA in 2015 that establishes an annual Defense Ministers' Dialogue and institutionalizes a Singapore-India-Thailand maritime exercise.²⁹ Lastly, South Korea's emergence as the primary arms exporter for many states in Asia, replacing the U.S. and China, is another example of middle states' efforts to strengthen cooperation among themselves and reduce dependence on either great power.³⁰

As U.S.-China competition for influence turns security institutions into an arena for great power competition, middle states are also turning to security institutions to preserve their

²⁶ "Agreement between Japan and Australia concerning the Facilitation of Reciprocal Access and Cooperation between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Australian Defence Force," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan* (January 6, 2022), https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/ocn/au/page4e_001195.html.

²⁷ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Japan, Philippines to Hold New South China Sea Naval Exercise," *The Diplomat* (June 10, 2015), <https://thediplomat.com/2015/06/japan-philippines-to-hold-new-south-china-sea-naval-exercise/>.

²⁸ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Japan, Philippines Seeking New Pact on Military Bases," *The Diplomat* (June 5, 2015), <https://thediplomat.com/2015/06/japan-philippines-seeking-new-pact-on-military-bases/>.

²⁹ Parameswaran, "Defense Dialogue Highlights Singapore-India Security Collaboration."

³⁰ Felix, Chang, "The Rise of South Korea's Defense Industry and Its Impact on South Korean Foreign Relations," *Foreign Research Policy Institute* (April 22, 2019), <https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/04/the-rise-of-south-koreas-defense-industry-and-its-impact-on-south-korean-foreign-relations/>.

autonomy and strengthen their security. Yet rather than seeking to align with one of the competing great powers through balancing or bandwagoning and the formation of alliances, most states in the region are hedging by forming more limited security agreements with both the U.S. and China. Yet it is not these strategies of balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging that is having the greatest impact on the emerging regional security architecture. Diversification, and the extent to which middle states are strengthening security ties among themselves, is transforming the regional security network and shaping the ability of the U.S. and China to realize their proposed visions for regional security. In the following section, I explore the effect of diversification on the regional security network.

3.4 Indo-Pacific Security Network

In articulating their visions for the regional security architecture, both Beijing and Washington speak in terms of networks. The U.S. has advocated for a “principled security network” that “weaves together bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral relationships into a larger, region-wide network.”³¹ The 2018 *U.S. National Defense Strategy* states the U.S. seeks to “strengthen and evolve [its] alliances and partnerships into an extended network capable of deterring or decisively acting to meet the shared challenges of our time.”³² The U.S. State Department’s vision for *A Free and Open Indo-Pacific* also speaks to a regional security network, stating “the United States seeks to build a flexible, resilient network of like-minded

³¹ Ashton Carter, “Networking Defense in the 21st Century,” Remarks at CNAS (June 20, 2016), <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/805206/networking-defense-in-the-21st-century-remarks-at-cnas/>.

³² U.S. Department of Defense, “Indo-Pacific Strategy Report;” U.S. Department of Defense, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge,” 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

security partners to address common challenges.”³³ Speaking to U.S. centrality within this network, previous U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter describes the U.S. as the critical ‘networker’ who “enhances cooperation and builds and strengthens connections” between nodes in the regional security network.³⁴

China also describes its vision for the regional security architecture in terms of networks. Speaking at the seventh annual Xiangshan Forum in Beijing in 2016, Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin called for a “comprehensive and multi-layered network” to support the regional security architecture.³⁵ Liu’s comments draw on the network-centric conceptions underpinning Xi Jinping’s call to build a “community of common destiny.” In his Work Report to the Nineteenth Party Congress in October 2017, Xi called on countries to “work together to build a community with a shared future for mankind...reject the Cold War mentality...and take a new approach to developing state-to-state relations...with partnership, not alliance.”³⁶ The *People’s Daily* official commentary on the Party Congress described Xi’s statement as a call to form a regional and global “partnership network.”³⁷

To visualize the emerging regional security network and identify the prominence of diversification in the strategies of middle states to respond to intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, I construct three separate network diagrams. The first network diagram is constructed using data

³³ U.S. Department of State, “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision,” (November 4, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Free-and-Open-Indo-Pacific-4Nov2019.pdf>.

³⁴ Carter, “Networking Defense in the 21st Century.”

³⁵ Alice Eckman, “At the 2016 Xiangshan Forum, China Outlines a Vision for Regional Security Governance,” *The Diplomat* (October 15, 2016), <https://thediplomat.com/2016/10/at-the-2016-xiangshan-forum-china-outlines-a-vision-for-regional-security-governance/>.

³⁶ 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,” *Xinhua* (October 18, 2017), http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping’s_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress

³⁷ Zhong Sheng, “Significance of 19th CPC Congress, Promoting Community of Common Destiny,” *Beijing Renmin Ribao* (November 24, 2017).

on all DCAs between states in the Indo-Pacific, including agreements with the U.S. and China. The second network diagram is constructed using data on all institutionalized senior defense dialogues between states in the region. I consider institutionalized senior defense dialogues to be regularized annual or biennial dialogues attended by the Defense Minister (or Deputy Minister) or Chief of the Armed Forces (or Vice Chief) from at least one of the participating countries. The third network diagram is constructed using data on regularized combined military exercises between states in the region. All networks are displayed for the years 2010 and 2020 to highlight the evolution of each network over the last decade.

To construct each network, I draw on novel datasets of all known DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises between states in the Indo-Pacific (including the U.S. and China) for the years 1980 to 2020. In creating the Indo-Pacific DCA dataset, I build on the Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset (DCAD), which identifies all known DCAs signed throughout the world from 1980 to 2010. I update the DCAD to include DCAs signed between states in the Indo-Pacific through the year 2020, as well as refine the DCAD to include omitted agreements.³⁸ In total, I identify 316 DCAs signed between Indo-Pacific states from 1980-2020, including 116 DCAs signed between 2011 and 2020. To identify patterns in the regional bilateral defense dialogue network, I construct a novel dataset of all known institutionalized bilateral defense dialogues in the region established from 1980-2020. I identify 163 bilateral defense dialogues, including 92 held at the senior level. For the bilateral combined military exercise network, I construct a dataset of all known institutionalized combined military exercises between states in the region for the years 1980-2000. I identify 201

³⁸ The DCAD identifies 137 DCAs signed between Indo-Pacific states from 1980 to 2010, including agreements with the U.S. I identify 200. Brandon J. Kinne, "The Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset (DCAD)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(4), 2019: 729-755.

institutionalized bilateral combined military exercises established between states in the region during this time period, with each exercise taking place on an annual or biannual basis. A description of the data collection process of each dataset is included in the Appendix.

While there is certainly a degree overlap in DCAs, defense dialogues, and combined military exercises, as some DCAs directly specify the establishment of a bilateral defense policy coordination mechanism or regular training and exercises, the distinct patterns in the network diagrams indicate there are important differences in each of the institutions. Examining each institution separately also adds a degree of robustness to the analysis. For instance, though all DCAs provide frameworks for routine defense cooperation, the actual levels of cooperation that takes place between states who share a DCA may vary. Incorporating additional forms of security institutions, such as institutionalized senior defense dialogues and combined military exercises, helps mitigate the potential for drawing inaccurate conclusions based on one single measure. The relative costs involved with senior defense dialogues and combined military exercises also increases the robustness of the findings. Senior level dialogues require a significant commitment of resources for participating states and impose significant opportunity costs on time-constrained senior leaders. Accordingly, scholars have used high-level meetings and international travel as a measurement of the importance states place on a bilateral relationship.³⁹ Similarly, regular combined military exercises require extensive planning and often substantial military resources, and can impose a significant burden on countries in terms of personnel, equipment, and opportunity costs. Exercises are frequently planned months or even years in advance, and for smaller states, the costs of an exercise can be a significant portion of

³⁹ For example, see Scott L. Kastner and Phillip C. Saunders, "Is China a Status Quo or Revisionist State? Leadership Travel as an Empirical Indicator of Foreign Policy Priorities," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2012): 163–177; James H. Lebovic and Elizabeth N. Saunders, "The Diplomatic Core: The Determinants of High-Level U.S. Diplomatic Visits, 1946–2010," *International Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (March 2016): 107–123.

the state's defense budget.⁴⁰ While the scale and scope of exercises can certainly vary, the decision to hold a regular combined military exercise signals a significant investment in a bilateral relationship.

While the scale and scope of security cooperation may vary across DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and combined military exercises, the existence of these bilateral security institutions, at a minimum, signals a dyad's base level of shared security interests, a willingness to regularly cooperate on security matters, and an expectation of mutual gain. These institutions also provide a framework for future security cooperation, and signal a dyad's intentions to expand bilateral cooperation. In their variance, these forms of security institutions are not unlike alliances, which can range from highly active partnerships that facilitate a broad range of defense pledges and security cooperation activities such as the U.S.-Japan alliance or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to alliances which lie dormant and are subject to uncertainty about their continued relevance, such as the alliance between China and North Korea.⁴¹ Moreover, the intent of the network analysis in this chapter is not to demonstrate which states share the closest security ties, or which states are balancing against or bandwagoning with China, but to demonstrate the growing prominence of these forms of security institutions, and identify which states and dyads are most likely to form them. What is lost in explaining the extent of security cooperation within a specific bilateral relationship is gained in considering the totality of the proliferation of security institutions across the region. Analyzing institutionalized senior defense dialogues and combined military exercises in conjunction with

⁴⁰ Gary Roughead and AMTI Leadership, "The Evolving Role of Military Exercises in Asia," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (March 4, 2015), <https://amti.csis.org/the-evolving-role-of-military-exercises-in-asia/>.

⁴¹ See Huang, Yufan, "Q. and A.: Yan Xuetong Urges China to Adopt a More Assertive Foreign Policy," *New York Times* (February 15, 2016), <https://cn.nytimes.com/china/20160215/c15chinayan/dual/>.

analyzing DCAs increases the confidence of findings derived from any single one of these institutions.

Alongside each network diagram, I display the corresponding centrality measures of the twelve most central states in the network. Centrality quantifies the extent to which each node, or state, is connected to other nodes in the network and its position relative to other nodes. Nodes which are more central within the network are traditionally viewed as having a “positional advantage” in the network, which in turn provides greater opportunities to exercise power and influence within the network.⁴² I focus on four of the most commonly used measures of centrality in the network literature: degree, betweenness, closeness, and eigenvector.

Degree is the simplest, and arguably crudest, measure of network centrality. Degree is simply the total number of ties between a node and all other nodes in the network. For the DCA network, degree indicates the total number of DCA partners of each state. While degree can be a powerful indication of the importance of a node within a network, degree is limited in that it does not account for the network structure beyond a node’s immediate partners. Other measures of centrality help account for this limitation. Betweenness measures how central a node is within a network by how efficiently it connects to other nodes. For example, a node with a higher betweenness score may be more central within a network because of its position as an intermediary between two otherwise disconnected nodes (e.g., China’s role as an intermediary with North Korea in the Six Party Talks.) Similar to betweenness, closeness relates to the flow of information and resources within a network. Closeness is calculated by identifying the shortest length between a node and every other node in the network. Nodes that are more central in the

⁴² Linton C. Freeman, “Centrality in Social Networks Conceptual Clarification,” *Social Networks* 1, no. 3 (1978): 215–239; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, “Network Analysis for International Relations.”

network are less dependent on other nodes, or intermediaries, to relay information or transmit resources to and from other nodes. Closeness measures in this analysis are scaled for interpretation and smaller closeness measures indicate greater centrality. A final measure of centrality considered in this analysis is eigenvector centrality. Rather than just accounting for the number of a node's ties, or a node's position in the flow structure of a network, eigenvector centrality accounts for the centrality of the nodes to which a node is connected. Nodes with ties to nodes who also have many ties, and nodes who share ties to common partners, receive greater eigenvector scores. Eigenvector scores are weighted against the most central node in the network, with the most central node having an eigenvector score of one.⁴³

Each of these centrality measures offers a distinct view of the emerging Indo-Pacific security network, yet how meaningful are these measures in terms of understanding interstate security ties? Degree, while the simplest of these measures, is arguably the most informative, as it identifies the extent to which each state has formed direct security ties with other states. Betweenness and closeness are perhaps less informative, as it is not clear the extent to which security agreements with a common partner facilitates the transmission of information or resources between two states who do not share a direct security tie. In some cases, intelligence classification agreements or arms export restrictions may actually limit the ability of a state to transmit information or military equipment to a third country. On the other hand, advances in military doctrine, organizational efficiencies, best practices, and many types of information do not face the same barriers to transmission and may be more easily transmitted between security partners. For example, states who do not share a direct security tie to the U.S. can likely gain

⁴³ Ibid.; Phillip Bonacich, "Power and Centrality: A Family of Measures," *American Journal of Sociology* 92, no. 5 (1987): 1170–1182.

some of the same benefits to increasing their military capabilities through security cooperation with Australia, Japan, or South Korea, as these countries' military doctrine, organization, intelligence methods, and equipment have been heavily influenced by their intimate defense relations with the U.S. Yet regardless of the extent to which security agreements with a common partner influences the transmission of information or resources between two otherwise disconnected nodes, betweenness and closeness measures do clearly convey the extent of interconnectivity between states in the network. Large decreases in betweenness scores for highly central nodes and increases for other nodes indicates movement away from a hub-and-spoke-like network to one in which more nodes have direct ties to each other. Decreasing closeness measures indicate the same evolution in network structure. It is in precisely this way that these measures are used to highlight the extent to which diversification is occurring within the Indo-Pacific security network.

Eigenvector centrality measures also offer meaningful insight into security networks. Eigenvector values identify which states have the most security ties to other states, as well as have direct ties to states who also have many security partners. This may indicate the existence of a network structure in which states primarily have security agreements with just a single central state, with two or more highly central states, a structure in which states have security agreements with many states, and the extent to which central states have security agreements with each other. The disparity between the eigenvector scores of the most central states and the less central states in the network can also be meaningful. Decreasing disparity in eigenvector values of can indicate the emergence of other highly central states in the security network, as well as greater connectivity between previously less central states.

Centrality within the Indo-Pacific security network is a matter of primary importance to both the U.S. and China, and both are clear in their desire to advance their positions within the network. U.S. desire to maintain regional primacy is in essence a bid to maintain its dominant centrality within the regional security network. China's aim to diminish U.S. influence and create an 'Asia for Asians' speaks to its desire to weaken the centrality of the U.S. and increase its own. Beijing's and Washington's prioritization of broadening and strengthening security partnerships in the region also speaks to their respective desires to increase their own network centrality. The efforts of both the U.S. and China to increase their security partnerships, as well as similar efforts of middle states, should be reflected in changing network centrality measures. More precisely, the diversification efforts of middle states should be reflected in the increased centrality of middle states in the regional DCA, senior defense dialogue, and combined military exercise networks, as well as decreased centrality of the U.S. and China within the networks.

3.4.1 Indo-Pacific DCA Network

A network diagram of all known DCAs between Indo-Pacific states in the years 2010 and 2020 is displayed in Figure 3.4. Node scale is relative to degree. Corresponding centrality measures for the twelve most central states in the network accompany the network diagram (Table 3.2).

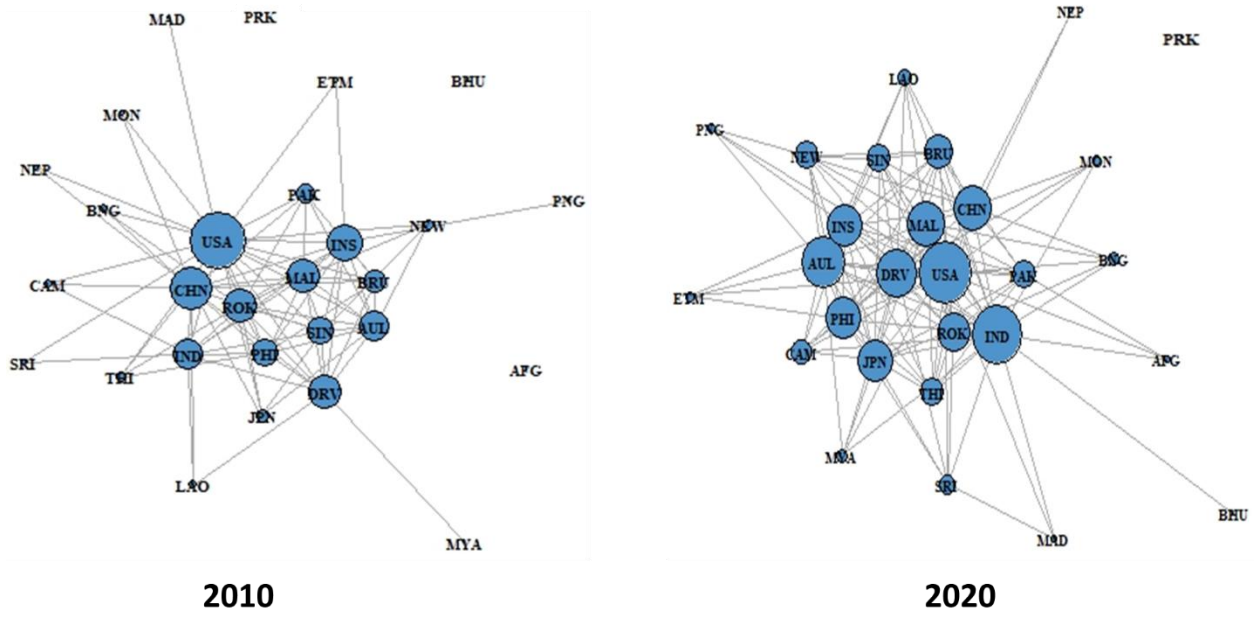


Figure 3.4: Indo-Pacific DCA Network (2010 and 2020)

Table 3.2: Indo-Pacific DCA Network Centrality Measures⁴⁴

	2010				2020			
	Degree	Btwnness	Closeness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Closeness	Eigenvector
USA	21	94.3	1.16	1.0	22	59.3	1.15	1.0
CHN	15	38.8	1.42	0.85	16	21.9	1.38	0.75
VNM	12	29.6	1.50	0.83	17	11.9	1.35	0.92
INS	13	31.5	1.46	0.88	15	10.8	1.42	0.82
MAL	12	5.3	1.50	0.88	16	7.6	1.38	0.90
ROK	12	9.8	1.50	0.81	14	5.1	1.46	0.82
IND	11	14.1	1.54	0.73	21	57.8	1.19	0.98
AUL	11	5.5	1.54	0.78	18	18.3	1.31	0.94
PHI	10	3.0	1.58	0.76	15	7.2	1.42	0.87
SIN	10	4.5	1.58	0.74	10	0.8	1.62	0.65
BRU	8	0.7	1.67	0.65	12	1.8	1.54	0.75
JPN	5	0.4	1.86	0.41	15	7.0	1.42	0.85

⁴⁴ Closeness measure scaled for interpretation: $1 / (\text{closeness} \times 28)$.

The network diagrams and associated centrality measures dramatically demonstrate the prevalence of diversification among middle states over the last decade. Most apparent is the increasing density of the regional security network and the rising importance of middle states within the network. From 2010 to 2020, the average number of DCA partners per middle state nearly doubled, increasing from five DCA partners to nine. The decrease in closeness measures, which dropped for most middle states in the network, also demonstrates the increasing density of the regional security network and rapid growth of ties between middle states. Closeness captures how connected a network is by measuring the shortest path between a node and every other node. Closeness measures decrease as more nodes become directly connected. In 2010, most middle states in the network had a DCA with the U.S., and the U.S. served as the only common security partner for many states in the region. By 2020, ties among middle states had greatly increased, and many states had several common security partners other than the U.S. For example, Japan's 2010 closeness value of 1.86 indicates that in 2010, there were an average of 1.86 edges between Japan and every other state in the network, indicating that Japan lacked direct security ties with most states in the region. By 2020, Japan's closeness value dropped to 1.42, indicating that on average, Japan was now connected to more than half of all other states in the network through a direct DCA tie.

In addition to growing network density and the substantial increase in DCA ties between middle states, the increasing centrality scores of many middle states demonstrates the prevalence of diversification in the strategies of middle states. Degree scores have significantly increased for almost all middle states in the region, and have tripled for Japan and nearly doubled for Australia and India. Betweenness scores have also increased for states throughout the region. The betweenness scores of India and Japan have more than quadrupled, and those of Australia and

Brunei have approximately tripled. The eigenvector scores of almost all middle states have also increased relative to the U.S., indicating middle states are becoming more central in the network, and increasingly connected to other middle states who are also more central in the network. In line with the expectation that more militarily capable and economically developed states make the most attractive security partners, relatively powerful middle states—Australia, India, and Japan—have experienced the greatest increases in centrality.

The increasing centrality of middle states in the regional security network stands in contrast to the relatively flat or decreasing centrality scores of the U.S. and China. The U.S. and China were by far the two most central nodes in the network in 2010. Both the U.S. and China maintained the largest number of DCA partners (as indicated by their high degree scores) and enjoyed the highest betweenness and lowest closeness measures of all states in the network. Yet with the substantial rise in DCA ties between middle states over the last decade, the centrality measures of the U.S. and China are becoming less dominant. Both states remained very central in the regional security network in 2020, but the disparity between the centrality of the great powers and that of middle states shrunk significantly. This is perhaps most evident in the shrinking gap in eigenvector scores between the U.S. and middle states and the decreasing betweenness scores of both the U.S. and China. In terms of eigenvector scores, the U.S. remains the most central node in the network, indicating that it is connected to the other most central states in the network. But as middle states form security ties between themselves, the disparity between the U.S.’ eigenvector score and that of other middle states has shrunk. Middle states are also becoming more central in the network, and states’ security ties are becoming more diversified and less reliant on the U.S. The betweenness measures of the U.S. and China have also dramatically declined, decreasing by approximately forty percent for both states. The degree scores of both

the U.S. and China have also remained flat, but this is perhaps more of a reflection that the U.S. and China have already formed DCAs with most states in the region, and that they institutionalized security relations with other states earlier than middle states institutionalized security relations among themselves. While the U.S. and China certainly remain very central within the regional security network, the stagnant centrality scores of both states are a direct reflection of the prominence of diversification and the growing importance of security ties between middle states.

3.4.2 Indo-Pacific Senior Defense Dialogue Network

Similar trends are reflected in the regional defense dialogue network. A network diagram of all known institutionalized senior defense dialogues between Indo-Pacific states in the years 2010 and 2020 is displayed in Figure 3.5. Node scale is relative to degree. Corresponding centrality measures for the twelve most central states in the network accompany the network diagrams (Table 3.3).

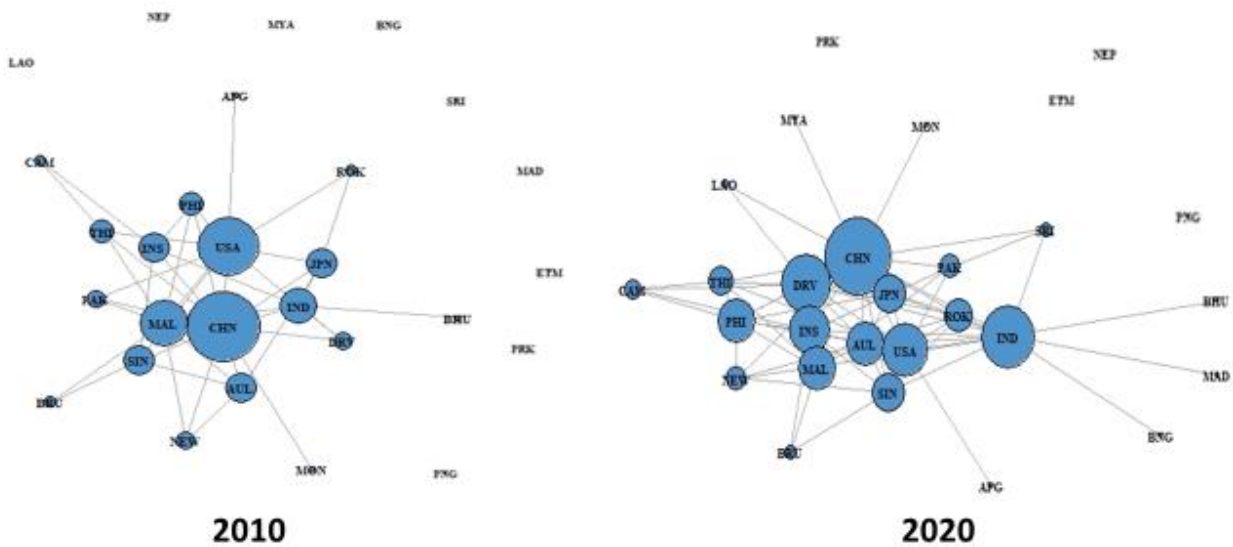


Figure 3.5: Indo-Pacific Senior Defense Dialogue Network (2010 and 2020)

Table 3.3: Indo-Pacific Senior Defense Dialogue Network Centrality Measures (2010 and 2020)⁴⁵

	2010			2020		
	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector
CHN	12	46.0	1.0	16	72.6	1.0
USA	10	36.3	0.85	11	29.4	0.81
MAL	8	21.4	0.67	9	13.2	0.63
IND	6	21.1	0.55	13	70.0	0.84
INS	5	9.6	0.47	10	17.3	0.74
SIN	5	8.6	0.52	8	9.0	0.62
JPN	5	7.1	0.54	8	8.0	0.73
AUL	5	2.7	0.53	9	3.9	0.75
THI	4	8.7	0.46	6	2.3	0.50
PHI	4	1.7	0.51	9	6.4	0.69
VNM	3	1.0	0.41	12	19.3	0.90
ROK	2	0.0	0.24	7	0.6	0.65

In 2010, the U.S. and China were by far the most central states in the network. Both states had the most dialogue partners and highest measures of degree, betweenness, and eigenvector centrality. Yet the network has changed dramatically over the last decade as middle states have institutionalized security relations among themselves. While the U.S. and China have both expanded their number of dialogue partners over the last ten years, the greatest activity has been between middle states. Whereas the U.S. and China accounted for over half (54%) of all senior bilateral defense dialogues in the region from 1980-2009, they accounted for less than one-third of those established from 2010-2020 (30%). Nearly twenty percent of all middle state dyads held a regular senior defense dialogue in 2020, compared to ten percent in 2010. The average number of dialogue partners per middle state has also doubled from two to four over the last decade. China and the U.S. are still very central within the network, but the positions of

⁴⁵ Closeness measures not included as measures are inaccurate due to the disconnected nature of the graph.

India, Indonesia, and Vietnam have grown increasingly prominent as each have expanded their number of dialogue partners two to four-fold.

The increasing importance of diversification among middle states is reflected in the rising degree, betweenness, and eigenvector scores of middle states throughout the region. While the betweenness score of China increased over fifty percent over the last decade, the increase in centrality measures experienced by many middle states has been far more significant. The degree scores of India, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam have each more than doubled, and India and Vietnam now have more senior defense dialogue partners than the U.S. India's betweenness score exceeds that of the U.S. and is nearly even with that of China, increasing over 230 percent in the last decade. The betweenness scores of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam have each increased over 80 percent in the last ten years. Eigenvector scores have also risen across the board for middle states, increasing from an average of less than 0.5 for the ten most central states in the network (other than the U.S. and China) in 2010 to over 0.7 in 2020. While the U.S., and particularly China, remain very central in the regional senior defense dialogue network, the increasing centrality measures of middle states in network reflects the growing importance of diversification in the strategies of middle states.

3.4.3 Indo-Pacific Combined Military Exercise Network

Trends in the regional combined military exercise network are similar with those of the DCA and senior defense dialogue networks, but to a somewhat lesser degree. A network diagram of all known regularized combined military exercises between Indo-Pacific states in the years 2010 and 2020 is displayed in Figure 3.6. Node scale is relative to degree. Corresponding

centrality measures for the twelve most central states in the network accompany the network diagrams (Table 3.4).

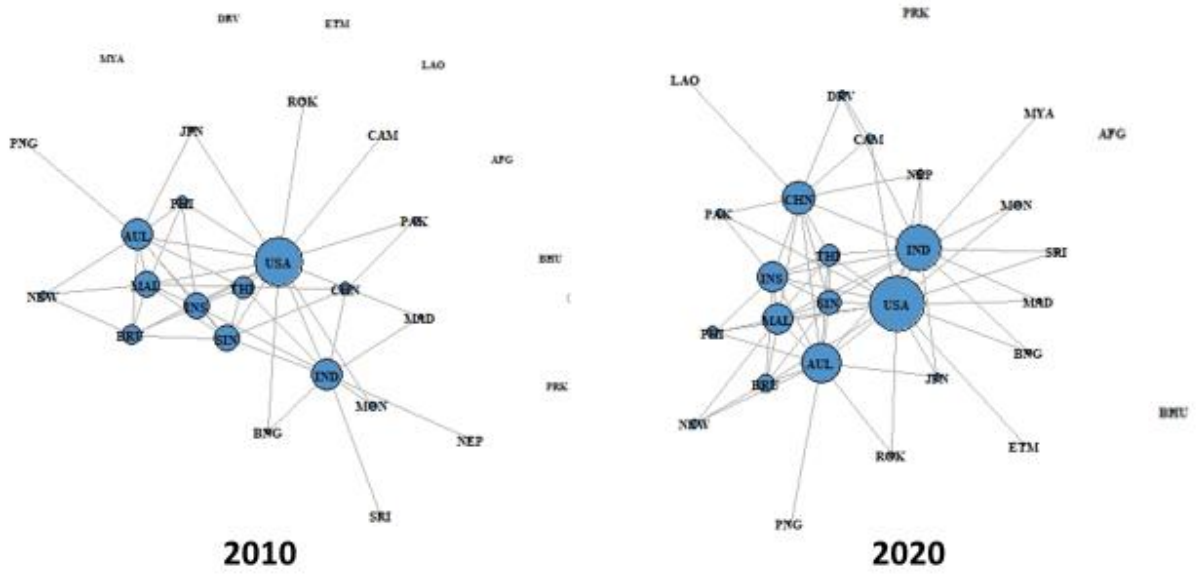


Figure 3.6: Indo-Pacific Bilateral Combined Military Exercise Network (2010 and 2020)

Table 3.4: Indo-Pacific Bilateral Combined Military Exercise Network Centrality Measures (2010 and 2020)⁴⁶

	2010			2020		
	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector
USA	15	91.0	1.00	18	95.4	1.00
IND	10	47.4	0.64	15	68.6	0.85
AUL	10	30.0	0.83	13	46.9	0.85
SIN	8	9.1	0.81	8	1.7	0.72
INS	8	6.8	0.83	10	7.6	0.79
MAL	8	6.6	0.79	10	11.5	0.76
THI	7	6.5	0.73	7	0.4	0.67
BRU	6	4.0	0.64	6	2.7	0.51
CHN	4	2.5	0.33	12	39.5	0.78
PHI	4	0.0	0.48	4	0.0	0.39
NEW	3	0.0	0.32	3	0.0	0.27
JPN	2	0.0	0.26	3	0.0	0.31

Consistent with the DCA and senior defense dialogue network, the combined military exercise network is far more dense and intertwined today than in 2010 as states throughout the region have established regular combined military exercises. Middle states such as Australia, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia have been particularly active in establishing regular military exercises with other states in the region, and the scale and scope of cooperation encompassed within these exercises continues to increase. The eigenvector and betweenness scores of each of these states have also increased relative to the U.S.

However, it is not middle states, but China who has been the most active in establishing regular combined military exercises. China went from four institutionalized combined military exercises in 2010 to twelve in 2020, establishing regular exercises with Cambodia, Laos,

⁴⁶ Closeness measures not included as measures are inaccurate due to the disconnected nature of the graph.

Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam, Thailand, and ASEAN, among others. Its betweenness measure went from 2.5 to 39.5, and its eigenvector score increased from 0.33 to 0.78. U.S. centrality measures also increased over the last decade, and the U.S. now conducts regular military exercises with two-thirds of all states in the region. The continued centrality of the U.S. and China in the regional combined military exercise network is reflective of Washington's and Beijing's efforts to extend their influence in the region as well as their overall military capacity. Of all states in the region, the U.S. and China have the greatest capacity to deploy the military units and equipment necessary to conduct military exercises and have the largest defense budgets to shoulder the costs of exercises. Many middle states have strong incentives to conduct military exercises with the U.S. and China, as numerous benefits towards military modernization can be gained through training with militaries as advanced and capable as those of the U.S. and China.

However, the continued centrality of the U.S. and China in the regional combined military exercise network does not discount the growing centrality of many middle states in the network. Australia and India now conduct regular exercises with over half the states in the region, and Indonesia and Malaysia conduct regular exercises with over a third. Many middle states conduct regular exercises with the U.S. and China, but the U.S. and China are no longer the only states with whom they conduct regular exercises. As middle states have expanded the scale and scope of military exercises with the U.S. and China, they have also sought to establish and expand military exercises with other middle states.

3.4.4 Cumulative Impact on Indo-Pacific Security Network

Network diagrams and centrality measures of the regional DCA, bilateral senior defense dialogue, and combined military exercise networks demonstrate the dramatic influence of

diversification on the regional security network over the last ten years. While there are important distinctions in each of these networks, each tells a similar story. Over the last decade, the regional security network has dramatically increased in density as middle states have formed security agreements among themselves. As the U.S. and China have prioritized strengthening security partnerships to increase their centrality within the regional security network and gain support for their respective visions for the regional order, middle states have turned to each other to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy. The U.S. and China remain the most central states within the regional security network, but their centrality is less dominant compared to a decade ago as middle states have sought to diversify.⁴⁷

In the next section, I provide a more thorough analysis of the patterns of security institutionalization in the region. I demonstrate that the proliferation of security ties between middle states is not simply the result of the growing interconnectedness of competing blocs within the regional security network that are centered on a great power, but that these security ties cross great power divisions and link almost all states in the region. I also show that rather than choosing to form security agreements with just the U.S. or with China, most states in the region are forming agreements with both.

3.5 Competing Blocs and Communities within the Regional Security Network

An alternative explanation for the proliferation of security ties among middle states in the region is that rather than diversifying to reduce dependence on a single power, middle states are

⁴⁷ Centrality measures for the DCA, senior defense dialogue, and combined military exercise networks for the years 2008 and 2012 are provided in the Appendix to increase confidence that the differences between the 2010 and 2020 networks are not simply the result of idiosyncrasies in regional security institutionalization in the year 2010. Network density and centrality measures for the years 2008 and 2012 are comparable to 2010 measures and demonstrate the increasing frequency of security ties between middle states over time.

strengthening ties with each other around a great power, resulting in the formation of distinct security blocs. For example, states could be primarily forming security partnerships with close U.S. allies Australia, Japan, and South Korea in an effort to reinforce a U.S.-centered security bloc. Indeed, the U.S. has encouraged Australia and Japan to broaden their security ties throughout the region as part of its effort to build a ‘principled security network.’⁴⁸ If middle states are simply primarily forming security ties with the U.S. and its allies, or with China and its close partners, such behavior could be viewed more as ‘alliance enhancement’ rather than true diversification. If this is the case, such behavior may presage the devolution of the regional order into two competing blocs centered on the U.S. and China, reminiscent of the distinct Western and Soviet blocs that dominated the Cold War.

If middle states are forming separate blocs centered on the great powers, or some other state or group of states, I would expect to observe several empirical results. First, if regional security blocs centered on the U.S. or China are forming, I would expect to see states choosing to form security agreements with only the U.S. or China, rather than with both. Second, if states were uniting around the U.S., as predicted by the balancing literature, I would expect to see states forming strong ties to the U.S. and its allies, with few ties to states outside the U.S. alliance network. Lastly, I would expect to see the formation of distinct sub-groups, or communities, of security partnerships centered on the U.S. or China.

I address this alternative explanation for the proliferation of security ties among middle states in the region and examine the regional security network for emerging security blocs in

⁴⁸ Ash Carter, “Remarks on The Future of the Rebalance: Enabling Security in the Vital & Dynamic Asia-Pac,” *U.S. Department of Defense*, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/959937/remarks-on-the-future-of-the-rebalance-enabling-security-in-the-vital-dynamic-a/>; Lisa Ferdinando, “Carter, ASEAN Ministers Reaffirm Commitment to Regional Security,” *U.S. Department of Defense*, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/961370/carter-asean-ministers-reaffirm-commitment-to-regional-security/>.

three separate ways. First, I use logistic regression to test whether forming a security partnership with the U.S. is correlated with whether a state forms a partnership with China, and vice-versa. Second, I address the potential for the formation of a U.S.-centered security bloc through a simple calculation of the percentage of each state's DCA partners that are U.S. allies. Lastly, I employ more sophisticated network analysis methods to identify the potential emergence of distinct sub-groups, or communities, within the regional DCA network.

3.5.1 Security Partnerships with both the U.S. and China

As an initial method to identify the potential emergence of distinct security blocs within the regional security network, I analyze whether middle states tend to form security partnerships with either the U.S. or China, or with both. Forming a security partnership with only one of the rival powers may serve as an indication of balancing or bandwagoning, while forming a partnership with both is consistent with a hedging strategy. The prevalence of national strategies and foreign policies in the region that emphasize autonomy and independence suggest that most middle states seek to avoid signaling close alignment to either the U.S. or China, and are likely to form security partnerships with either both the U.S. or China, or with neither. As stated by Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, rather than being “forced to choose between the U.S. and China,” states in the region “want to cultivate good relations with both.”⁴⁹

To identify whether this sentiment is reflecting in the emerging regional security order, I use a simple logistic regression to test whether forming a security partnership with the U.S. (China) makes it more or less likely a state forms a partnership with China (the U.S.). I use a dyad-year panel model for all dyads in the region involving the U.S. or China for the years 2000

⁴⁹ Loong, “The Endangered Asian Century.”

to 2020. In the first model, I use the existence of a DCA with China as the independent variable and the existence of a DCA with the U.S. as the dependent variable, and then switch independent and dependent variables in the second model. The results are positive and at high levels of significance (Table 3.5). Having a DCA with the U.S. (China) significantly increases the likelihood a state will also have a DCA with China (the U.S.). The effects are also substantial. States are ninety percent more likely to form a DCA with China when they have a DCA with the U.S., and are almost forty percent more likely to form a DCA with the U.S. when they have a DCA with China.

Table 3.5: Middle State DCA Formation with the U.S. and China

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	DCA	
	(1)	(2)
DCA w/CHN	1.187*** (0.202)	
DCA w/US		1.187*** (0.202)
Constant	0.389*** (0.126)	-0.762*** (0.173)
Observations	546	546
Log Likelihood	-306.365	-359.399
Akaike Inf. Crit.	616.729	722.798
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

A similar logistic regression using senior defense dialogues as the dependent variable yields even more substantial results (Table 3.6). Indo-Pacific states who have a senior defense dialogue with the U.S. are 175 percent more likely to form a similar dialogue with China, and nearly 285 percent more likely to form a senior defense dialogue with the U.S. when they have one with China. Rather than choosing between the U.S. and China, middle states are institutionalizing their security relations with both the U.S. and China.

Table 3.6: Middle State Senior Defense Dialogue Formation with the U.S. and China

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Senior Defense Dialogue	
	(1)	(2)
Def Dialogue w/CHN	2.008*** (0.208)	
Def Dialogue w/US		1.890*** (0.204)
Constant	-1.774*** (0.156)	-1.099*** (0.119)
Observations	546	546
Log Likelihood	-284.592	-316.924
Akaike Inf. Crit.	573.184	637.848
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

3.5.2 U.S. Allies as a Percentage of DCA Partners

In this second analysis, I test for the potential formation of a broad security bloc centered on the U.S. and its allies Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. Table 3.7 identifies the percentage of each state’s DCA partners that are U.S. allies (or the U.S.), and shows how this percentage has changed over the last twenty years.⁵⁰ For example, in 2000, Bangladesh had only one DCA partner—the U.S. Accordingly, 100 percent of Bangladesh’s DCAs were with the U.S. or one of its allies. By 2010, Bangladesh had also signed DCAs with China and South Korea, leading the U.S. and its allies to account for two-thirds of Bangladesh’s DCA partnerships. By 2020, Bangladesh had also signed DCAs with India and Malaysia while maintaining its previous DCAs with China, South Korea, and the U.S. Accordingly, the U.S. and its ally South Korea accounted for forty percent of Bangladesh’s DCA partnerships. The cells

⁵⁰ More precisely, the calculated percentage is the number of a state’s DCA partners who are U.S. allies (or the U.S.) divided by a state’s total number of DCA partners.

highlighted in blue indicate where fifty percent or more of a state’s DCAs are with the U.S. or one of its allies in the region.

Table 3.7: Percentage of a State’s DCA Partners that are U.S. Allies

Country	Year		
	2000	2010	2020
AFG	N/A	N/A	0.33
AUL	0.33	0.36	0.28
BHU	N/A	N/A	0.00
BNG	1.00	0.67	0.40
BRU	0.50	0.38	0.33
CAM	1.00	0.33	0.44
CHN	0.29	0.20	0.13
DRV	0.50	0.33	0.29
ETM	N/A	0.50	0.75
IND	0.40	0.27	0.29
INS	0.50	0.31	0.40
JPN	0.50	0.60	0.33
LAO	0.00	0.00	0.17
MAD	N/A	1.00	0.33
MAL	0.33	0.33	0.38
MON	0.33	0.50	0.25
MYA	0.00	0.00	0.40
NEP	0.50	0.50	0.50
NEW	0.67	0.50	0.40
PAK	0.67	0.43	0.45
PHI	0.57	0.40	0.33
PNG	N/A	0.00	0.50
PRK	N/A	N/A	N/A
ROK	0.50	0.42	0.36
SIN	0.50	0.40	0.40
SRI	1.00	0.50	0.57
THI	1.00	0.75	0.50
USA	0.31	0.25	0.23
Total ≥ 50%	14	9	5
Percentage greater than or equal to 50%			

The chart suggests that while the U.S. and its allies may have been the earliest DCA partners for many middle states in the region, most states’ security partnerships are no longer centered on the U.S. alliance network. In 2020, only five states had DCA partnerships where the U.S. or its allies accounted for fifty percent or more of a state’s DCA partnerships, compared to fourteen in 2000 and nine in 2010. Other than Thailand, each of these states are small, less

developed states who have very few DCA partners. This suggests that states in the region are not just forming DCAs with the U.S. and its allies to bolster the U.S. alliance network in Asia, but are pursuing a broader diversification strategy that seeks to expand a state's security partnerships beyond the U.S. alliance network.

3.5.3 Communities within the Regional Security Network

In this third analysis, I employ more sophisticated network methods to identify the potential existence of distinct sub-groups, or communities, within the regional DCA network. Network community detection methods identify if a group of nodes have a higher degree of internal density and fewer ties to outside members relative to other sets of nodes. Density is the most common indicator of network connectivity, which is the extent to which nodes are directly or indirectly tied together.⁵¹ Density is calculated by summing the total number of existing ties in a network, or sub-group in a network, and dividing by the total number of possible ties. If distinct blocs are emerging in the regional security network, I would expect to find sub-groups of states who have higher levels of internal density and fewer security partnerships with states outside the sub-group. These could be sub-groups centered on the U.S., China, or another state or group of states in the region such as ASEAN.

To identify if distinct blocs, or communities, exist within the regional security network, I utilize several community detection methods that have been developed to identify cohesive sub-groups within a network. As no one detection method is usually adequate to identify distinct sub-groups, I employ the walktrap, edge-betweenness, and cohesive blocking methods. I focus on the

⁵¹ Daniel A. McFarland, *Integrated Network Science: Applied Social Network Analysis in R* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014).

regional DCA network as a proxy for the regional security network. I also test for the existence of communities within the DCA network at the 2000, 2010, and 2020 time intervals to identify if communities have emerged or disappeared during these time periods.

Each of these methods fail to detect any coherent groupings of distinct communities that possess significantly higher degrees of internal density relative to other potential groupings. Such communities even appear to be absent during the 2000 and 2010 time periods when the network was far less dense, and a higher percentage of states' DCA partners were members of the U.S. alliance network. Modularity, which measures the density of connections within a community, is also low for each of the networks. Modularity scores range from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating every node is in its own community and 1 indicating every node is in the same community. In practice, social networks with strong communities have modularity values that range from 0.3 to 0.7., with higher values rarely occurring.⁵² The modularity values for the 2000, 2010 and 2020 DCA networks are 0.277, 0.087 and 0.057, respectively. As network density increases, modularity decreases, and any coherent communities centered on the U.S. alliance network, China, ASEAN, or any other regional bloc are undetected. The lack of distinct communities within the regional DCA network discounts the potential that the proliferation of security partnerships among middle states is a manifestation of alliance enhancement or the formation of competing blocs. This increases confidence in the assertion that middle states in the region are seeking to strengthen security ties with a broad range of partners through diversification to reduce their reliance on a single partner.

⁵² Mark Newman and Michelle Girvan, "Finding and Evaluating Community Structure in Networks," *Physical Review E*, 69(2), 2004.

3.5.4 Section Summary

The lack of evidence of the emergence of distinct security sub-groups in the region discounts the alternative explanation that the proliferation of security ties between middle states is a manifestation of states' efforts to strengthen ties around one of the competing great powers or form competing security blocs. The security partnerships of most middle states are far broader than the U.S. alliance network, and most middle states are forming security partnerships with both the U.S. and China. Distinct sub-groups of tightly linked security partners who have few ties outside their community are also absent in the current regional security network. Each of these outcomes point to the prevalence of diversification as a primary strategy of middle states throughout the region. In the Indo-Pacific today, middle states are not just seeking to balance or bandwagon by aligning with one of the competing great powers and its federation of alliances. Nor are they simply hedging by forming security partnerships with both the U.S. and China. Middle states across the region are strengthening their security ties with a broad range of partners that transcends any great power-centered security network as part of a broad diversification strategy that seeks to reduce their reliance on any one power.

3.6 Conclusion

As the U.S. and China have proposed competing visions for the regional security order, middle states throughout the region are strengthening their commitment to nonalignment and foreign policy independence. Security institutions are a primary mechanism through which the U.S. and China seek to gain support for their proposed visions for the regional order, and intensifying U.S.-China rivalry has transformed security institutions into an arena for great power competition. Yet rather than just serving as mechanisms for great powers to exert their

influence, middle states are also leveraging security institutions to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy.

The dynamics of U.S.-China great power competition and middle state desire for autonomy have contributed to the dramatic proliferation of security institutions throughout the Indo-Pacific over the last two decades. While the efforts of the U.S. and China to advance their visions of the regional security order have contributed to this proliferation, much of the growth in security institutions is due to growing security cooperation among middle states. Through diversification, middle states seek to strengthen their security and advance their autonomy in ways that are independent of the competing great powers.

Network diagrams and centrality measures of the regional DCA, bilateral senior defense dialogue, and combined military exercise networks in the Indo-Pacific demonstrate the dramatic influence of diversification on the regional security network over the last ten years. As middle states have formalized security ties among each other, the security network has greatly increased in density and the centrality measures of middle states within the network have increased across the board. While the U.S. and China remain very central within the regional security network, their centrality is far less dominant than compared to a decade ago. As the U.S. and China have both sought to increase their centrality within the network, the emerging ties between middle states have created a regional security network far less dependent on either great power.

In the next chapter, I further explore the impact of diversification on the emerging Indo-Pacific security network. While middle states are increasingly forming security ties among themselves, not all middle states are diversifying, and middle states are not just forming security ties with all other middle states. In Chapter Four, I empirically test the hypotheses derived in Chapter Two concerning which states are more likely to pursue a diversification strategy and

which pairs of states will be more likely to form a security partnership. Identifying the answers to these questions are important to understanding the emerging structure of the regional security network, and the roles of the U.S., China, and middle states within the network.

CHAPTER 4. EMPIRICAL TEST OF DIVERSIFICATION

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the prevalence of diversification among middle states in the Indo-Pacific. Using descriptive and network-based evidence, I demonstrated the influence of diversification on the regional security network, describing the growth and patterns of security institutionalization across the region. As highlighted in the regional security network diagrams and the centrality measures of states within the network, not all states are as likely to diversify, and not all states are forming security partnerships with every other state in the region. In this chapter, I provide empirical tests of the hypotheses derived in Chapter Two, identifying which types of states are more likely to diversify, and when they do, with which types of states are most likely to form a security partnership.

In Chapter Two, I argued that middle states who are militarily capable, economically developed, face a significant threat from the rising power, or who have a weak commitment to alliance are more likely to employ a diversification strategy. I also argued that as middle states seek to diversify, states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, share a common security partner, or who face a common threat are more likely to form a security partnership. To test these hypotheses, I employ several statistical inference methods to identify and distinguish between the various factors that may influence middle states to strengthen security relations amid increasing great power rivalry. Each of these quantitative methods have their own strengths and weaknesses, and in drawing on the strengths of multiple approaches, I aim to highlight important dynamics that are shaping the evolution of the Indo-Pacific security network. As discussed in the Introduction Chapter, numerous scholars have conducted valuable qualitative research analyzing security cooperation across the Indo-Pacific. Much of this work is qualitative, focused on identifying and describing security cooperation

between certain states in the region. Through the application of quantitative methods, I aim to shed light on factors that are influencing security cooperation across the region as a whole. By broadly analyzing the growth of security institutions in the region, and the dynamics that are influencing their formation, I aim to complement existing qualitative studies and advance the field's understanding of the role security institutions play in middle states' response to growing U.S.-China rivalry.

To preview the findings of this chapter, I identify significant evidence in support of the hypotheses derived in Chapter Two concerning which states are most likely to diversify, and with whom they are likely to diversify. I find that middle states who are militarily capable, economically developed, or face a significant threat from the rising power are more likely to employ a diversification strategy. As they seek to diversify, states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, share a common security partner, or who face a common adversary are more likely to form a security partnership. To derive these findings, I continue the previous chapter's practice of operationalizing diversification as the formation of DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises between middle states. I view the existence of one of these forms of institutionalized security cooperation as an indication of some level of security partnership between states.

In using these measures, I acknowledge that the extent of security cooperation that exist between states who share one of these agreements is not constant. For example, while both Australia and the Philippines, and Australia and Vietnam share a DCA, defense cooperation between Australia and the Philippines is currently far more extensive than Australia's defense cooperation with Vietnam. However, though the extent of bilateral security cooperation encompassed within a DCA may vary, the existence of a DCA between states signals a basic

level of shared security interests and expectation of joint gains, and provides a framework for the expansion of bilateral security cooperation. My intent in using these measures of security cooperation is not to identify which states have the closest security ties, but to demonstrate that bilateral security cooperation between middle states is occurring, and occurring to an increasingly extensive extent.

In presenting the evidence for these claims, I proceed as follows. First, I use descriptive evidence to demonstrate how middle states in the Indo-Pacific have diversified to varying extents and at varying rates over the last two decades. I identify the number of security partnerships each state has formed over separate time periods, and highlight which states have formed a DCA with China, the U.S., with both, or with neither. Second, I use negative binomial regression to provide greater precision to the trends observed in the descriptive data and identify which types of states are most likely to pursue a diversification strategy. I consider all states in the Indo-Pacific (other than the U.S. and China), and account for all DCAs, institutionalized bilateral senior defense dialogues, and regular bilateral combined military exercises formed among middle states in the region for the years 2000 through 2020. Third, I employ network inference methods to determine which pairs of states are more likely to form a security partnership. Specifically, I construct a temporal exponential random graph model (TERGM) to model the evolution of the regional DCA network over the last twenty years. The TERGM allows for the identification of both exogenous (individual state and dyadic characteristics) and endogenous (network) factors that have influenced the evolution of the regional security network. To increase confidence in the TERGM results, I model the formation of DCA ties in the region using a dyad-year panel dataset and logistic regression. While logistic regression is less adept at modeling network data and specifying endogenous factors, the statistical results are largely consistent with the network

model results. The logistic regression results and interpretation are included in the Appendix, along with the TERGM diagnostics. I conclude by discussing the collective results from each of the models and the broader implications for the regional security network and the middle state strategy of diversification.

4.1 Who Diversifies?

4.1.1 Descriptive Evidence

To help visualize the patterns of diversification and the institutionalization of security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific over the last twenty years, I construct a chart that identifies how many DCA partners each middle state had in the years 2000, 2010, and 2020 (Figure 4.1). The chart also indicates whether each state had a DCA with the U.S. (blue), a DCA with China (red), a DCA with both the U.S. and China (green), or did not have a DCA with either the U.S. or China (black). States are divided into four groups based on their number of DCA partners.¹ I exclude DCAs with China and the U.S. in the total count of DCA partners to focus on the formation of DCAs among middle states. I concentrate on DCAs in this analysis as these agreements are often broad framework agreements that facilitate a wide range of defense cooperation activities and may incorporate regular defense dialogues and combined military exercises within the overall agreement. Similar charts for senior defense dialogues and combined military exercises identify similar trends and are included in the Appendix.

¹ The thresholds for the four groups are set to approximately optimize the distribution of states for the 2020 time period among four equally spaced bins.

	≤ 2			3 - 6		7 - 10		> 10		
2000	AFG	MAD	PNG	AUL	MAL	ROK				
	BHU	MON	PRK	BRU	SIN					
	BNG	MYA	SRI	IND						
	CAM	NEP	THI	INS						
	DRV	NEW		JPN						
	LAO	PAK		PHL						
2010	AFG	MAD	SRI	JPN			AUL	PHL	INS	
	BHU	MON	THI	NEW			BRU	SIN	ROK	
	BNG	MYA					DRV			
	CAM	NEP					IND			
	ETM	PNG					MAL			
	LAO	PRK					PAK			
2020	AFG			BNG	SRI	BRU			AUL	PHL
	BHU			ETM		CAM			DRV	ROK
	MAD			LAO		NEW			IND	
	NEP			MON		PAK			INS	
	PRK			MYA		SIN			JPN	
				PNG		THI			MAL	

Legend

DCA w/US

DCA w/PRC

DCAs w/US & PRC

DCA w/neither US nor PRC

Figure 4.1: Total DCA Partners (Indo-Pacific States)²

Several trends are readily apparent from the chart. Foremost, bilateral security institutions have proliferated throughout the Indo-Pacific over the last twenty years. The number of DCAs between middle states have dramatically increased over the last two decades, and particularly in the last decade. As identified in Figure 4.1, most states in 2000 had less than three DCA partners, and only one (South Korea) had more than six. By 2020, most states had more than seven DCA partners.

Figure 4.1 also highlights which states are forming these security institutions with the most number of partners, and those who are forming them with the least. In each time period, relatively militarily capable and economically developed states are those who had the most number of partners. Australia, India, Japan, and South Korea rank among the states with the most number of DCA partners. Relatedly, those states with the fewest DCA partners are those who are

² The total number of DCAs for each state excludes DCAs with the U.S. or China.

relatively economically underdeveloped and militarily weak. As of 2020, most of these states are also closely aligned to a powerful patron, such as Bhutan, North Korea, and Afghanistan (prior to the U.S. departure in 2021). This observation aligns with the logic that closely aligned states are less likely to pursue diversification as a means to advance their autonomy as they have chosen (or have been forced to accept) a foreign policy of alignment over autonomy. Additionally, poor, weak states are also less desirable security partners than economically developed, militarily capable states. Even if a closely aligned weak state wanted to diversify its relations to reduce its dependence on its powerful patron, it may have difficulty finding willing partners.

A second observation from Figure 4.1 is that there are no instances of middle states avoiding forming DCAs with either the U.S. or China and only forming these agreements with many other middle states. All states who have at least seven middle state DCA partners also have DCAs with the U.S., China, or with both. Additionally, the only states with seven or more middle state DCA partners who do not have a DCA with both the U.S. and China are Australia, Japan, and South Korea—the U.S.’ closest allies in the Indo-Pacific. These states are the only states in the region who have DCAs with many other middle states but have not signed any meaningful security cooperation agreements with China. The high DCA activity of these states who are closely allied to the U.S. at first glance appears disconnected from the claim that states who have a weak commitment to alliance will be likely to diversify. However, the tendency for states who have a weak commitment to alliance to diversify does not discount that states who have a strong commitment to alliance may also have powerful reasons for wanting to strengthen security cooperation with other middle states. For instance, there are several potential explanations for the observed high DCA activity of close U.S. allies Australia, Japan, and South Korea. First, each of these states has expressed a desire to play a greater role in regional security,

and closer security relations with other states may provide important benefits to these states that do not distract from their alliance with the U.S.³ For instance, a greater role in regional security may increase the ability of these states to shape the regional security order as well as shape the preferences of their partner states. Some degree of increased security cooperation may also be motivated by a desire to expand markets for arms exports, a motivation particularly relevant to South Korea.

Second, increased regional security cooperation by these close U.S. allies may also be motivated in part by a desire to hedge against U.S. retrenchment. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. allies in Asia have expressed concern of U.S. withdrawal from the region. These concerns were exacerbated under the Trump administration's "America First" doctrine which questioned the value of overseas alliances and military support to foreign countries. In strengthening cooperation with other states, these states increase their ability to manage security threats without the guarantees of U.S. involvement. Moreover, in the face of growing Chinese power and shared concerns of Beijing's long-term intentions, extending their own security networks in the region makes it more challenging for Beijing to establish a sphere of influence and Chinese-centric regional security order. Strengthening security cooperation with other states while maintaining close alliance ties is consistent with the claim that in the face of growing great power rivalry,

³ For example, Tokyo has expressed its desire to be a "Proactive Contributor to Peace" and emphasized its "need to contribute more actively to the peace and stability of the region." Similarly, Canberra's most recent *Defense Strategic Update* states "Australia must be an active and assertive advocate for stability, security and sovereignty" in the region, and describes its efforts to "build new, and strengthen existing partnerships" as contributing to advancing its role in regional security. Lastly, Seoul's launch of its New Southern Policy in 2017 focuses on promoting greater cooperation with South and Southeast Asia is in part motivated by its desire to increase its regional influence. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Security Policy of Japan," <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/security/index.html>; Australia Department of Defence, "2020 Defence Strategic Update," (2020): 25-26, <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/publications/2020-defence-strategic-update>; South Korean Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy, "New Southern Policy Plus: A Community for People, Peace and Prosperity" (2021), <http://www.nsp.go.kr/eng/main.do#>.

middle states seek to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy by reducing their reliance on either great power.

A third explanation for the growing security cooperation activity of close U.S. allies suggests a possible alternative path that contributes to the proliferation of security cooperation arrangements among middle states. The efforts of Australia, Japan, and South Korea to strengthen security ties with other middle states may in part be motivated by a desire to reinforce the U.S.-led security network in the region. Indeed, the U.S. has encouraged its allies to strengthen ties with other states in the region to build a “principled security network” of “like-minded partners.”⁴ Rather than viewing increased middle state security cooperation as diversification to reduce reliance on the U.S., such activity may be viewed more as “alliance enhancement.” Yet even if these close U.S. allies are seeking to bolster the U.S. alliance network by strengthening cooperation with other states, their efforts to expand interstate security cooperation facilitates the diversification efforts of other middle states. The relation between alliance commitment and diversification will be further explored in the next chapter through a case study of Philippine diversification behavior under the Duterte administration.

4.1.2 Negative Binomial Regression

To provide greater precision to the above observations and test the hypotheses derived in Chapter Two, I construct several regression models to test which states are most likely to pursue a diversification strategy. In Chapter Two, I proposed certain middle states are more likely to

⁴ Ash Carter, “Remarks on The Future of the Rebalance: Enabling Security in the Vital & Dynamic Asia-Pac,” *U.S. Department of Defense*, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/959937/remarks-on-the-future-of-the-rebalance-enabling-security-in-the-vital-dynamic-a/>; Lisa Ferdinando, “Carter, ASEAN Ministers Reaffirm Commitment to Regional Security,” *U.S. Department of Defense*, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/961370/carter-asean-ministers-reaffirm-commitment-to-regional-security/>.

diversify: States who face a significant security threat from the rising power, governments who have a weak commitment to alliance, and states who are militarily capable and economically developed.

H1. Middle states who face a significant security threat from the rising power are more likely to diversify

H2: Governments who have a weak commitment to alliance are more likely to diversify

H3. Middle states who are militarily capable or economically developed are more likely to diversify

To test which states are most likely diversify, I use negative binomial regression and a state-year panel model for all middle states in the Indo-Pacific for the years 2000-2020. I use the previously described datasets covering all DCAs, institutionalized senior defense dialogues, and formalized combined military exercises between states in the Indo-Pacific as my primary data source. As the dependent variable, I use a count variable of the total number of DCAs, institutionalized bilateral senior defense dialogues, and reoccurring combined military exercises established by each state with another middle state in the observed year. I use negative binomial regression rather than a Poisson regression as the variance of the dependent variable is significantly greater than the variable's mean.⁵

To test whether middle states who face a significant security threat from the rising power are more likely to diversify (H1), I include a variable indicating whether the state experienced a militarized interstate dispute (MID) against China within the five years preceding the year of

⁵ Negative binomial and Poisson regression are usually the most appropriate models when the dependent variable is a discrete count outcome. When the variance of the dependent variable is roughly equal to its mean, the Poisson regression model is typically most appropriate to fit the data. If the variance is significantly greater than the mean, the negative binomial regression is typically most appropriate. I ran the models using both negative binomial regression and Poisson regression and tested which model provided a better fit for the data using a likelihood ratio test. The test revealed the negative binomial regression provided a better fit for the data ($p < 0.05$). See Michael Don Ward and John S. Ahlquist, *Maximum Likelihood for Social Science: Strategies for Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 2014-17.

observation.⁶ I anticipate that states who experienced a MID against China will be more likely to establish one of these forms of security institutions with another state. As an alternate operationalization of threat from the rising power, I also test whether states who have an active territorial dispute with China during the observed period are more likely to form these institutions.⁷ States with active territorial disputes against the rising power are especially at risk as the rising power's growing strength may be used to settle historic disputes and expand its borders. To evaluate the impact of military strength and economic development on diversification (H3), I include measures of a state's annual military expenditures and GDP per capita.⁸ I anticipate that states who have greater economic and military capabilities will be more likely to form these security institutions as they have greater capacity for defense cooperation and are generally more attractive defense partners.

I also control for regime type, the number of states to which the observed state is contiguous, and whether the state has a formal defense alliance with the U.S. I anticipate democratic states will be more likely to form these security institutions due to democratic norms of cooperation and government transparency, which may facilitate increased trust between security partners.⁹ I anticipate states with more neighbors will be more likely to form these institutions as neighboring states may be more likely to form cooperative security institutions to

⁶ Glen Palmer, et al., "The MID5 Dataset, 2011-2014: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description." Working paper (2020). <https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/MIDs/mid-5-data-and-supporting-materials.zip/view>.

⁷ Data on states with active territorial disputes against China from Chinese Foreign Relations Dataset (Zhang, 2018) and Fravel (2008).

⁸ GDP per capita data from The World Bank, "World Development Indicators," <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>; Annual military expenditure data from National Material Capabilities (v6.0): David J. Singer, "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816-1985", *International Interactions*, 14: 115-32 (1987).

⁹ I use the Polity V dataset to identify democratic states. In line with common practice, I consider states with a Polity score greater than or equal to six as a democracy. Center for Systemic Peace, *Polity V Dataset* (2020). <https://www.systemicpeace.org/csprandd.html>.

manage shared security challenges and border security issues.¹⁰ Lastly, I control for states who have a formal defense alliance with the U.S.

I do not include any statistical tests of how a government's alliance commitment affects its diversification behavior (H2) in this chapter. Alliance commitment is a difficult concept to operationalize, and levels of commitment may vary from year to year and across administrations. Due to the difficulties of identifying a consistent quantifiable operationalization for alliance commitment that is reliable across different countries and time periods, I explore the relation between alliance commitment and diversification behavior in the following chapter through a detailed case study of the Philippines.

4.1.3 Results

The negative binomial regression results align with the hypotheses and increase confidence in the predictions concerning which states are more likely to diversify. Results are reported in Table 4.1. The GDP per capita and military expenditures variables, as well as MID and active territorial disputes with China variables, are tested separately to avoid multicollinearity. Each of the primary independent variables are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), with the exception of the MID against PRC variable when tested with the military expenditures variable in Model 4. The MID against PRC variable falls just outside standard

¹⁰ I use the Correlates of War Direct Contiguity dataset to identify the number of states with which a state shares a border (land or sea). I consider contiguous states to be those which share a land border or are separated by 400 miles of water or less. 400 miles is the maximum distance at which two 200-mile exclusive economic zones can intersect, which accounts for dyads who may form cooperative defense arrangements to facilitate the protection of overlapping economic interests. I only consider the number of Indo-Pacific states with which a state shares a border in calculating a state's the total number of neighboring states. I also exclude China from the total number of neighboring states as I am only considering defense arrangements between middle states. See: Charles S. Gochman, "Interstate Metrics: Conceptualizing, Operationalizing, and Measuring the Geographic Proximity of States since the Congress of Vienna," *International Interactions*, 1991, 17 (1): 93-112; Correlates of War Project. *Direct Contiguity Data, 1816-2016*, version 3.2.

levels of significance ($p = 0.08$) in Model 4, but is highly significant ($p < 0.001$) when tested with GDP per capita in Model 2. Predicted probability graphs of the primary independent variables are displayed in Figure 4.2 and are based on coefficient estimates from Models 2 and 3.

Table 4.1: Middle State Likelihood of Forming a Cooperative Defense Arrangement (Negative Binomial Regression)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Establish DCA, Def Dialogue, or Combined Mil Ex (Count Variable)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
GDP per capita	0.371*** (0.042)	0.396*** (0.041)		
Mil Expenditures			0.331*** (0.038)	0.319*** (0.040)
Active Terr Dispute w/PRC	0.276* (0.122)		0.251* (0.124)	
MID against PRC		0.644*** (0.131)		0.241 (0.138)
Contiguous States	0.216*** (0.021)	0.213*** (0.020)	0.073*** (0.022)	0.083*** (0.021)
Democracy	0.336* (0.131)	0.257 (0.132)	0.272* (0.132)	0.249 (0.133)
US Ally	0.387** (0.139)	0.211 (0.143)	0.110 (0.149)	0.093 (0.149)
Constant	-4.328*** (0.380)	-4.503*** (0.380)	-5.409*** (0.512)	-5.230*** (0.533)
Observations	546	546	546	546
Log Likelihood	-671.176	-661.601	-670.303	-670.755
θ	1.873***(0.371)	2.170***(0.461)	2.064***(0.437)	2.052***(0.434)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,354.353	1,335.203	1,352.607	1,353.510
<i>Note:</i>			* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$	

Facing a significant threat from the rising power has a particularly substantial effect on a middle state's diversification behavior. Drawing coefficients from Models 2 and 3, middle states who experienced a MID against China in the previous five years were approximately 90 percent more likely to establish an additional DCA, institutionalized defense dialogue or combined

military exercise with another middle state in a given year than states who did not experience a MID against China. States who had an active territorial dispute with China were approximately 30 percent more likely to establish an additional DCA, dialogue, or exercise. Middle states who are relatively militarily capable and economically developed are also more likely to diversify. Increasing a state's annual military spending by one standard deviation from the mean value of all middle states in the region increases the likelihood of forming an additional DCA, dialogue, or exercise with another middle state in a given year by approximately 130 percent. Similarly, increasing a state's GDP per capita by one standard deviation from the regional mean increases the likelihood by approximately 85 percent.

The regression results for the control variables also provide interesting insights into which types of states are more likely to form these institutions. Democratic states sign more DCAs, institutionalize more senior defense dialogues, and establish more regular combined military exercise in a given year than non-democratic states. The coefficient for U.S. allies is positive for each of the models, but is only significant in Model 1. Removing the Democracy control variable to account for potential multicollinearity between the Democracy and U.S. ally variable (as all U.S. allies in the region are also democratic) does not change the results. This suggests that the proliferation of these forms of security institutions in the region is not necessarily driven by U.S.-allied states seeking to expand the U.S. alliance network, nor by states seeking to strengthen their ties to the U.S. alliance network. As expected, states who have more neighbors (Contiguous States) are also more likely to form these institutions in a given year. Model 2, which includes GDP per capita, MID behavior with China, and each of the control variables, provides the best fit for the data (AIC = 1335).

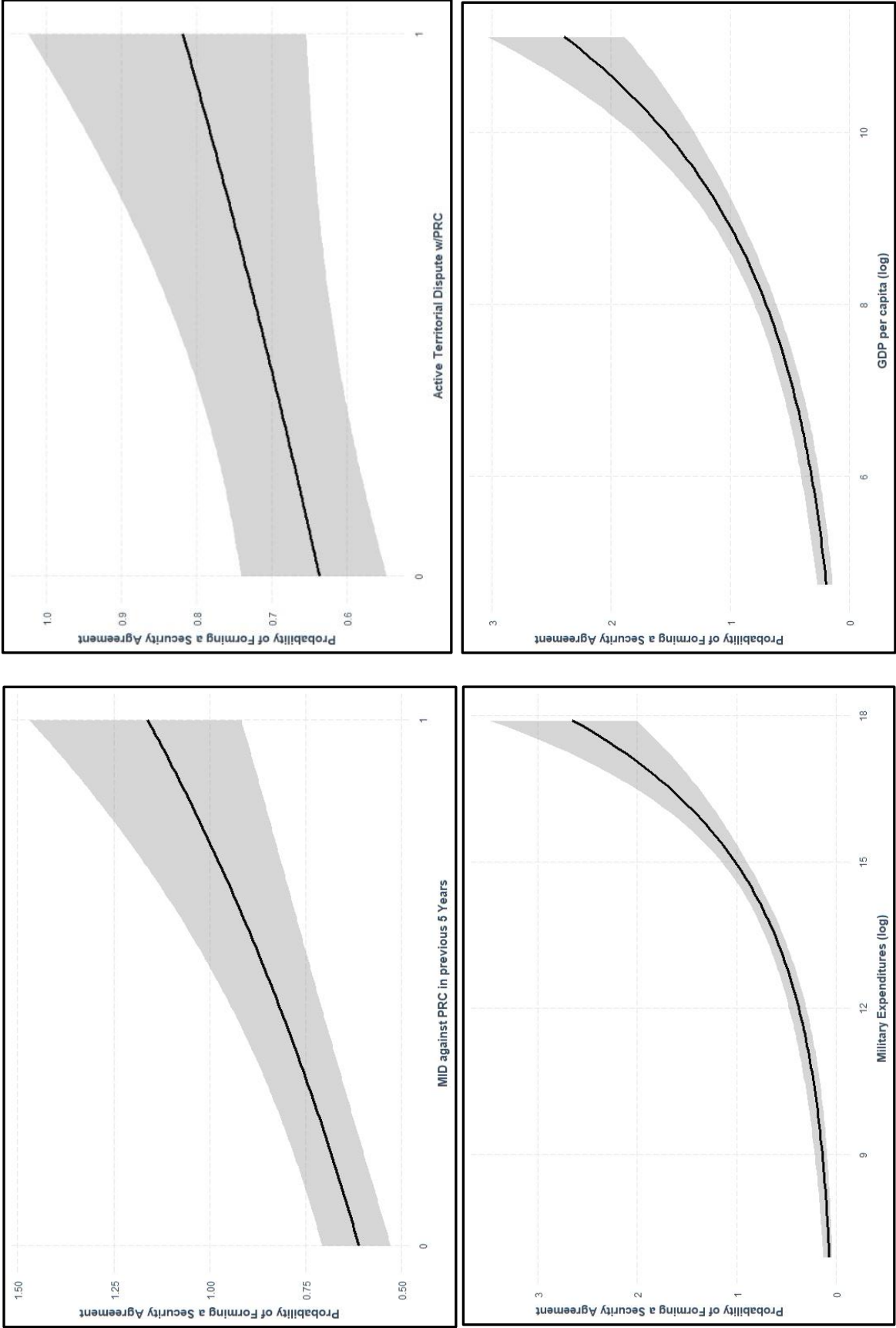


Figure 4.2: Predicted Probabilities for Security Agreement Formation (2000-2020)

To increase robustness of the results, I also model the data using logistic regression and a binary dependent variable that indicates whether a state signed a DCA, institutionalized a bilateral senior defense dialogue, or established a reoccurring combined military exercise with another middle state in the region during the year of observation. The binary dependent variable and logistic regression provide an alternative test of the proposed hypotheses and results are somewhat easier to interpret. Positive explanatory variable coefficients indicate which factors increase the likelihood a state establishes one of these forms of security institutions in a given year, rather than establishing one additional form of these institutions. The results of logistic regression align with those of the negative binomial regression. The regression table, predicted probably graphs, and their interpretation are included in the Appendix.

Results from both the negative binomial and logistic regression models are consistent. Middle states who face a significant security threat from the rising power, are militarily capable, and who are economically developed are more likely to pursue a diversification strategy. These results hold for different model specifications, alternative dependent and independent variables, and when accounting for important control variables. In the following chapter, I build on these results to analyze the relation between alliance commitment and diversification behavior. First, however, I identify which pairs of middle states will be most likely to form a security partnership as they seek to diversify.

4.2 Who Diversifies with Whom?

In this section, I test the hypotheses derived in Chapter Two concerning which pairs of states are most likely to form security partnerships. In Chapter Two, I argued that under

conditions of intensifying great power rivalry, states diversify to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy. Accordingly, a state's choice in security partners is conditioned on the potential partner state's ability to aid the state in advancing its military capabilities and addressing security threats while minimizing its risk to autonomy loss. Accordingly, I anticipate that states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, face a common adversary, and who share common security partners are more likely to form a security partnership.

To test the above hypotheses, I model the regional security network as a temporal series of cross-sectional exponential random graph models (ERGM) based on bilateral DCAs.¹¹ An ERGM is a statistical model that is useful for estimating covariate effects on the formation of ties within a network as well as parameter estimates of the forms of dependence that may exist within relational data.¹² This allows for the identification of both exogenous and endogenous effects on network ties, a critical consideration for the accurate modeling of interdependent systems such as regional security networks. In its ability to consider endogenous network effects, ERGMs offer a strong advantage over standard regression frameworks. While standard regression models can provide accurate estimates of the effect of covariates on outcomes that are independent of others' outcomes, these estimates break down when outcomes depend on each other.

A fundamental assumption of standard regression frameworks is the independence of observations. There is strong evidence that many phenomena in international security, such as

¹¹ Rather than incorporate institutionalized defense dialogues and combined military exercises into this analysis, I focus on the regional bilateral DCA network to demonstrate the likelihood of two states forming a security partnership. DCAs are often broad framework agreements that facilitate a wide range of defense cooperation activities, which may include more narrowly focused regular defense dialogues and combined military exercises. I plan to further explore institutionalized defense dialogues and combined military exercises in future work.

¹² Skyler J. Cranmer and Bruce A. Desmarais, "Inferential Network Analysis with Exponential Random Graph Models," *Political Analysis* 19, no. 1 (2011): 67.

war onset, nuclear proliferation, and the formation of security ties within a regional security network, violate this assumption. Proverbially, the well-used adage “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” reflects the non-independence of state’s choices in security relations. If one’s security partners are in part determined by one’s enemies and their relations with other states, then one’s choices in security partners are not fully independent. For example, it is almost certain that growing security cooperation between Australia and Japan, or between Japan and the Philippines, is influenced by these countries’ common alliance with the U.S. Empirically, Kinne has shown that the endogenous network effects of preferential attachment and triadic closure play an important role in a state’s choice of DCA partners.¹³

In addition to the dependence of a state’s choice of security partners on the choices of other states, endogeneity also exists in the durability of security agreements. The existence, or lack of, a security cooperation agreement between two states in one year is greatly influenced by whether an agreement existed in the previous year. Unless these sources of potential endogeneity are accounted for in the modeling process, coefficient estimates will be biased and standard errors will be inconsistent due to model misspecification and the omission of endogenous variables. Standard regression frameworks using dyadic relationships and variables are often still subject to these potential sources of errors. Several studies have proposed the use of clustered standard errors in dyadic regression models to help account for these issues. However, clustering standard errors often fails to correct for the shortcomings of standard regression models when

¹³ Brandon J. Kinne, “Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network,” *International Organization* 72, no. 4 (2018): 799–837.

applied to network data as the non-independence of nodes precludes the node-wise partitioning that is required to cluster standard errors.¹⁴

Substantively, ERGMs model an entire graph (the collection of all nodes and all possible ties between nodes) at a single point in time to determine the probability distribution of realizing the observed network given the identified conditions and covariates. The observed network is treated as a single realization from a multivariate distribution.¹⁵ Statistical inference in ERGMs is possible through the estimation of the maximum likelihood of observing the given network among all other potential network structures based on the specified network parameters and covariates. Importantly, these effects can include both exogenous effects (nodal and dyadic covariates), as well as endogenous network effects (structural influences). One common inference method to approximate the likelihood function of an ERGM (and the method I employ here) is the Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) simulation approach. The MCMC approach allows for modeling the observed network as the result of sampling from probability distributions through the simulation of a stochastic process. The observed network is initialized using pseudo-likelihood estimates, and networks are simulated based on the identified parameters specified for the model. The MCMC converges when changes in the network edges, which are modeled by specified coefficients, cannot be distinguished from random noise.¹⁶

I model the regional security network as a TERGM of the regional DCA network for the years 2000-2020. The TERGM is a longitudinal extension of the ERGM which allows for the analysis of the formation and dissolution of ties between nodes within a network over time.

¹⁴ Cranmer and Desmarais, “Inferential Network Analysis with Exponential Random Graph Models”; William H. Greene, *Econometric Analysis, 6th ed* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2008).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Daniel A. McFarland, James Moody, Jeff Smith, *Integrated Network Science: Applied Social Network Analysis in R* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014).

TERGMs are essentially a panel of individual ERGMs of the same network separated by time, which allows researchers to explore the influence of exogenous and endogenous effects on network evolution while controlling for relational stability. To generate the TERGM, I represent the regional DCA network as it exists at the end of each year as a 26 x 26 adjacency matrix (Y), which accounts for each of the 26 states in the region (except the U.S. and China). Each node represents an individual state in the region, and edges between nodes represent the existence of a DCA between a pair of states during the observed year. Rows in the adjacency matrix are represented by subscript i , and columns are represented by subscript j . Each Y_{ij} is given a value of zero or one, with one indicating the existence of a DCA between states i and j during the year of observation. Each adjacency matrix is undirected—that is, $Y_{ij} = Y_{ji}$ for all i and j —as DCAs are mutual agreements between states. An individual adjacency matrix is created for each year between 2000 and 2020 (inclusive), providing a total of twenty-one observations of the regional DCA network. The individual DCA adjacency matrices for each year serves as the dependent variable in the overall TERGM.

The DCA adjacency matrix for each year is modeled as a function of several exogenous and endogenous covariates. Exogenous covariates include state or dyad characteristics that may influence the formation of a DCA between states, but are generally not affected by the existence of a DCA tie between other states in the network. In this model, selected exogenous covariates include foreign policy preference similarity, levels of bilateral trade, conflict and territorial dispute history with China, contiguity, political system similarity, and national power.

Foreign Policy Preference Similarity: To operationalize foreign policy preference similarity, I adopt the common practice of comparing UN General Assembly voting ideal

point estimates. UN voting ideal point estimates provide a dynamic ordinal spatial model that approximates a state's foreign policy preferences toward the U.S.-led liberal order based on a state's voting record in the UN General Assembly. This measure offers high construct validity in capturing foreign policy similarity between states who institutionalize their security relations under the shadow of U.S.-China rivalry. UN voting ideal points also arguably offer greater measurement validity than other measures of state foreign policy preferences, such as UN voting affinity or S scores.¹⁷ I lag ideal point estimates by one year to reduce the potential for reverse causation. In the TERGM, I compare UN voting ideal point estimates through the *absdiff* term, which compares the absolute difference between two continuous values. Negative coefficient estimates indicate more similar values contribute to tie formation, while positive coefficient estimates indicate larger differences in values contribute to tie formation. I anticipate states with greater foreign policy affinity, as operationalized as smaller differences in UN voting ideal point estimates, will be more likely to form a security agreement.

Closeness of Economic Relations: To account for the closeness of bilateral economic relations, I identify the top trading partners for each country based on both imports and exports for each year from 2000-2020.¹⁸ I create a 26 x 26 adjacency matrix incorporating all middle states in the region for each year, and states who rank as one of each other's top five trading partners are coded as having a tie in the network (coded as 1

¹⁷ Michael A. Bailey, Anton Strezhnev, and Erik Voeten. "Estimating dynamic state preferences from United Nations voting data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 2 (2017): 430-456.

¹⁸ Trade data from World Bank, World Integrated Trade Solution, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/>.

in the adjacency matrices). The DCA adjacency matrix for each year is then compared to the trade adjacency matrix from the previous year in the TERGM through the *edgescov* term. Bilateral trade is lagged by one year to minimize reverse causation. I anticipate dyads where one state is one of the other state's top trading partners will be more likely to form a security agreement.

Common Adversary: To test whether states who face a common adversary are more likely to form a security partnership, I focus on states who face a significant threat from China. As in the previous section, I identify states who face a significant threat from China as those who have an active territorial dispute with China. As an alternate operationalization, I also test whether states who experienced a MID against China within the five years preceding the year of observation are more likely to form a DCA. I identify states who have an active territorial dispute against China in the nodal attribute list and use the *nodematch* term in the model to determine the variable's influence on DCA formation. When using *nodematch*, I use the *diff = TRUE* function to differentiate between states who have an active territorial dispute against China and those who do not, and *keep* only those states with active territorial disputes against China. I also include the *nodefactor* function with the territorial dispute variable to control for potential overrepresentation of possible ties between nodes that share an attribute.¹⁹ I follow the same procedure for the MID variable. I anticipate dyads where both states have an active

¹⁹ Laurence Brandenberger and Sebastián Martínez, "Intro to ERGMs, Marginal Effects and Goodness-of-Fit," *R Studio* (February 2019), https://rstudio-pubs-static.s3.amazonaws.com/471073_d45a4acd780b4987932dc8fc47c46dd5.html.

territorial dispute with China or recently experienced a MID against China will be more likely to form a DCA.

Contiguity: I control for contiguity (including those states separated by 400 miles of water or less) to account for the possibility that neighboring states are more likely to form security agreements than non-neighboring states.²⁰ The tendency for neighboring states to form security cooperation agreements aligns with the logic of the network influence of propinquity, which identifies that physical and temporal proximity lead to more frequent contact and opportunity for cooperation.²¹ To test for the influence of contiguity in the model, I create an adjacency matrix which identifies all neighboring states. I then compare the contiguity adjacency matrix to the DCA adjacency matrix for each year through the *edg cov* term. I anticipate neighboring states will be more likely to form a security agreement than non-neighboring states.

Political System Similarity: I control for political system similarity using Polity V scores.²² Polity scores range from -10 (strong autocratic) to +10 (strongly democratic) and are lagged by one year to reduce the potential for reverse causation. Individual state polity scores are compared in the TERGM through the *absdiff* term. I anticipate political

²⁰ Douglas M. Stinnet, Jaroslav Tir, Philip Schafer, Paul F. Diehl, and Charles Gochman, "The Correlates of War Project Direct Contiguity Data, Version 3," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 19(2), 2002:58-66; Correlates of War Project. Direct Contiguity Data, 1816-2016. Version 3.2. I control for contiguity, rather than geographic distance between capitals, as sharing a physical border presents states with numerous motivations to conduct defense cooperation, such as border security issues and security challenges common to shared border regions, including counterterrorism and natural disasters. Accounting for geographic distance between capitals may also skew results against large countries whose capitals are relatively distant from each other but who share a border.

²¹ Leon Festinger and John Thibaut, "Interpersonal communication in small groups," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 46(1), (1951): 92-99.

²² Center for Systemic Peace, *Polity V dataset*, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>.

system similarity will have a positive influence on security partnership formation, as sharing a common form of government may increase familiarity and facilitate cooperation. However, I do not discount that democracies and autocracies may find ample areas for security cooperation regardless the differences in their political systems. For example, the democratic country of Australia conducts significant security cooperation with the autocratic countries of Brunei, Singapore, and Vietnam. I anticipate foreign policy preference similarity, rather than similarity of political systems, to be a much stronger motivation for bilateral security cooperation.

CINC: I control for national power through the commonly used Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score.²³ The CINC score provides an aggregated score of six factors identified as influential in a state's national material capabilities, including total military personnel, military expenditures, iron and steel production, energy consumption, total population, and urban population. Observations are weighted according to the percentage of a state's share of the global total for each of these measurements. I incorporate CINC in the model through the *nodecov* term.

In addition to these exogenous variables, I also include two endogenous variables in the model. Endogenous covariates include characteristics of the network itself which may influence the formation or dissolution of a DCA between states. In this model, I focus on two network influences—the tendency for states to form security partnerships with highly central states in the

²³ David J. Singer, "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816-1985," *International Interactions* (1987) 14: 115-32.

network and the tendency for states to form security partnerships with other states based on the existence of a security agreement between common security partners. This first network influence is commonly referred to as preferential attachment, which describes the condition in which highly central nodes in a network attract more additional ties than less-connected nodes. High degree nodes are favored not because of their intrinsic characteristics, such as power or wealth, but precisely because of their high degree of centrality within the network.²⁴

The second network influence is triadic closure. Triadic closure describes the extent to which triads in a network, or a group of three nodes, are ‘closed.’ In balance theory terms, triadic closure describes the extent to which the network conforms to the logic of “a friend of a friend is a friend.”²⁵ In terms of security cooperation, the logic of triadic closure asserts that states will tend to form security partnerships with the partners of their security partners. In his study of the global DCA network, Kinne demonstrates the influence of both preferential attachment and triadic closure in DCA formation, arguing that these two network influences are among the most influential in prompting the formation of DCAs between states.²⁶

Accounting for both preferential attachment and triadic closure in the TERGM serves two purposes. First, I use these endogenous variables as controls for the exogenous variables to demonstrate the influence that foreign policy preference similarity and trade play in the formation of security agreements, even when accounting for endogenous network influences. Second, I use these variables to demonstrate the role endogenous network influences, such as triadic closure, play in a state’s security partnership decisions. To test the influence of each of

²⁴ Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, “Network Analysis for International Relations.”

²⁵ Fritz Heider, “Attitudes and Cognitive Organization,” *The Journal of Psychology* 21:1 (1946): 107-112

²⁶ Kinne, “Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network.”

these variables in motivating bilateral security cooperation, I test the exogenous and endogenous covariates both separately and jointly.

Preferential Attachment: To test for preferential attachment, I use the geometrically weighted degree (GWDegree) term. GWDegree estimates whether the degree of a node changes the likelihood a tie is formed between nodes. As the term is geometrically weighted, marginally decreasing weighting is used as degree increases, which dampens the tendency for model degeneracy. A negative coefficient on the term indicates centralization of edges and reflects an increased likelihood that higher degree nodes will attract an ever greater number of ties.²⁷ I anticipate states will be more likely to form a security partnership with states who are more central in the network.

Triadic Closure: To test whether sharing a common security partner increases the likelihood that two states will form a DCA, I include the geometrically weighted edge-wise shared partner (GWESP) and geometrically weighted dyad-wise shared partner (GWDSP) terms in the TERGM. The GWESP term is a weighted count of the distribution of shared partners in the network, which allows for the identification of local clustering and the tendency for nodes to form edges with the connections of their

²⁷ There is debate within the literature concerning whether a positive or negative GWDegree coefficient is an indication of preferential attachment. I adopt the most recent position on the debate as outlined by Levy (2016). Regardless of whether a positive or negative coefficient indicates centralization of edges within a network, I use the GWDegree term as a control variable and my findings are not dependent on whether the GWDegree term is interpreted either way. See Michael Levy, "GWDegree: Improving interpretation of geometrically-weighted degree estimates in exponential random graph models," *Journal of Open Source Software* 1, no. 3 (2016), 36; Michael Levy, "A Shiny app to help interpret GW-Degree estimates in ERGMs," *Center for Environmental Policy & Behavior* (June 26, 2016), <https://environmentalpolicy.ucdavis.edu/blog/shiny-app-help-interpret-gw-degree-estimates-ergmsMich>; Garry Robins, Pip Pattison, and Peng Wang, "Closure, Connectivity and Degree Distributions: Exponential Random Graph (P*) Models for Directed Social Networks," *Social Networks* 31, no. 2 (May 1, 2009): 107–8; Garry Robins et al., "Recent Developments in Exponential Random Graph (P*) Models for Social Networks," *Social Networks* 29, no. 2 (2007): 198.

connections. Specifically, two nodes (i and j) have an edgewise shared partner when they are connected to each other and both are connected to a third node (k). The existence of ties between all three nodes in a triad produces a triangle, and GWESP produces a geometrically weighted count of all closed triads within a network. Unlike GWESP, the GWDSP term counts shared partnerships regardless of whether i and j have a tie. Controlling for GWDSP when using the GWESP allows us to determine whether triangles in the network tend to be “open” or closed.”²⁸

The GWESP term not only accounts for the tendency for nodes to close a single triad, but also accounts for all shared partners for a given dyad. Having more shared partners is modeled as increasing the likelihood that an unconnected dyad forms a connection. Yet as the number of shared partners increases, decreasing weight is placed on each shared partnership due to the geometrically-weighted nature of the term. This dampens the tendency for network models to ‘avalanche’ into a system of completely closed cliques and aids in preventing model degeneracy.²⁹ The inclusion of the GWESP term with the GWDeg term also helps avoid confounding centralization with clustering.³⁰ In the regional DCA network model, a positive coefficient for the GWESP term suggests that states tend to have more shared DCA partners than should be expected based on density and the included covariates alone. I anticipate the GWESP coefficient to be positive, indicating that states are more likely to form a security partnership with states who share a common security partner.

²⁸ Tom Snijders, Philippa E. Pattison, Garry L. Robins, and Mark S. Handcock. “New Specifications for Exponential Random Graph Models.” *Sociological Methodology* 36, no. 1 (2006): 99–153

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Levy, 2016.

4.2.1 Results

Results are shown in Table 4.2 and are consistent with the hypotheses. Middle states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, face a common adversary, or who share common security partners are more likely to form a DCA. Results for UN voting ideal points, bilateral trade, and active territorial disputes with China are all in the anticipated direction and significant across each of the models. Model 1 tests the exogenous variables while leaving out the endogenous (GWESP, GWDSP, and GWDeg) variables. Model 2 adds the triadic closure terms (GWESP and GWDSP) to the model, while Model 3 adds the triadic closure and preferential attachment terms (GWDeg) to the model. Model 4 replaces the territorial dispute with China variable with the MID against China variable. Model 5 adds the Polity variable to the model and leaves out the Ideal Point Distance variable to reduce the potential for multicollinearity. TERGM coefficients are reported in log odds and represent the change in the likelihood (log odds) of a tie between two nodes for a one unit change in the predictor.

Table 4.2: Indo-Pacific Middle State DCA Network TERGM (2000-2020)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Ideal Point Distance	-0.52** (0.19)	-0.53** (0.19)	-0.61** (0.20)	-0.65** (0.20)	
Bilateral Trade	1.08*** (0.22)	0.96*** (0.22)	0.57* (0.23)	0.51* (0.23)	0.54* (0.23)
Terr Dispute w/PRC (Nodematch)	1.42** (0.48)	1.63*** (0.49)	1.76*** (0.50)		1.75*** (0.50)
Terr Dispute w/PRC (Nodefactor)	-0.15 (0.24)	-0.25 (0.24)	-0.43 (0.24)		-0.32 (0.25)
MID against PRC (Nodematch)				-0.03 (0.83)	
MID against PRC (Nodefactor)				-0.13 (0.24)	
Contiguity	1.26*** (0.23)	1.21*** (0.24)	1.27*** (0.25)	1.25*** (0.24)	1.12*** (0.24)
CINC	-6.11 (5.43)	-4.73 (5.23)	-1.43 (5.02)	-0.08 (4.55)	-4.29 (5.19)
Polity					0.00 (0.02)
GWESP		0.70*** (0.11)	-0.31 (0.17)	-0.30 (0.16)	-0.30 (0.17)
GWDSP		-0.06 (0.04)	0.12* (0.05)	0.12** (0.05)	0.14** (0.05)
GWDeg			-4.45*** (0.53)	-4.33*** (0.52)	-4.50*** (0.52)
Edges	-4.07*** (0.21)	-4.54*** (0.29)	-1.33** (0.42)	-1.39*** (0.41)	-1.81*** (0.41)
Num. vertices	520	520	520	520	520
AIC	953.70	910.60	803.86	815.20	812.72
BIC	999.99	970.12	869.99	881.32	878.85

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

As identified in Models 1-3, closeness of economic relations is an important indicator of whether states form a security partnership. Based on the coefficient in Model 3, in dyads where a state is one of a state's top five trading partners (importing or exporting), the dyad is approximately 65 percent more likely to form a DCA than dyads where neither state is among the primary trading partners of the other state. The UN voting ideal point coefficient is also significant and negative, indicating that greater foreign policy preference similarity has a positive influence on DCA formation. Sharing a common adversary is also an important factor in the formation of a security partnership. Based on the coefficient in Model 3, dyads in which both

states have active territorial disputes against China are approximately 85 percent more likely to form a DCA than dyads where only one or neither state in the dyad has an active territorial dispute with China.

The results from the MID variable are less conclusive. Model 4 indicates that dyads in which both states experienced a MID against China within the five years previous to the year of observation are no more likely to form a DCA than dyads where only one or neither state in the dyad experienced a MID against China, holding all other values constant. The sign on the MID coefficient is actually slightly negative, though the result is not significant. These results suggest that while having a territorial dispute with China increases the likelihood that two states will form a security partnership, recently experiencing a MID against China does not necessarily have the same effect. One potential explanation for the differences in results is that states who experienced a MID against China are a smaller group of states than those who have an active territorial dispute with China, and the relatively few number of states who have recently experienced a MID against China may limit the significance of the findings. While the result for the MID variable is inconclusive, the result for the territorial dispute variable is strong and highly significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that sharing a common adversary can play an important role the formation of a security partnership.

As expected, the contiguity coefficient is positive and highly significant across all models, indicating that states are more likely to form security partnerships with their neighbors than with more distant states. Specifically, dyads who share a border (land or sea) are approximately 78 percent more likely to sign a DCA than dyads who do not share a border, holding all other values constant. The polity variable is close to zero and is not significant,

indicated a null relationship between political system similarity and DCA formation. The CINC control variable, which accounts for a state's level of power, is not significant.

The results for the endogenous network variables also offer interesting insights concerning the factors driving the formation of security partnerships among middle states in the Indo-Pacific. Model 2 identifies triadic closure as an important factor in the formation of security partnerships. The coefficient on the GWESP term is positive and highly significant, suggesting that states tend to have more shared security partners than would be expected based on the included covariates alone. The sign of the GWESP coefficient, however, turns negative when GWDeg is added to the TERGM in Model 3. In Model 3, the GWDeg coefficient is negative and highly significant, indicating that higher-degree nodes in the network have more DCA partners than would be expected based on triadic closure and the included exogenous covariates alone. That GWESP turns negative once GWDeg is added to the network suggests that the evidence in Model 2 supporting the influence of triadic closure in the network may actually be an artifact of centralization within the network around high degree nodes. States do not appear to be avoiding closing triangles, however, as the negative coefficient is not significant, but the results suggests that triadic closure has a less important influence on security partnership formation in the Indo-Pacific than preferential attachment.

One potential explanation for the reversal in coefficient signs for the GWESP term is that the Indo-Pacific middle state DCA network is a subset of the broader regional security network. The regional security network not only includes the U.S., China, and all middle states, but also states outside the region who have security ties with states in the region. To consider how middle states' DCAs with the U.S. and China impact DCA formation among middle states, I reintroduce the U.S. and China into the regional DCA network and conduct a TERGM similar to the network

that includes only middle states. Unsurprisingly, when the U.S. and China, the two most central nodes in the regional DCA network, are introduced into the model, the results are altered. The coefficients for UN voting ideal point estimates, bilateral trade, and territorial dispute history with China diminish in magnitude and lose their significance. CINC becomes positive (though not significant), and the effect of GWDeg becomes more substantial (more negative). GWESP remains negative. That the primary independent variables decrease in magnitude and are no longer significant reinforces the argument that security relations among middle states are distinct from their relations with the great powers. The factors that motivate middle states to balance, bandwagon, or hedge by forming security institutions with two competing great powers differ from those that motivate middle states to diversify by forming security institutions among themselves. The TERGM incorporating the U.S. and China in the regional DCA network is included in the Appendix.

TERGM diagnostics are also included in the Appendix. The tests indicate that the models converge, provide accurate parameter estimates, and overall are a relatively good fit for the data. To increase robustness of the TERGM results, I also construct an alternate model using panel data and logistic regression to identify which states are more likely to form a DCA. While logistic regression does not allow for the direct accounting of the endogeneities discussed above, it does allow for consideration of the exogenous independent variables that are central to the hypotheses. The regression results align with those derived from the TERGM and are supportive of the hypotheses. The logistic regression model and discussion on the results are included in the Appendix.

Overall, the TERGMs and logistic regression models indicate that middle states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, face a common adversary,

or who share common security partners are more likely to form a security partnership. These results suggest that as middle states seek to diversify by strengthening security ties with other middle states, they seek partners who are able to advance their security while posing the least threat to their autonomy.

4.2.2 Determinants of DCAs between Middle States Compared to Determinants of Alliances

How do the findings concerning which pairs of middle states are more likely to form a DCA compare to previous studies that analyze which pairs of states are more likely to form an alliance? As previously described, DCAs and other anarchic forms of security institutions are distinct from alliances and states may form these institutions different purposes. However, do the institutional differences between alliances and DCAs translate into different determinants concerning which pairs of states form these agreements? Overall, the results in this chapter in some ways align with those of previous studies concerning of the determinants of alliances in some ways, yet differ in others. Like previous studies of alliances, this study finds that states prefer to form security agreements with the security partners of their current partners. In contrast, bilateral trade and sharing a common adversary appear to play a stronger role in determining which states sign a DCA than in determining which states enter an alliance. However, the conflicting findings of previous studies exploring the determinants of the alliances and the variety of statistical methods and operationalizations employed to derive these findings, as well as this study's direct focus on DCAs between middle states, make direct comparison difficult.

Perhaps the most comparable study in terms of methodology that analyzes the determinants of alliance formation is by Cranmer et al (2012), entitled "Toward a Network

Theory of Alliance Formation.”³¹ In their study, the authors use a TERGM to test the influence of triadic closure on alliance formation following WWII through the end of the Cold War. The authors find triadic closure has a significant and positive effect on alliance formation, estimating that, on average, the probability of two states forming an alliance increases by 80-350% when the states share a common alliance partner. At the same time, they find the effects of certain state and dyadic covariates vary during certain periods of the Cold War. Specifically, they find having a common enemy (as measured by both states in a dyad engaging in a war with the same third country at any point in the previous ten years) is found to have a positive effect on alliance formation shortly after the end of WWII when using a dyadic logit regression, but a null effect during all other periods and when using a TERGM. State capabilities (as measured by CINC scores) are found to have a generally positive effect on alliance formation, but the effect is indeterminate towards the end of the Cold War. They also find political system similarity (as measured by differences in polity scores) and interest affinity (measured using UN Affinity Score) have a null effect on alliance formation during each time period.³² Contiguity is also consistently positive.

A similar study using network methods to test the determinants of alliance formation is by Warren (2010), entitled “The geometry of security: Modeling interstate alliances as evolving networks.”³³ Warren uses a stochastic actor-oriented model (SAOM) to model longitudinal network data of the global alliance system from 1950 to 2000. Warren finds that states prefer to form alliances with the allies of their existing allies (“friend of friend”), but that having a conflict

³¹ Cranmer, Desmarais, and Kirkland, “Toward a Network Theory of Alliance Formation.”

³² Voting Ideal Point distance measures, as used in my models, are a more recent development than the UN Affinity Scores used in the Cranmer et al study. See Bailey et al. (2017) for a discussion on the improved validity of the ideal point measure over UN Affinity Scores.

³³ Warren, “The Geometry of Security: Modeling Interstate Alliances as Evolving Networks.”

with a common state does not necessarily promote alliance formation (“the enemy of my enemy is not necessarily my friend.”)³⁴ Warren also finds a positive and significant relationship between joint democracy and alliance formation, but a negative relation between bilateral trade volume and alliance formation.

The findings of Cranmer et al (2012) and Warren (2010) complement, and in some cases challenge, previous studies of alliance formation that rely on standard regression models.

Concerning political system similarity and alliance formation, Silverson and Emmons find that “birds of a feather” do indeed “flock together” in forming alliances, and democracies are biased towards each other in their alliances choices.³⁵ The findings of Lai and Reiter generally support this conclusion, finding that states with similar regime type are more likely to ally with each other after WWII, but that two democracies are no more likely to ally than two autocracies.³⁶

Simon and Gartzke confirm the finding that states of similar regime type (including both democracies and autocracies) are more likely to ally, but argue that this correlation is an aberration of the ideologically-driven Cold War and that states prior to WWII preferred forming alliances with states of dissimilar regime types.³⁷ My null finding concerning the relation between political system similarity and DCA formation between middle states is consistent with the Cranmer et al (2012) study and those studies which consider alliances prior to WWII. This suggests that states with dissimilar political systems find sufficient reason to cooperate on

³⁴ Warren uses the occurrence of a MID within the last ten years to identify the existence of a conflict between states.

³⁵ Randolph M. Silverson and Juliann Emmons, “Birds of a Feather: Democratic Political Systems and Alliance Choices in the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 2 (1991): 285–306.

³⁶ Lai and Reiter, “Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992.”

³⁷ Simon and Gartzke, “Political System Similarity and the Choice of Allies: Do Democracies Flock Together, or Do Opposites Attract?”

defense matters despite these differences, and DCA formation among middle states in the Indo-Pacific is not as ideological driven as alliance formation during the Cold War.

Concerning the impact of trade on alliance formation, Lai and Reiter find that dyadic trade levels have a null effect on the probability of alliance formation.³⁸ This is consistent with Warren's 2010 study using a SAOM. Both Lai and Reiter, as well as Warren, interpret this result as evidence in support of studies demonstrating the positive effect of alliance formation on trade, rather than the reverse.³⁹ The results of this study, as well as those of Kinne in his study of the global DCA network, show the opposite relation between trade and DCA formation.⁴⁰ This suggests a potential difference in the extent to which trade influences different levels of security cooperation. While trade may encourage the formation of lesser forms of security agreements, it is insufficient to motivate more hierarchal forms of security agreements such as alliances.

4.3 Conclusion

In the shadow of intensifying great power rivalry, middle states not only seek to bandwagon, balance, or hedge by increasing their cooperation with the competing great powers, but may also seek to diversify by strengthening their cooperation with other middle states. Through diversification, middle states seek to increase the quality and quantity of their security cooperation with other middle states to reduce their reliance on a single power. While security cooperation with less powerful states may not bring the same benefits of cooperation with great

³⁸ Lai and Reiter, "Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992."

³⁹ Edward D. Mansfield and Rachel Bronson, "Alliances, Preferential Trading Arrangements, and International Trade," *The American Political Science Review* 91, no. 1 (1997): 94-107; Joanne Gowa and Edward D. Mansfield, "Power Politics and International Trade," *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 2 (1993): 408-420; Andrew G. Long and Brett Ashley Leeds, "Trading for Security: Military Alliances and Economic Agreements," *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no. 4 (July 1, 2006): 433-451.

⁴⁰ Kinne, "Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network."

powers, security cooperation with other middle states can provide valuable opportunities for military training, access to advanced military equipment, increase the number of partners a state is able to call on to meet security challenges, and reduce dependence on a single source for strengthening military capabilities. Each of these outcomes strengthen a state's security and reduce its vulnerability to coercion. Security cooperation with other middle states also has the benefit of not drawing the state between the competing great powers, as does increasing security cooperation with one of the great powers.

These benefits of diversification speak to the fundamental interests of many middle states who sit between the competing great powers. Through diversification, middle states seek to strengthen their security in light of the increasingly likelihood of conflict, while preserving their autonomy in the face of great powers' efforts to influence their alignment. Yet as identified by the alignment dilemma, these dual interests are often in conflict. Increased security that accompanies close alignment often comes at the loss of autonomy and policy flexibility.

In forming security institutions, middle states seek to balance their desire for both security and autonomy. The formation of more limited forms of security institutions, such as DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises, are one way in which middle states seek to strike a balance between security and autonomy. Through these institutions, states increase their security, albeit to a more limited extent, while avoiding the formal alignment obligations of more hierarchical forms of security institutions, such as alliances.

The importance of these limited forms of security institutions is seen in their proliferation in the Indo-Pacific. Middle states throughout the region have actively formed DCAs, defense dialogues, and combined military exercises to advance their security interests while preserving

their autonomy. Yet as identified in this chapter and the previous chapter, not all states in the Indo-Pacific are forming these security institutions to the same extent, and states are not just forming them with every other state. In this chapter, I have leveraged three novel datasets that together provide an extensive view of bilateral security relations in the Indo-Pacific to demonstrate which states are more likely to diversify. States who face a significant threat from the rising power, are economically developed, and are military capable are more likely to form security ties with other middle states in the region.

The alignment dilemma also leads us to anticipate which types of middle states will be more likely to form a security partnership. As middle states seek to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy amid growing great power rivalry, they seek partners who are best able to contribute to their security while posing the least threat to their autonomy. Accordingly, dyads who have similar foreign policy preferences, share common security partners, face a common adversary, and have close economic relations are more likely to form a security partnership.

In the next chapter, I focus on providing evidence for the claim that states who have a weak commitment to alliance will also be likely to diversify. Governments who have a weak commitment to alliance may seek to distance themselves from their ally and seek to form more limited security agreements with other partners to bolster their security and strengthen their autonomy. To support this claim and demonstrate the drivers of diversification at the state level, I conduct an in-depth case study of Philippine diversification behavior over the last decade. Through an extensive review of Philippine senior leader statements, national security publications, arm sales, and defense agreements signed by the Aquino and Duterte administrations, I show that the administrations' contrasting levels of commitment to the

Philippines' alliance with the U.S. is a central factor influencing Philippine diversification behavior.

CHAPTER 5. PHILIPPINE ALLIANCE COMMITMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

On October 20, 2016, newly elected Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte announced his “separation” from the U.S. at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People during his first official visit to China. “I announce my separation from the United States. Both in military, maybe not social, but economics also. America has lost.”¹ Just three weeks earlier while in Hanoi, Duterte served notice to the U.S. that though he would maintain his country’s longstanding defense alliance with America, he would cancel future combined military exercises and establish new alliances.² After decades of close military relations under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), strong bilateral economic relations that positioned the U.S. as one of the Philippines’ largest trading partners, and deep socio-cultural ties between the two countries, President Duterte made deliberate efforts to reduce the Philippines’ longstanding security dependence on the U.S. and seek rapprochement with China, with whom the Philippines was involved in a contentious territorial dispute in the SCS.

In distancing Manila from Washington and sending overtures to Beijing, Duterte reversed the strategic course set by his predecessor, President Benigno Aquino III. During Aquino’s tenure, U.S.-Philippine security relations soared as the two countries established new defense policy coordination mechanisms, increased the scale and scope of combined military exercises, and signed extensive security agreements, culminating with the signing of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in 2014. At the same time, Philippine relations with China sunk

¹ “China Lauds ‘milestone’ Duterte Visit,” *BBC News*, October 20, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37700409>.

² Euan McKirdy, “Defense Secretary: U.S. to ‘sharpen Edge’ in Asia,” *CNN* (September 30, 2016), <https://www.cnn.com/2016/09/30/politics/ash-carter-asia-pivot-south-china-sea/index.html>.

to new lows as tensions escalated in response to Chinese challenges to Philippine claims in the SCS, extensive Chinese land reclamation and militarization of features within the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and Manila's submission of its maritime claims against China to the Arbitral Tribunal of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).³

The sudden shift in Philippine foreign policy and national security strategy under the Duterte administration sent shock waves throughout the region and Washington, leading some observers to claim Duterte's so called "pivot" had "rebalanced the geopolitical order of the South China Sea" and "triggered a crisis in the Philippine–U.S. security alliance."⁴ To explain Philippine actions, most observers focused on Manila's relations with Beijing and Washington, and viewed the Duterte administration's actions through the lenses of balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging. However, Philippine foreign policy and national security behavior under the Duterte administration is far more complex than 'pivoting towards China' or 'distancing from the U.S.' A major element of Philippine foreign policy and national security strategy under Duterte that has been largely ignored is Manila's concerted effort to strengthen its security ties with middle states throughout the region. While seeking to reduce its security dependence on the U.S., the Philippines has signed defense agreements with India, Indonesia, Russia, and Thailand, elevated South Korea over the U.S. as its most important arms supplier, and initiated new forms of defense cooperation with Australia and Japan that are increasingly independent from the U.S. In this chapter, I turn the spotlight from Manila's relations with the competing great powers to its expanding security ties with other middle states. In doing so, I address a consequential

³ The Philippines refers to the South China Sea as the West Philippine Sea.

⁴ For example, see Hal Brands, "A Filipino Battleground of the China-U.S. Cool War," *Bloomberg* (September 19, 2019), <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-09-19/philippines-is-the-battleground-of-the-china-u-s-cool-war>; Renato Cruz de Castro, "The Duterte administration's Appeasement Policy on China and the Crisis in the Philippine–U.S. Alliance," *Philippine Political Science Journal*, 38, no. 3 (2017): 159–181.

development that theories of balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging do not adequately explain: In the face of growing Chinese threat to national sovereignty and increasing U.S.-China rivalry, why would the Philippines deliberately distance itself from its sole alliance partner and pursue a strategy aimed at strengthening security relations with other middle states?

The Duterte administration's efforts to reduce its security dependence on the U.S. and strengthen security ties with other middle states provide profound insight into the causes and patterns of diversification that are occurring in the Indo-Pacific today. In response to intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, middle states across the region are strengthening security ties among themselves to increase their security and preserve their autonomy. Yet as identified in the previous chapter, not all states are as likely to diversify. States who face a significant security threat from the rising power, are militarily capable and economically developed, and whose government has a weak commitment to alliance are more likely to form more security institutions with other middle states. While each of these conditions are important in determining whether a state pursues diversification, the relative importance of each of these conditions may vary. In the case of the Philippines, I argue that the Duterte administration's weak commitment to its alliance with the U.S. is the primary factor driving Philippine diversification.

The previous chapter also demonstrated that certain pairs of states are more likely to form a security partnership: states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, and states who share common security partners or face a common adversary. In this chapter, I show that as the Duterte administration has pursued diversification, its formation of security partnerships closely follows this pattern. Among the Philippines' closest security partners are states with whom the Philippines has close economic relations, shares a common adversary, and has common security partners, including fellow U.S. allies Australia, Japan, and

South Korea. Whereas the Aquino administration primarily viewed security cooperation with these states as reinforcing the U.S. alliance network, the Duterte administration views cooperation with these states as providing meaningful alternatives to U.S. arms transfers, weapon sales, military training, and contingency support.

5.1 Case Study Selection and Methodological Approach

The Philippines offers an instructive case to demonstrate several of the primary causes of diversification in the Indo-Pacific. Foremost, under the Duterte administration, the Philippines has pursued a clear diversification strategy. While seeking to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. and pursue an ‘independent foreign policy,’ the Philippines has made a clear and concerted effort to strengthen security ties with states throughout the region. The diversification strategy of the Duterte administration stands in contrast to the security strategy pursued by the Aquino administration. Rather than downplay the U.S. alliance and pursue broad security ties with states across the region, the Aquino administration focused on reaffirming its alliance with the U.S. and strengthening security relations with the U.S. alliance network.

Second, the Philippines presents a case where a government’s weak commitment to alliance is clear. Within three months of assuming office, the Duterte administration unambiguously and stridently announced the Philippines’ “military” and “economic” “separation” from the U.S.⁵ Shortly after, during an official visit to Tokyo, Duterte stated, “I want them [U.S. forces] out...I’m willing to revise or abrogate agreements...This will be the last

⁵ “China Lauds ‘milestone’ Duterte Visit,” *BBC News*, October 20, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37700409>.

maneuver, war games, between the United States and the Philippine military.”⁶ Duterte’s disdain for the U.S. alliance stands in sharp contrast to the Aquino administration’s high level of commitment to the alliance. While advancing security ties with the U.S., the Aquino administration regularly reaffirmed its commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance, describing the alliance as having “never been stronger”⁷ and “a cornerstone of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific.”⁸

The variation in alliance commitment and diversification behavior between the Aquino and Duterte administrations presents useful conditions for the identification of factors that influence diversification. By selecting cases that allow for variation in both the independent and dependent variables, the conditions for causal identification are strengthened.⁹ The Aquino administration held a strong commitment to its alliance with the U.S. and did not employ a diversification strategy in terms of forming substantial security ties outside the U.S. alliance network. In contrast, the Duterte administration held a weak commitment to its alliance with the U.S. and employed a broad diversification strategy that sought to reduce security dependence on the U.S. and strengthen security ties with other middle states throughout the region.

Administration	Alliance Commitment (IV)		Diversification (DV)
Aquino (2010-2016)	Strong	→	No
Duterte (2016-Present)	Weak	→	Yes

Figure 5.1: Alliance Commitment and Diversification

⁶ Motoko Rich, “Rodrigo Duterte, in Japan, calls for U.S. Troops to Exit Philippines in 2 Years,” *The New York Times* (October 26, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/27/world/asia/philippines-president-rodrigo-duterte-japan.html>.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, “Joint Statement of the United States-Philippines Ministerial Dialogue,” (April 30, 2012), <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/04/188977.htm>.

⁸ Benigno Aquino III, “President Aquino’s Statement during the Joint Presscon with the U.S. President,” *Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines*, November 18, 2015, <https://mirror.officialgazette.gov.ph/2015/11/18/president-aquino-joint-presscon-us-president-obama/>.

⁹ Gary Goertz, *Multimethod Research, Causal Mechanisms, and Case Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017), 58-73.

In comparing the alliance commitment and diversification behavior of the Aquino and Duterte administrations, causal identification can be confounded by conditions that may vary between the two different time periods. For example, between the Aquino and Duterte administrations, the threat from China may have increased to a point that influenced the Duterte administration to pursue a diversification strategy. However, potential confounds concerning the causes influencing Philippine diversification are minimized by several conditions.

First, the shift in Philippine diversification behavior and alliance commitment from the Aquino administration to the Duterte administration was immediate. Within weeks of inauguration, the Duterte administration made dramatic steps to decrease security cooperation with the U.S. and expand cooperation with states as diverse as Russia, India, and Japan. The immediacy of the change in Philippine alliance commitment and diversification behavior under the Duterte administration reduces the potential that these changes were made in direct response to a sudden change in other conditions, such as the emergence or escalation of a significant threat to national security.

Second, while Philippine diversification behavior and alliance commitment varied between the Aquino and Duterte administrations, other conditions important to diversification remained relatively constant. In previous chapters, I identified the level of threat a state faces from a rising power and a state's level of economic development and military capabilities as important determinants of whether a state employs a diversification strategy. Both of these conditions remained relatively constant between the Aquino and Duterte administrations. Most salient, both administrations perceived China to pose a significant threat to Philippine sovereignty. Confrontations at Philippine claimed features in the SCS, including Reed Bank, Scarborough Shoal, and Second Thomas Shoal, occurred shortly after Aquino took office and

continued throughout his administration. Extensive Chinese land reclamation in the SCS and the Philippine EEZ, and the militarization of these features, also occurred during the Aquino administration. These conditions and the severity of the threat posed by China to Philippine sovereignty persisted throughout the Duterte administration.

The Philippines' level of economic development and military capability also remained relatively constant between the Aquino and Duterte administrations. During both administrations, the Philippines stood as the approximate median of all ASEAN states in terms of GDP per capita and national military expenditures. The Philippines experienced no dramatic economic growth or recession, or large increase or decrease in military expenditures, relative to other states in the region during either administration.¹⁰

The immediacy of the change in Philippine foreign policy and diversification behavior, the persistent threat from China perceived by both administrations, and the relative stability of Philippine economic conditions and military capabilities reduce the likelihood that Philippine diversification under Duterte is the result of factors other than the weak alliance commitment of the Duterte administration. Moreover, the potential temporal confounds presented by changes in conditions between consecutive administrations is arguable less challenging than confounds that would be present in a cross-country case study that attempted to compare national security behavior and alliance commitment levels across two different countries who face different security threats, maintain different political systems, and have different national histories and cultures.

¹⁰ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Military Expenditure Database* (2021), <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>; The World Bank, "Data: The Philippines," <https://data.worldbank.org/>.

The focus on the weak alliance commitment of the Duterte administration and its desire to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. as the primary driver of Philippine diversification is not to suggest that other factors did not influence the administration's shift in foreign policy and security strategy. Duterte's personal umbrage to U.S. criticism, his administration's desire to attract Chinese investment, and his need to solidify political support also played an important role. In the weeks leading up to the administration's termination of U.S.-Philippine combined exercises and joint patrols, high level U.S. criticisms of Duterte's anti-drug campaign prompted severe backlash from Duterte, who in response threatened to cancel the EDCA and slandered President Obama. Observers also point to Duterte's desire to curry Chinese investment as a primary cause of his efforts to reduce U.S.-Philippine security cooperation.¹¹ Some observers speculated that the administration calculated it could garner greater Chinese investment by downgrading Philippine security ties with the U.S. than it could by maintaining the Aquino administration's balancing strategy towards China. Duterte's public statements appear to confirm these estimates. During an interview with Chinese state broadcaster CCTV in October 2016, Duterte stated, "The only hope of the Philippines economically, I'll be frank with you, is China."¹² During his first official visit to China, where he announced his "separation" from the U.S. and "alignment" with China, Duterte left Beijing with \$24 billion in funding and investment pledges.¹³ Duterte's need to solidify his domestic political coalition also likely played

¹¹ Petty and Sieg, "Duterte Hits out at U.S., Then Heads to Japan;"; Rich, "Rodrigo Duterte, in Japan, Calls for U.S. Troops to Exit Philippines in 2 Years."

¹² Curt Mills, "Philippines Pushes Thaw in Relations with Beijing," *US News* (October 19, 2016), <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2016-10-19/duterte-says-he-is-chinese-during-trip-while-anti-american-protest-in-Manila-causes-injuries>.

¹³ Andreo Calonzo and Cecilia Yap, "China Visit Helps Duterte Reap Funding Deals Worth \$24 Billion," *Bloomberg* (October 21, 2016), <https://www.bloombergquint.com/markets/china-visit-helps-duterte-reap-funding-deals-worth-24-billion>.

an important role in the administration's diversification efforts. As the newly elected president, attacking U.S.-Philippine security relations may have served to gain the political support of key factions within the government for other domestic priorities, such as Duterte's anti-drug campaign. Downgrading U.S.-Philippine security relations may have allowed Duterte to gain the support of politicians who were wary of Philippine dependence on the U.S., a sentiment deeply rooted within the Philippine political tradition.

While each of these factors likely played a role in the foreign policy and security behavior of the Duterte administration, they are secondary to the administration's weak commitment to the U.S. alliance. Moreover, each of these factors do not contradict, but neatly align with, Duterte's deep-seated animosity towards Philippine security dependence on the U.S. and the cost this dependence imposes on Philippine sovereignty. The role of each of these factors in shaping the administration's efforts to diversify is further discussed throughout this chapter.

The Philippines is also an excellent case to analyze the primary causes of diversification in that it demonstrates that while many of the factors influencing diversification are state-level characteristics, such as national security threats, military capabilities, and level of economic development, domestic politics and institutions also matter. The dramatic swings in Philippine foreign policy over the course of two administrations was enabled by governmental institutions that endow the Philippine President with dominant control over foreign policy. High presidential autonomy over foreign policy allowed the Aquino administration to pass the EDCA as an executive order, despite significant criticism from the Philippine Senate, and allowed the Duterte administration to submit a notice of termination of the U.S.-Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), despite challenges from other elected officials.

To analyze the role alliance commitment played in Philippine diversification behavior, I proceed as follows. First, I describe the increased threat China posed to Philippine sovereignty since 2010. I then recount the primary events surrounding the Duterte administration's so-called 'pivot' away from the U.S., and contrast the foreign policies and senior leader statements of the Duterte administration to that of the Aquino administration. I demonstrate the relative strength of the Aquino administration's commitment to the U.S. alliance, and the relative weakness of the Duterte administration's commitment. Next, I conduct a systematic analysis of Philippine diversification behavior across both the Aquino and Duterte administrations in three areas where I expect to see evidence linking Philippine alliance commitment and diversification. Specifically, I analyze 1) the official national security publications of the Aquino and Duterte administrations; 2) all defense agreements signed by both administrations; and 3) Philippine arms purchases since 2010. Broadly, evidence in each of these areas points towards focused Philippine efforts to strengthen security cooperation within the U.S. alliance network during the Aquino administration, and broad efforts to diversify Philippine security away from the U.S. and strengthen cooperation with other middle states during the Duterte administration. I then explore three competing explanations for Philippine diversification. I find little evidence for each of these alternate explanations, which strengthens confidence in identifying the weak alliance commitment of the Duterte administration as the primary cause of Philippine diversification. Following this discussion on alternate explanations, I provide a deeper analysis of Philippine security cooperation with Japan, who has emerged as one of the Philippines' most important security partners in its diversification strategy. I close by discussing the generalizability of the identified relation between alliance commitment and diversification beyond the Philippines and the implications of Philippine diversification for U.S. regional strategy.

5.2. Growing China Threat and the Aquino Administration's Affirmation of the U.S.-Philippine Alliance

On March 2, 2011, two Chinese patrol boats confronted and expelled a Philippine survey ship conducting oil exploration around Reed Bank, a land feature in the Spratly Islands whose sovereignty is claimed by both China and the Philippines.¹⁴ According to the Commander of the Philippines Western Command, whose area of responsibility includes Philippine claims in the Spratlys, the Chinese vessels aggressively attempted to ram the survey ship and ordered it to leave, declaring the area under PRC jurisdiction. In response, the Philippines deployed an OV-10 light attack aircraft and a surveillance aircraft to Reed Bank, and two coastguard vessels were dispatched to escort the survey ship for the duration of its survey activities.¹⁵ Though the incident was short lived and the Chinese patrol boats departed prior to the arrival of Philippine Navy aircraft, the incident would have a lasting influence on Philippine perceptions of China's threat to Philippine sovereignty.¹⁶

Located 250 kilometers west of the Philippine island of Palawan, Reed Bank sits well within the Philippines EEZ. Philippine leaders were outraged over the PRC's "brazen" attempts to restrict Philippine access to its territory and surrounding waters. Shortly after the incident, the Philippines lodged a diplomatic protest with the PRC Embassy in Manila. In response, the PRC Foreign Ministry declared "China owns indisputable sovereignty over the [Spratly] Islands and their adjacent waters. Oil and gas exploration activities by any country or company in the waters

¹⁴ Also referred to as Recto Bank.

¹⁵ Ian Storey, "China and the Philippines: Implications of the Reed Bank Incident," *Jamestown* (May 6, 2011), <https://jamestown.org/program/china-and-the-philippines-implications-of-the-reed-bank-incident/>.

¹⁶ Renato Castro, "The Aquino administration's 2011 Decision to Shift Philippine Defense Policy from Internal Security to Territorial Defense: The Impact of the South China Sea Dispute," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 24 (2012): 67–87.

under China's jurisdiction without permission of the Chinese government constitutes violation of China's sovereignty, rights and interests, and thus are illegal and invalid."¹⁷

One year later, on April 8, 2012, a Philippine Navy surveillance airplane spotted eight Chinese fishing boats anchored at Scarborough Shoal, a contested chain of reefs and rocks within the Philippine EEZ that are claimed by both China and the Philippines.¹⁸ Shortly thereafter, Manila dispatched the Philippine Navy patrol vessel *BRP Gregorio del Pilar* to survey the shoal and inspect the fishing boats. Upon inspection, the Filipino inspection team reportedly discovered large amounts of illegally collected coral, clams, and live sharks in the Chinese vessel. When attempting to arrest the Chinese fisherman, two Chinese maritime surveillance ships positioned themselves between the Philippine Navy vessel and the Chinese fishing boats, preventing the arrest of the Chinese fisherman.

In the weeks that followed, a tense standoff between the Philippines and China ensued. Chinese cyber-attacks, restrictions against Philippine exports, suspension of tourism, fishing bans, and protests in both China and the Philippines accompanied failed negotiations and continued posturing by both Philippine and Chinese maritime vessels at the Shoal. Then on June 15, as part of what was understood by Manila as a U.S.-brokered deal with Beijing to simultaneously withdraw all ships from Scarborough Shoal, the two remaining Philippine maritime vessels withdrew from the shoal. As the Philippine vessels departed, the Chinese vessels remained, leaving China with de facto control of the shoal. Manila declined to revive the

¹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Jiang Yu's Regular Press Conference," March 24, 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2535/t810015.htm>.

¹⁸ Also known as Panatag Shoal in the Philippines and Huangyan Island (黄岩岛) in China.

dispute, and Beijing has maintained control of the shoal through a near constant presence of Chinese Coast Guard vessels.¹⁹

Over the next several years, Chinese challenges to Philippine sovereignty claims in the SCS would continue to mount. In March 2014, Chinese Coast Guard vessels blocked Philippine ships as they attempted to resupply Philippine Marines stationed on the grounded *BRP Sierra Madre* at Second Thomas Shoal.²⁰ While the Philippines, with support from U.S. surveillance aircraft, would resupply the *Sierra Madre* by ship weeks later, China would soon resume intercepting and harassing Philippine resupply and maintenance vessels. As of early 2022, China maintains persistent patrols in the vicinity of the shoal.²¹ The Philippines has also lodged protests against China for the presence of dozens of Chinese Coast Guard and Maritime Militia vessels around Thitu Island, the largest of the Spratly Islands occupied by the Philippines.²² Philippine diplomatic protests have referred to the presence of the vessels as “illegal” and “a clear violation of Philippine sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction as defined under international law.”²³

¹⁹ “Scarborough shoal standoff: A timeline,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 9, 2012, <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/36003/scarborough-shoal-standoff-a-historical-timeline>; Michael Green, et. al, “Counter-Coercion Series: Scarborough Shoal Standoff,” *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (May 22, 2017), <https://amti.csis.org/counter-co-scarborough-standoff/>; Michaela Del Callar, “DFA: China Boats Blocking PHL Vessels from Panatag Shoal,” *GMA News* (July 18, 2012), <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/265889/news/nation/dfa-china-boats-blocking-phl-vessels-from-panatag-shoal/>.

²⁰ Also known as Ayungin Shoal in the Philippines and Renai Jiao 仁爱礁 in China; “Chinese Ships Block Two PHL Vessels’ Approach to Ayungin Shoal,” *GMA News* (March 10, 2014), <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/351953/chinese-ships-block-two-phl-vessels-approach-to-ayungin-shoal/story/?related>; Michael Green, et al. “Counter-Coercion Series: Second Thomas Shoal Incident,” *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (June 9, 2017), <https://amti.csis.org/counter-co-2nd-thomas-shoal/>

²¹ Drake Long and Jason Gutierrez, “China Coast Guard Patrols Near Philippine-Occupied Second Thomas Shoal,” *Radio Free Asia* (April 1, 2020), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/coastguard-shoal-04012020192136.html>; Michael Green, “Counter-Coercion Series: Second Thomas Shoal Incident.”

²² Also known as Pagasa Island in the Philippines and ZhongYe Island (中業島) in China

²³ Jim Gomez, “Philippines Slams China’s South China Sea Flotilla,” *The Diplomat* (April 8, 2019), <https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/philippines-slams-chinas-south-china-sea-flotilla/>; “The Long Patrol: Stare-down at Thitu Island Enters Its Sixteenth Month,” *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (March 5, 2020), <https://amti.csis.org/the-long-patrol-stare-down-at-thitu-island-enters-its-sixteenth-month/>.

In addition to Chinese challenges to Philippine claims in the SCS, Philippine leaders also perceive PRC land reclamation and military construction in the Spratly Islands to pose a serious threat to Philippine sovereignty. China's island building in the SCS reached its apex in June 2015 when China announced its reclamation activity largely complete after having created over 3,200 acres of artificial islands in the disputed Spratly and Paracel Island chains.²⁴ China's SCS activity would then turn to military airfield and port facility construction on reclaimed features, including the construction of an air and naval base at Mischief Reef, a previously low tide elevation that sits well within the Philippine EEZ. The most recent Philippine National Defense Strategy refers to the "massive construction of artificial islands...as a grave threat to its national security."²⁵

²⁴ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2016* (Washington, D.C., April 26, 2016); Ben Dolven, et al., "Chinese Land Reclamation in the South China Sea: Implications and Policy Options," *Congressional Research Service* (June 18, 2015), https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20150618_R44072_f366ec875f807562038948748386312c12acd5f4.pdf; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Ministry Spokesman Lu Kang's Remarks on Issues Relating to China's Construction Activities on the Nansha Islands and Reefs," June 16, 2015, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1273370.shtml.

²⁵ The Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense, *National Defense Strategy: 2018-2022* (Manila, Philippines, Department of National Defense, 2018), 11.



Figure 5.2: Competing Chinese and Philippine Claims in the SCS²⁶

In response to the growing threat from China, the Aquino administration sought to revitalize the U.S.-Philippine alliance and strengthen bilateral security cooperation. Senior administration officials regularly reaffirmed their shared interests with the U.S. and commitment to the MDT. For example, in a joint statement following the inaugural “2 plus 2” ministerial dialogue in April 2012, the two countries described the alliance as “stronger than ever” and affirmed their shared obligations under the MDT. The statement also cited increasing alignment between the two countries, describing the U.S. and the Philippines as “inextricably bound by

²⁶ Image from *Stratfor*, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/article/china-and-philippines-standoff-over-second-thomas-shoal>.

common values and shared aspirations, including a commitment to democracy and the rule of law.”²⁷ At the signing of the Manila Declaration in 2011 in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the MDT, Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert F. del Rosario described the alliance as having “never been stronger.”²⁸

As the Aquino administration reaffirmed its commitment to the U.S. alliance, it simultaneously sought to distance itself from China. Following the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff and subsequent failed negotiations with Beijing concerning Philippine rights in the SCS, Manila instituted arbitral proceedings against China in early 2013 under Annex VII to the UNCLOS. The Philippines’ submission concerned its historic maritime rights and entitlements in the SCS, the lawfulness of Chinese actions at Scarborough Shoal and surrounding waters, and the status of certain maritime features in the SCS. After the arbitration commenced, the Philippines sought further declaration from the Tribunal on the lawfulness of China’s recently accelerated land reclamation and construction activities in the Spratly Islands, including reclamation activities within the Philippine EEZ.²⁹ In response, China published a position paper on the arbitration proceedings which explicated its position that the Tribunal lacked jurisdiction to determine the merits of the case and reiterated its refusal to participate in the arbitration or accept the Tribunal’s ruling.³⁰ China also suspended the limited defense ties it shared with the

²⁷ U.S. Department of State, “Joint Statement of the United States-Philippines Ministerial Dialogue,” April 30, 2012, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/04/188977.htm>.

²⁸ U.S. Department of State, “Signing of the Manila Declaration On Board the USS Fitzgerald in Manila Bay, Manila, Philippines,” November 16, 2011, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/11/177226.htm>; Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines, *National Security Policy: 2011 – 2016. Securing the Gains of Democracy*, (Manila, Philippines, October 21, 2010), 30.

²⁹ Permanent Court of Arbitration, “The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of Philippines v. The People's Republic of China),” <https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/7/>.

³⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Position Paper of the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Matter of Jurisdiction in the South China Sea Arbitration Initiated by the Republic of the Philippines,” December 7, 2014, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1217147.shtml.

Philippines under the two countries' 2004 DCA, cancelling the reoccurring Defense and Security Dialogue and exchanges with China's National Defense University.³¹

As the case proceeded, PRC land reclamation and construction in the SCS accelerated, further stoking concerns of China's long term intentions and hardening the Aquino administration's stance against China. Throughout the remainder of his presidential term, Aquino would regularly speak out against Chinese actions and seek to raise international awareness of the threat posed by China's military buildup and territorial ambitions. On more than one occasion, Aquino would compare Beijing's activities in the SCS to Nazi Germany's expansionism prior to WWII.³² Often in conjunction with these statements, the Aquino administration asserted the obligation of the U.S. under the MDT to defend the Philippines should China move to occupy Philippine territory in the SCS.³³

When the Tribunal announced its award in July 2016, Philippine claims were largely validated. Fourteen of the Philippines's fifteen claims were unanimously accepted, broadly repudiating China's Nine-Dash Line, reclamation activities, and assertive behavior in the SCS.³⁴ In a statement following the ruling, Beijing reiterated its position that the Tribunal lacked

³¹ Nicole Forrest Green, "Australia and the Philippines, Strategic Allies and Partners: Interview with Philippines Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana," *Australian Naval Institute* (March 5, 2017), <https://navalinstitute.com.au/australia-and-philippines-strategic-allies-and-partners/>.

³² Keith Bradsher, "Philippine Leader Sounds Alarm on China," *The New York Times* (February 4, 2014), <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/05/world/asia/philippine-leader-urges-international-help-in-resisting-chinas-sea-claims.html>; Kiyoshi Takenaka, "Philippine's Aquino Revives Comparison between China and Nazi Germany," *Reuters* (June 3, 2015), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-philippines/philippines-aquino-revives-comparison-between-china-and-nazi-germany-idUSKBN0OJ0OY20150603>.

³³ Javier C. Hernandez, "South China Sea: Benigno Aquino Says U.S. Will Defend Philippines If China Moves on Reef," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (May 20, 2016), <https://www.smh.com.au/world/south-china-sea-benigno-aquino-says-us-will-defend-philippines-if-china-moves-on-reef-20160520-gozh20.html>.

³⁴ The Permanent Court of Arbitration, *PCA Case No. 2013-19 In the Matter of the South China Sea Arbitration before an Arbitral Tribunal Constituted under Annex VII to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea between the Republic of the Philippines and the People's Republic of China: Award* (July 16, 2016), <https://www.pcacases.com/pcadocs/PH-CN%20-%2020160712%20-%20Award.pdf>

jurisdiction and described the ruling as “null and void and having no binding force.”³⁵ Going further, Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin dismissed the award as “nothing more than a piece of waste paper” and one that “will not be enforced by anyone.”³⁶

Despite the Philippines’ momentous victory, the Philippines remained largely silent. Two weeks before the ruling, Rodrigo Duterte succeeded Aquino as President of the Philippines. During his presidential campaign, Duterte stated his position that the dispute should be solved through bilateral negotiations rather than an international tribunal, a stance long advocated by Beijing.³⁷ Following the ruling, Duterte declared his intent to set aside the arbitration ruling and seek direct consultations with Beijing.³⁸ As the years-long arbitration and much anticipated ruling faded with the inauguration of Duterte, so did the Philippines’ firm commitment to its alliance with the U.S.

5.3 Foreign Policy Independence: The Weak Alliance Commitment of the Duterte Administration

The Aquino administration’s strong commitment to the U.S. alliance stands in direct contrast to the weak commitment of the Duterte administration. Throughout its tenure, the

³⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “China Adheres to the Position of Settling Through Negotiation the Relevant Disputes Between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea,” July 13, 2016, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1380615.shtml.

³⁶ Liu Zhenmin, “Remarks at a State Council Information Office briefing on the South China Sea Disputes,” July 13, 2016, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/32618/Document/1483804/1483804.htm>.

³⁷ In May 2016, Duterte stated, “I have a similar position as China’s. I don’t believe in solving the conflict through an international tribunal.” See: Emily Rauhala, “Rise of Philippines’ Duterte Stirs Uncertainty in the South China Sea,” *Washington Post* (May 10, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/rise-of-philippines-duterte-stirs-up-uncertainty-in-the-south-china-sea/2016/05/10/d75102e2-1621-11e6-971a-dadf9ab18869_story.html.

³⁸ After Duterte’s comments drew international and domestic criticism, Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay would clarify that the administration “reaffirms its respect for and firm adherence to this milestone ruling and will be guided by its parameters when tackling the issue of maritime claims in the South China Sea.” Yasay pledged that Duterte “will not deviate from the four corners of the ruling.” See: Yuji Vincent Gonzales, “Yasay: Duterte Won’t Deviate from South China Sea Ruling,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (December 19, 2016), <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/150895/yasay-duterte-wont-deviate-south-china-sea-ruling>.

Duterte administration has sought to downgrade U.S.-Philippine security relations and reduce Philippine dependence on the U.S. The weak commitment of the Duterte administration to its alliance with the U.S. is most clearly seen in the administration's attacks against U.S.-Philippine security agreements, cancelation of combined military operations and exercises, its emphasis on foreign policy independence, and its efforts to review the MDT to avoid Philippine entrapment in a conflict between the U.S. and China.

One of Duterte's first orders of business after coming to office was to dismiss U.S. Special Forces from Mindanao where they were conducting counterterrorism operations alongside the AFP. On September 12, 2016, just two and a half months after assuming office, Duterte stated, "I didn't say anything before out of respect or I do not want a rift with America but they [U.S. Forces in Mindanao] have to go."³⁹ The next day, Duterte cancelled joint maritime patrols with the U.S. in the SCS, which were initiated earlier that year under the Aquino administration.⁴⁰ Combined military exercises with the U.S. were next on the chopping block, and two weeks later on September 28 during an official visit to Hanoi, Duterte served notice to the U.S. that the upcoming Philippine Amphibious Landing Exercises (PHIBLEX) with the U.S. in Luzon would be the last military exercise between the U.S. and the Philippines. Over the next two weeks, Duterte repeated his intentions to "establish new alliances" and "break up" with the U.S.⁴¹ Then on October 20, 2016, Duterte's assault against the U.S. alliance reached its apex when in front of an audience at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, he announced his military and

³⁹ Pia Ranada, "Duterte: U.S. Troops Should Stay out of Mindanao," *Rappler* (September 12, 2016), <http://www.rappler.com/nation/145981-duterte-united-states-special-forces-mindanao>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ McKirdy, "Defense Secretary Ash Carter: U.S. to 'sharpen military edge' in Asia"; Buena Bernal and Holly Yan, "Philippines' President Says He'll 'break up' with U.S., Tells Obama 'Go to Hell,'" *CNN* (October 4, 2016), <https://www.cnn.com/2016/10/04/asia/philippines-duterte-us-breakup/index.html>.

economic “separation” from the U.S. Upon his return to Manila, Duterte announced his intention to cancel the EDCA with the U.S.⁴²

⁴² “Duterte Warns End to U.S. Defence Pact during Japan Visit,” *Al Jazeera* (October 25, 2016), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/duterte-warns-defence-pact-japan-visit-161025141718165.html>; Martin Petty and Linda Sieg, “Philippines’ Duterte Hits out at U.S., Then Heads to Japan,” *Reuters* (October 25, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-philippines-idUSKCN12O2P1>.

12-Sep-16	“I didn't say anything before out of respect or I do not want a rift with America but they [U.S. Special Forces in Mindanao] have to go. It will get more tense. If they see an American, they will really be killed. They will demand ransom, they will kill them.” (Manila)
13-Sep-16	“We will not join any expedition or patrolling [joint maritime patrols with the U.S. in the Philippine EEZ]. I will not allow it because I do not want my country to be involved in a hostile act... We are not going to cut our umbilical cord with the countries we are allied now.” (Villamor AB, Philippines)
28-Sep-16	“I will visit China. I will open the door for everyone. I will go to Russia. I'm serving notice now to the U.S. I will maintain the alliance, but I will establish new alliances...I serve notice to you now that this will be the last joint military exercise with U.S. Jointly, Philippines, U.S., last one.” (Hanoi)
4-Oct-16	“Eventually I might, in my time, I will break up with America. I'd rather go to Russia and to China.” (Manila)
20-Oct-16	“I announce my separation from the United States. Both in military, not maybe social, but economics also. America has lost...I've realigned myself in your ideological flow and maybe I will also go to Russia to talk to Putin and tell him that there are three of us against the world - China, Philippines, and Russia. It's the only way.” (Beijing)
24-Oct-16	“You have the EDCA, well forget it. If you stay here long enough...I do not want to see any military man of any other nation except the Philippine soldier.” (Manila, commenting on a recent visit by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel)
25-Oct-16	“I want them out...I'm willing to revise or abrogate agreements... This will be the last maneuver, war games, between the United States and the Philippine military.” (Japan)

Figure 5.3: Duterte's Public Statements on Downgrading U.S.-Philippine Security Relations (September - October 2016)⁴³

As Duterte launched his volatile attack against the U.S.-Philippine security relationship, his senior administration officials framed his actions as part of a broader effort to reduce

⁴³ Pia Ranada, “Duterte: U.S. Troops Should Stay out of Mindanao,” *Rappler* (September 12, 2016), <http://www.rappler.com/nation/145981-duterte-united-states-special-forces-mindanao>; McKirdy, “Defense Secretary: U.S. to ‘sharpen Edge’ in Asia.”; Buena Bernal and Holly Yan, “Philippines’ President Says He’ll ‘break up’ with U.S.,” *CNN* (October 4, 2016); “Duterte Warns End to U.S. Defence Pact during Japan Visit,” *Al Jazeera* (October 25, 2016), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/duterte-warns-defence-pact-japan-visit-161025141718165.html>; Martin Petty and Linda Sieg, “Philippines’ Duterte Hits out at U.S., Then Heads to Japan,” *Reuters* (October 25, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-philippines-idUSKCN1202P1>.

Philippine dependence on the U.S. and strengthen Philippine sovereignty. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana explained Duterte's cancelation of combined military exercises as "trying to develop a relationship with the U.S. that is not too dependent on one country." Communications Secretary Martin Andanan later stated that while the U.S. had been like a father to the Philippines, it was time to "move out of the house" and "decide for ourselves."⁴⁴ Even more directly, in October 2016, Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay proclaimed "breaking away from the shackling dependency of the Philippines to effectively address both internal and external security threats has become imperative in putting an end to our nation's subservience to United States' interests."⁴⁵ While some observers viewed Duterte's volatile statements as an impulsive reaction to U.S. criticisms of human rights violations associated with his anti-drug campaign, his administration officials explained his actions as part of a concerted effort to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. and strengthen Philippine sovereignty.

As the Duterte administration sought to downgrade U.S.-Philippine security relations, it also advanced its central foreign policy principle of foreign policy independence. This principle is enshrined in the Philippines' 1987 Constitution, which states Filipino leaders "shall pursue an independent foreign policy" where the "paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination."⁴⁶ While previous Philippine leaders have interpreted this provision differently, the Duterte administration explicitly tied foreign policy independence to Philippine dependence on the U.S. A day after his

⁴⁴ Andreo Calozzo and Cecilia Yap, "China Visit Helps Duterte Reap Funding Deals Worth \$24 Billion," *Bloomberg* (October 21, 2016), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-10-21/china-visit-helps-duterte-reap-funding-deals-worth-24-billion>.

⁴⁵ Curt Mills, "Rodrigo Duterte Wants to Free Philippines From U.S. Shackles, Foreign Minister Says," *U.S. News* (October 7, 2016), <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-10-07/rodrigo-duterte-wants-to-free-philippines-from-us-shackles-foreign-minister-says>.

⁴⁶ *The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines*, Section 7, (1987).

electoral victory, Duterte made his objective to reduce U.S. dependence clear, declaring his intent to “charter a course [for the Philippines] on its own and will not be dependent on the United States.”⁴⁷ More directly, Foreign Affairs Secretary Yasay stated, “Indeed, breaking away from our closest friend, only military ally and strategic partner would not be in our best national interest....and yet, separation from our former colonial master is demanded in pursuing our independent foreign policy.”⁴⁸

In the months that followed, the Duterte administration’s commitment to foreign policy independence and reducing Philippine dependence on the U.S. was on full display during Duterte’s frequent foreign visits. At the September 2016 ASEAN summit, Duterte stated, “In our relations to the world, the Philippines will pursue an independent foreign policy. I repeat: The Philippines will pursue an independent foreign policy. We will observe and must insist on the time-honored principles of sovereignty, sovereign equality, non-interference, and the commitment to a peaceful settlement of disputes to best serve our people and protect the interests of our country.”⁴⁹ While speaking at the Philippine Economic Forum in Tokyo in October 2016, Duterte railed against U.S. colonialization, his opposition to U.S. military presence in the Philippines, and declared his commitment to pursue an independent foreign policy.⁵⁰ Additionally, in October 2019 in front of a crowd of Russian elites and diplomats at the Valdai

⁴⁷ “Philippines’ Incoming Leader Duterte to Pursue Independent Foreign Policy,” *Reuters* (May 31, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-politics-usa-idUSKCN0YM1J7>.

⁴⁸ “U.S.-Philippine Relations,” *Global Security*, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/philippines/forrel-us.htm>.

⁴⁹ Rodrigo Roa Duterte, “Speech of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during His Arrival from His Participation at the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits in Laos and Visit to Indonesia,” September 10, 2016, <https://pcoo.gov.ph/sept-10-2016-speech-of-president-rodrigo-roa-duterte-during-his-arrival-from-his-participation-at-the-28th-and-29th-asean-summits-in-laos-and-visit-to-indonesia/>.

⁵⁰ Rodrigo Roa Duterte, “Speech of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during the Philippine Economic Forum,” October 26, 2016, <https://pcoo.gov.ph/oct-26-2016-speech-of-president-rodrigo-roa-duterte-during-the-philippine-economic-forum/>.

International Discussion Club in Sochi, Russia, Duterte criticized U.S. leadership of the liberal global order and asserted the Philippines' need for friends and partners who "respect our independence to make sovereign decisions." Rather than reaffirming the Philippines' close alignment with its sole treaty ally, Duterte referred to the Philippines as part of the "nonaligned" Global South. The Duterte administration's emphasis on foreign policy independence, while at the same time downgrading U.S.-Philippine security relations, clearly demonstrate its lack of commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance.

The Duterte administration's weak commitment to the U.S. alliance is reflective of the nationalistic strand of Philippine political ideology that is wary of the sovereignty costs imposed by Philippine dependence on the U.S. Shortly after gaining its independence from the U.S. in 1946, the Philippines and the U.S. signed the *Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines* on August 30, 1951. Under the MDT, the U.S. retained a strong military presence in the Philippines and stated its commitment to ensure the security of the Philippines as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism in Southeast Asia. Along with the defense assurances stated in the MDT, the U.S. retained ownership of Naval Base Subic Bay and Clark Air Base and the permanent presence of tens of thousands of U.S. troops stationed at these bases. Troop levels grew to nearly thirty thousand at the height of the Vietnam War, and dropped to a steady fifteen thousand during the latter half of the 1970s and 1980s.⁵¹

⁵¹ Tim Kane, "Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950-2003," *The Heritage Foundation* (2021), <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/global-us-troop-deployment-1950-2003>.

Major U.S. - Philippines Defense Agreements	
Military Bases Agreement Signed 1947, expired 1992	Mutual Defense Treaty Signed 1951
Visiting Forces Agreement Signed 1998	Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement Signed 2014

Figure 5.4: Major U.S.-Philippines Defense Agreements

The U.S.-Philippine MDT and the presence of thousands of U.S. troops hampered the development of an independent Philippine military. Following Philippine independence in 1946, U.S. forces remained deeply embedded within AFP defense plans, logistic chains, training, and operational doctrine. As described by Heydarian, local Philippine elite developed a “perverse strategic culture, defined by the effective outsourcing of external security to America.” In its continued reliance on the U.S., the AFP developed “a profound and deleterious sense of strategic dependence.” This dependence, Heydarian argues, led the U.S. to become “the de facto guarantor of the Philippines’ survival against external threats,” and led the Philippines to become “more of a de facto protectorate than a sovereign ally of America.”⁵² As a ‘de facto protectorate’ of the U.S., Philippine interests were often subservient to the strategic interests of the U.S., who leveraged foreign and military aid and bilateral trade to influence Philippine politics.⁵³ Following the overthrow of the dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, voices expressing concern of the sovereignty costs imposed by continued U.S. dependence grew louder.

With the revival of nationalistic sentiment following the ousting of the Marcos regime and the return of democratic elections, concerns of perceived Philippine subservience to U.S. interests continued to build. These concerns led to the explicit inclusion of the mandate for

⁵² Richard Javad Heydarian, “Tragedy of Small Power Politics: Duterte and the Shifting Sands of Philippine Foreign Policy,” *Asian Security* 13, no. 3 (September 2, 2017): 220–236.

⁵³ Stephen R. Shalom, “Securing the U.S.-Philippine Military Bases Agreement of 1947,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 22, no. 4 (December 1, 1990): 3–12.

Philippine leaders to “pursue an independent foreign policy” in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. These same concerns were center stage during the 1991 Philippine Senate debates concerning the renewal of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) with the U.S. Originally signed in 1947, the Agreement gave the U.S. extensive rights over existing U.S. military facilities in the Philippines and the right to establish new bases.⁵⁴ After subsequent bilateral agreements reduced the ninety-nine year lease on the bases to twenty-five years, extension of the Agreement fell before the Philippine Senate in 1991. Despite having the support of Philippine President Corazon Aquino, mother of future president Benigno Aquino III, the Philippine Senate failed to ratify the treaty’s extension. Senators opposed to the treaty denounced the treaty as a “perpetuation of U.S. colonialism” and called the vote to not renew the treaty as “a vote for a truly sovereign and independent Philippine nation.” Following the Senate’s vote, Senator Agapito Aquino, brother-in-law of President Corazon Aquino, asserted the U.S. “must understand that the lack or absence of authentic sovereignty on our part translates into a very real incapacity to stand on our own feet, a palpable inability to grow up, a political adolescence perpetually tied to the purse strings of America, a crippling dependence, an anachronistic colonial and Cold War mentality.”⁵⁵ As demonstrated by Senate resistance to the MBA, opposition to Philippine security dependence on the U.S. formed a pronounced, and at times decisive, voice in Philippine politics.

Though the expiration of the MBA in 1992 removed thousands of U.S. troops from the country, Philippine security dependence on the U.S. persisted. After decades of close defense ties

⁵⁴ The Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines, *Agreement between the United States of American and the Republic of the Philippines Concerning Military Bases* (1947), <https://web.archive.org/web/20170212010914/https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-ph-ust000011-0055.pdf>.

⁵⁵ William Branigin, “Base Treaty Rejected by Philippines,” *Washington Post* (September 17, 1991), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1991/09/17/base-treaty-rejected-by-philippines/e90c9f09-9de3-4b1c-94ec-116ff06c63cf/>.

and the hosting of thousands of U.S. military personnel, the Philippines had grown chronically dependent on the U.S. military. While stationed in the Philippines, U.S. military units filled critical roles in the Philippines' national defense strategy and AFP operational plans, performing vital command and control, intelligence, training, and operational functions. The departure of U.S. military forces left critical gaps in Philippine military capabilities. In the peaceful afterglow following the end of the Cold War, the Philippines failed to make adequate investments in its armed forces to compensate for the reduced U.S. footprint. Despite the departure of U.S. troops, national defense expenditures actually decreased throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Whereas defense spending as a percentage of GDP averaged over two percent in the late 1980s and early 1990s, spending gradually decreased to just over one percent by 2010.⁵⁶ Without dedicated domestic investments to fill gaps left by the departure of U.S. troops, the Philippines remained as dependent on the U.S. for its security as when tens of thousands of U.S. troops were stationed in the country.

In the face of the rising threat from China and in recognition of Philippine security reliance on the U.S., the Aquino administration sought to bolster the U.S.' ability to protect Philippine sovereignty through the signing of the EDCA in 2014. The EDCA provided a legal framework for the increased presence of U.S. forces in the Philippines and granted the U.S. military access to bases throughout the Philippines.⁵⁷ The EDCA reignited debates concerning the sovereignty costs of U.S. security dependence. To avoid the constitutionally-mandated Senate approval process required for treaties (which had previously led to the expiration of the

⁵⁶ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Military Expenditure Database* (2021), <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

⁵⁷ The Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America, *Agreement between the Government of The Republic of the Philippines and The Government of The United States of America on Enhanced Defense Cooperation* (April 24, 2014) <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2014/04apr/20140428-EDCA.pdf>.

MBA), the Aquino administration signed the EDCA as an executive agreement. Senate resentment over its being slighted in the approval process led to debate on the constitutionality of EDCA and a petition to the Philippine Supreme Court to review whether the Agreement required Senate ratification. Senate debate echoed arguments heard during the 1991 MBA debates. Those opposed to the EDCA called the Agreement a violation of Philippine sovereignty and the constitutional mandate to pursue an independent foreign policy. Though the Philippine Supreme Court would eventually affirm the constitutionality of the EDCA, dissenting Supreme Court justices argued EDCA was a derogation of the country's sovereignty and a violation of the Constitution.⁵⁸ Justice Marvic Leonen argued the EDCA extended Philippine dependence on the U.S., and described the Agreement as “an unequal treaty” that is “an affront to the sovereignty, dignity and independence of the Philippine State.” Justice Teresita Leonardo-de Castro argued that while “the Philippines cannot stand alone and will need friends,” it cannot “bargain away [its] sovereignty.”⁵⁹

The Duterte administration's weak commitment to the U.S. alliance is a direct reflection of the nationalistic element of the Philippine political tradition that views Philippine security dependence on the U.S. as an offense to Philippine sovereignty. Duterte's individual ideological beliefs closely align with this tradition. Biographers describe Duterte's ideological development as heavily influenced by his coming of age during the Vietnam War era when anti-imperialist and anti-American sentiment flourished in the region. Duterte also has close ties to far-left

⁵⁸ Jerome C. Aning, “SC Dissenters Say EDCA a Derogation of PH Sovereignty, *Philippines Daily Inquirer* (January 18, 2016), <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/135212/sc-dissenters-say-edca-a-derogation-of-ph-sovereignty#ixzz79Nt9ZECR>.

⁵⁹ Supreme Court of the Republic of the Philippines, *Rene A.V. Saguisag, et al. Vs. Executive Secretary Paquito N. Ochoa, Jr., et al./Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), et al Vs. Department of National Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, et al., G.R. No. 212426* (January 12, 2016), https://www.lawphil.net/judjuris/juri2016/jul2016/gr_212426_2016.html.

groups, including the Philippines communist movement, which vehemently opposes U.S. military presence in the Philippines. During his university studies, Duterte developed a close relationship with Professor Jose Maria Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Later on, Duterte became close friends with former communist rebel Leonico Evasco, who would later serve as Duterte's presidential campaign manager and Secretary of the Cabinet.⁶⁰ The Duterte administration's weak commitment to the U.S. alliance is reflective of Duterte's personal deep-seated view of Philippine security dependence on the U.S. as a barrier to true national sovereignty.

The weak commitment of the Duterte administration toward the U.S. alliance can also be seen in the types of assurances sought by the Duterte administration in contrast to those sought by the Aquino administration. In response to perceived Chinese aggression in the SCS, the Aquino administration repeatedly sought assurances concerning the applicability of the MDT to Philippine claims. For example, prior to attending the April 2012 ministerial dialogue, Foreign Affairs Secretary del Rosario stated he would "seek assurances that the United States would come to the aid of the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal." While it is unclear whether Rosario received such assurances, following the dialogue the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs released a detailed review of previous U.S. assurances and clarifications of the MDT, making the case that the MDT clearly applied to attacks against Philippine claims in the SCS.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Richard Javad Heydarian, *The Rise of Duterte* (New York, NY: Springer, 2017), 35.

⁶¹ Tongfi Kim, "Sino-Philippine Disputes and the US-Philippines Alliance," *US Alliance Obligations in the Disputes in the East and South China Seas: Issues of Applicability and Interpretations* (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2016); Albert F. del Rosario, "Statement of Secretary Del Rosario Regarding the Philippines-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty," *Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines* (May 9, 2012), <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2012/05/09/statement-of-secretary-del-rosario-regarding-the-philippines-u-s-mutual-defense-treaty-may-9-2012/>.

In contrast to the Aquino administration's efforts to seek treaty assurances, the Duterte administration has at times sought to distance itself from the MDT. In December 2018, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenza called for a review of the MDT to clarify ambiguities within the agreement.⁶² Though the Trump administration would later definitively state the MDT's applicability to the SCS (which previous administrations had been reluctant to do), Lorenzana revealed that it was not whether the U.S. would respond to attacks against the Philippine that was most worrisome to the administration, but whether the Philippines' obligations under the MDT would drag the Philippines into a war with China. Lorenza stated, "It is not the lack of reassurance that worries me. It is being involved in a war that we do not seek and do not want."⁶³ In September 2021, Lorenzana renewed calls to review the MDT, stating the alliance "will have to evolve in recognition of new geopolitical realities." Lorenzana further downplayed the relevance of the alliance, stating "much is to be desired in terms of the 70-year-old alliance, given what is happening in the South China Sea and beyond, not to mention the Philippines' commitment to cultivate a more balanced relations with other countries in the region."⁶⁴ Rather than viewing the alliance as a deterrent to Chinese aggression, the Duterte administration has come to view the MDT more as a liability.

⁶² Eimor P. Santos, "DND Eyes Review of Mutual Defense Treaty with U.S.," *CNN Philippines* (December 20, 2018), <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/12/20/Philippines-U.S.-Mutual-Defense-Treaty-South-China-Sea-dispute.html>.

⁶³ Ramses Amer and Li Jianwei, "The Philippines' Reaction to Pompeo's Interpretation of the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty," *Institute for Security and Development Policy* (March 14, 2019), <https://isdp.eu/publication/the-philippines-reaction-to-pompeos-interpretation-of-us-philippines-mutual-defense-treaty/>; Lara Tan, "Lorenzana Warns of 'chaos during Crisis' with so-Called Vague U.S.-PH Defense Treaty," *CNN Philippines* (March 5, 2019), <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2019/03/05/U.S.-Philippines-mutual-defense-treaty-Lorenzana-China.html>.

⁶⁴ Amer and Li, "The Philippines' Reaction to Pompeo's Interpretation of the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty."

The Duterte administration's rhetorical attacks against the U.S.-Philippine security relationship, its emphasis on foreign policy independence, its statements concerning the need to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S., and its efforts to review the MDT to avoid entrapment clearly demonstrate the Duterte administration's weak commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance. This weak commitment to the U.S. alliance is grounded in the deep-seated nationalistic element of the Philippine political tradition that views Philippine security dependence on the U.S. as an affront to Philippine sovereignty. Duterte's long standing ideological views and political actions clearly reflect this political tradition. Under this view, the primary threat to Philippine sovereignty is not necessarily Chinese aggression in the SCS, but the Philippines' persistent security dependence on the U.S.

5.4 Evidence of Philippine Diversification and Weak Alliance Commitment

In this section, I demonstrate how the weak alliance commitment of the Duterte administration led to a concerted effort to build security ties with middle states throughout the Indo-Pacific and reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. The diversification strategy pursued by the Philippines aligns with the logic that weak alliance commitment and a desire to reduce one's security dependence on another state necessitates increasing security through other means, such as forming more limited security partnerships with other states. To demonstrate the relation between alliance commitment and diversification behavior, I systematically analyze Philippine diversification behavior across three areas: official Philippine national security publications, defense agreements, and arms purchases. I compare and contrast the diversification behavior of the Duterte administration, who held a weak commitment to the U.S. alliance, to that of the Aquino administration, who held a strong commitment to the U.S. alliance. If my

proposed relation between alliance commitment and diversification is correct, I expect to see evidence of diversification in each of these areas under the Duterte administration, and little evidence of diversification under the Aquino administration. I also expect that as the Philippines diversifies, its closest security partners are states with whom the Philippines shares similar foreign policy preferences, has close economic relations, and shares common security partners and a common adversary. To preview the findings, the Philippines has made broad efforts to strengthen security ties with states throughout the region and reduce security dependence with the U.S. under the Duterte administration, and focused much more narrowly on strengthening security ties with the U.S. and its closest allies under the Aquino administration. As the Duterte administration has pursued diversification, it has formed partnerships with “like-minded” states with whom it shares common security partners, faces a common adversary, and has close economic relations.

5.4.1 Official National Security Publications

Official national security publications are authoritative government statements identifying a state’s national security challenges and its ways and means to address these challenges. The most common forms of official national security publications include national security strategies, national defense strategies, national military strategies, and defense white papers. These publications are often governed by state laws, which may regulate the terms and conditions for when a government releases a document and the document’s content. Official national security publications identify a government’s highest national security priorities and often serve as an overarching policy statement that guides the development of supporting plans, strategies, acquisitions, and day-to-day military and diplomatic activities. Accordingly, these

publications can provide valuable information concerning how a government views its national security environment and its prioritization of resources to address perceived risks.

To assess the relation between Philippine alliance commitment and diversification, I analyze the official national security publications released by the Aquino and Duterte administrations. I focus my attention on the *National Security Policy* (NSP) statements released by the Aquino administration in 2011 and the Duterte administration in 2017. The Philippine National Security Council identifies the NSP as “a statement of principles that should guide national decision-making and determine courses of action to be taken in order to attain the state or condition wherein the national interests, the well-being of our people and institutions, and our sovereignty and territorial integrity are protected and enhanced.”⁶⁵ Several conditions make the NSP statements conducive for analytical comparison. First, the NSP is the highest official national security publication released by Philippine Presidential administrations, and serves as the guiding document for all other policies and strategies. Second, while both administrations released additional national security documents, such as the Aquino administration’s 2012 *Defense White Paper* and the Duterte administration’s 2018 *National Security Strategy* and *National Defense Strategy*, the NSP is the only high level national security document released by both administrations. Lastly, both the Aquino and Duterte administrations released their NSP statements within their first year in office, and both documents are equal in length (32 pages). For these reasons, I focus on comparing and contrasting the NSPs of both administrations, and leverage other national security publications to support the analysis derived from the NSP statements.

⁶⁵ Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines, *National Security Policy: 2011 – 2016. Securing the Gains of Democracy* (Manila, Philippines, 2011), 1.

If my hypothesis concerning the relation between alliance commitment and diversification is correct, the national security publications of the Aquino administration should signal a high level of commitment to the U.S. alliance and prioritize strengthening security ties with the U.S. Conversely, the national security publications of the Duterte administration should signal a weak level of commitment to the U.S. alliance and downplay security ties with the U.S. while prioritizing security ties with other partners. In seeking to strengthen security ties with other states, the national security publications of the Duterte administration should also emphasize expanding security cooperation with states who have similar foreign policy preferences, share common security partners, face a common adversary, and are close economic partners of the Philippines.

5.4.1.1 National Security Policy of the Aquino Administration

The Aquino administration's NSP is entitled *National Security Policy 2011-2016: Securing the Gains of Democracy* and was released in April 2011. Broadly, the NSP heavily stresses the Aquino administration's commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance and cites continued close security cooperation with the U.S. as central to Philippine national security. In its emphasis on strengthening security ties with the U.S., cooperation with other states is minimized, and only given brief and inexplicit attention. The administration's 2012 Defense White Paper is consistent with these general themes of the NSP.

It is important to note that the Aquino administration's NSP was released prior to the 2012 Scarborough Shoal crisis, and likely drafted prior to the March 2011 Reed Bank incident. Consequently, the Aquino administration's NSP does not cite China as a significant threat to national security, and focuses on domestic security challenges, including protracted communist

insurgency, secessionist rebellion in Mindanao, terrorism, and rising crime rates. The NSP's central focus is on strengthening domestic stability and development, and identifies "four key elements" for focused attention: 1) governance; 2) delivery of basic services; 3) economic reconstruction and sustainable development; and 4) security sector reform.

Despite the statement's domestic focus, the NSP identifies the Philippines' alliance with the U.S. and continued bilateral security cooperation as central to addressing Philippine national security challenges. In the document, the administration "reaffirms" its alliance with the U.S. and the "relevance" of the MDT, citing the alliance as "beneficial to [the] security" of the Philippines and a "stabilizing force" in the region:

"The Philippines sees the continuation of its harmonious relationship with the United States as beneficial to its security and reaffirms this alliance with the view that the U.S. military presence is a major stabilizing factor in the region."⁶⁶

"A continuing U.S. security presence in the Asia Pacific is considered as a positive stabilizing force, particularly with the growing complexity of security challenges that confront the region. Consequently, the 1951 RP-U.S. MDT continues to remain relevant to this day."⁶⁷

Importantly, as the Aquino administration's NSP affirms its commitment to its alliance with the U.S., it does not emphasize non-alignment or signal its intent to establish a national security strategy or foreign policy distinct from the U.S. The sole reference to foreign policy independence in the document is an obligatory quotation listing constitutional provisions related to national security.

Regarding security cooperation with the U.S., the document identifies the MDT as enabling valuable security cooperation activities that are beneficial to addressing Philippine security concerns:

⁶⁶ Ibid, 30.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 11.

“Activities emanating from the Mutual Defense Treaty have resulted in the improvement of interoperability between the two nation’s armed forces and in other joint activities that address ongoing security concerns such as terrorism and other transnational crimes.”⁶⁸

The NSP does include a single reference to “enhancing...cooperative security arrangements” with “ASEAN member countries, Japan, China, South Korea, and Australia,” but no further details or priorities for cooperation with countries other than the U.S. are provided.⁶⁹

Similar to the NSP, the administration’s July 2012 Defense White Paper, entitled *Transforming the Department of National Defense to Effectively Meet the Defense and Security Challenges of the 21st Century*, is also primarily focused on domestic security challenges and force modernization. Despite its domestic focus, the White Paper emphasizes the need to strengthen military interoperability and cooperation with the U.S. under the MDT in order to achieve force modernization, particularly in the areas of “planning and execution of military operations and command and control communications.”⁷⁰ Discussion on strengthening cooperation with states aside from the U.S. is extremely limited and not specific.

5.4.1.2 National Security Policy of the Duterte Administration

The NSP of the Duterte administration is entitled *National Security Policy for Change and Well-being of the Filipino People: 2017-2022* and was released in April 2017. Broadly, the NSP reflects the Duterte administration’s focus on public security and pursuit of an independent foreign policy. Whereas the Aquino administration’s NSP reaffirms the government’s commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance and its prioritization of strengthening security ties

⁶⁸ Ibid, 30.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 30.

⁷⁰ Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense, *A White Paper on Philippine Defense Transformation* (Manila, Philippines, July 2012), 12-20.

with the U.S., the NSP of the Duterte administration emphasizes the Philippine’s need to remain “free from external control and influence” and downplays U.S.-Philippine security relations. At the same time, the NSP highlights the administration’s emphasis on strengthening defense relations with “like-minded countries” throughout the region. The administration’s 2018 National Security Strategy and 2018 National Defense Strategy are consistent with these primary themes.

In the 2017 NSP, the Duterte administration lays out an expansive view of national security that encompasses areas such as health security, economic and financial security, military and border security, information and cyber security, and maritime and airspace security, among others. The document also provides a framework for national security that emphasizes the close relation between economic development and national security, identifying economic and social development as a precondition for security.⁷¹ Moreover, the NSP heavily focuses on addressing public security, including rising levels of domestic crime and drug abuse. While the NSP identifies disputes in the West Philippine Sea to be the “foremost security challenge to the Philippines’ sovereignty and territorial integrity,” it stops short of identifying China as a threat to national security.⁷²

A reoccurring theme of the 2017 NSP is the Duterte administration’s commitment to an independent foreign policy and remaining free from foreign influence and control. For example,

⁷¹ Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines, *National Security Policy for Change and Well-being of the Filipino People - 2017-2022* (Manila, Philippines 2017), 1-2; Interestingly, there are close connections between how the Duterte administration articulates its conceptualization of national security and that of China under Xi Jinping. See History and Literature Research Institute of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, 习近平: 关于总体国家安全观论述摘编 [Xi Jinping: On the Holistic Approach to National Security] (Beijing, Central Committee Literature Press, 2018).

⁷² Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines, *National Security Policy for Change and Well-being of the Filipino People - 2017-2022* (Manila, Philippines, 2017), 13.

in President Duterte’s foreword to the document, he declares the administration “will pursue an independent foreign policy anchored on international law without compromising our unique culture and enduring values that distinctly characterize us as a sovereign nation.” Later in the document, the administration asserts that the government must “ensure that the country is free from foreign control and intervention” and government programs “will be geared towards maintaining an independent foreign policy.”⁷³ The theme is repeated in the section entitled “Safeguard the Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty”:

“The Philippines must demonstrate to the world that we are capable of protecting and defending what is ours, and that we shall fully assert and exercise our sovereign rights as a truly independent nation—free from external control and influence.”⁷⁴

In contrast to the single reference to foreign policy independence in the Aquino administration’s NSP, the Duterte administration’s NSP references foreign policy independence and self-reliance six times.

The themes of foreign policy independence and self-reliance are also reflected in the NSP’s emphasis on reducing its security dependence on the U.S. Whereas the Aquino administration’s NSP stressed increasing interoperability with the U.S., the NSP of the Duterte administration prioritizes “achieving self-reliance in defense” and “assuming full responsibility for security.” While the Duterte administration’s NSP refers to a U.S. security presence in the region as a “stabilizing force” and states the Philippines’ intent to “work closely with the U.S. on a number of significant security and economic issues,” it stops short of affirming its commitment to the alliance. The 2017 NSP’s repeated emphasis on foreign policy independence, remaining

⁷³ Ibid, 23.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 21.

free from foreign influence and control, and achieving self-reliance in defense clearly communicate the weak alliance commitment of the Duterte administration.

In its emphasis on reducing its security dependence on the U.S., the Duterte administration stresses the need to expand security cooperation with other states. As a “strategic objective” of “safeguarding territorial integrity and sovereignty,” the NSP states the Philippines must “enhance cooperative maritime security and defense arrangements with other countries.”⁷⁵ The NSP also identifies “developing new security or cooperation arrangements” as a strategic objective of the administration.⁷⁶ In forming security partnerships with other states, the NSP emphasizes forming partnerships with “like-minded countries and strategic partners.” The NSP specifically highlights the Philippines’ “strengthened strategic partnership” with Japan and its aim to boost “political, security and defense ties and cooperation between the two countries.”⁷⁷ The statement also identifies extra-regional powers such as, Australia, India, Russia, and South Korea as “crucial” to contributing to regional stability and its intent to work closely with these states on security issues.⁷⁸

The themes of foreign policy independence, reducing security dependence on the U.S., and strengthening security cooperation with states throughout the region are repeated in the administration’s 2018 National Security Strategy and 2018 National Defense Strategy. The National Security Strategy identifies the “pursuit of an independent foreign policy” as a “core national interest” of the Philippines.⁷⁹ Revealingly, the outlined priorities in the National

⁷⁵ Ibid, 21.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 23.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 14.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁷⁹ Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines, *National Security Strategy 2018: Security and Development for Transformational Change and Well-Being for the Filipino People* (Manila, Philippines, 2018).

Security Strategy are devoid of references to strengthening cooperation with the U.S.⁸⁰ The National Security Strategy does, however, identify “developing new security cooperation agreements” and “strengthening cooperation and peaceful approach with countries sharing common maritime borders and interests” as a “key...strategic action” for safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁸¹ Similarly, the 2018 National Defense Strategy emphasizes “achieving self-reliance in defense” and “assuming full responsibility for security.”⁸² Like the NSP and National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy lacks emphasis on strengthening ties with the U.S. and stresses the need to deepen security cooperation with “like-minded nations” and emerging partners.⁸³

The official security publications of the Aquino and Duterte administrations are reflective of the anticipated behavior of middle states who have a weak commitment to alliance in their decisions to pursue diversification. Viewed comparatively, the NSP statements of the Aquino and Duterte administrations are unambiguously distinct. The NSP and Defense White Paper of the Aquino administration communicates a high level of commitment to the U.S. alliance and prioritizes strengthening security ties with the U.S. Conversely, the NSP, National Security Strategy, and National Defense Strategy of the Duterte administration signal a weak commitment to alliance and emphasizes foreign policy independence, defense self-reliance, and avoiding foreign influence and control. The national security publications of the Duterte administration clearly lack the Aquino administration’s emphasis on strengthening security cooperation and

⁸⁰ The only reference to the U.S. in the 2018 NSS is found in the Annex as the document details the strategic priorities of major states in the region. The section states “The Philippines will work closely with the U.S. on a whole range of issues, including shared security and economic concerns.” Ibid, 89.

⁸¹ Ibid, 56-64.

⁸² The Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense, *National Defense Strategy: 2018-2022*, Department of National Defense (Manila, Philippines, 2018), 58.

⁸³ Ibid, 48.

interoperability with the U.S., but give far greater emphasis to broadening security relations with like-minded partners and states. In its emphasis on strengthening security partnerships with Australia, India, Japan, and South Korea, the national security publications of the Duterte Administration prioritize strengthening security cooperation with states who are close economic partners, share common security partners, and face a common adversary in China. The contrast between the official national security publications of the Aquino and Duterte administrations provides strong evidence that weak alliance commitment is a primary contributor to diversification.

5.4.2 Philippine Defense Agreements

Bilateral and multilateral defense agreements, including DCAs and institutionalized defense dialogues, are a primary indicator of a state's diversification behavior. Since 2000, the Philippines has signed 26 DCAs and institutionalized 18 bilateral defense dialogues with states in the Indo-Pacific. As a state's ability to conduct meaningful security cooperation is limited due to the time, resources, and opportunity costs involved with cooperation, defense agreements and security cooperation activities can reveal meaningful information concerning how states prioritize their foreign relations and efforts to increase their security.

In this section, I assess the relation between Philippine alliance commitment and diversification by analyzing all defense agreements signed by the Aquino and Duterte administrations. If my hypothesis concerning the relation between alliance commitment and diversification is correct, the defense agreements signed by the Aquino administration, who held a strong commitment to alliance, should primarily be with the U.S. and close U.S. allies. Those signed by the Duterte administration, who holds a weak commitment to alliance, should

primarily be with states outside the U.S. alliance network. Security ties with fellow U.S. allies may increase, yet efforts should be made to make defense cooperation independent from the U.S. Additionally, in its efforts to strengthen security ties with other states, defense agreements signed by the Duterte administration should most frequently be with states who have similar foreign policy preferences, share common security partners, face a common adversary, and are close economic partners.

5.4.2.1 Defense Agreements of the Aquino Administration

As directed in the administration's NSP, the central thrust of the Philippines' security strategy under Aquino focused on reinforcing the U.S.-Philippine alliance and strengthening bilateral security relations. To bolster the alliance, the Philippines established several key senior leader dialogues with the U.S. and signed the extensive EDCA. In April 2012, the U.S. and Philippines inaugurated the annual "2 plus 2" ministerial dialogue between their Defense Secretaries and Foreign Ministers to facilitate closer policy alignment. The ministerial dialogue followed the launch of the assistant secretary-level Philippines-U.S. Bilateral Strategic Dialogue, which was established in January 2011.⁸⁴ Combined military exercises with the U.S. also expanded under the Aquino administration, and participation in Balikatan, the largest and oldest military exercise between the two countries, reached over 11,700 in 2015, nearly double the number of military participants from the previous year.⁸⁵ Most significantly, in April 2014, the two countries signed the EDCA, which provided for the rotational presence of U.S. forces at

⁸⁴ Greg Poling, "Implications and Results: United States-Philippines Ministerial Dialogue," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (May 4, 2012), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/implications-and-results-united-states%E2%80%93philippines-ministerial-dialogue>.

⁸⁵ Renato Cruz De Castro, "U.S.-Philippines Balikatan Exercise in the Face of Chinese Island Building," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (April 17, 2015), <https://amti.csis.org/u-s-philippines-balikatan-exercise-in-the-face-of-chinese-island-building/>.

mutually agreed upon locations in the Philippines.⁸⁶ Following the signing of the EDCA, President Aquino stated the Agreement “takes our security cooperation to a higher level of engagement, reaffirms our country’s commitment to mutual defense and security, and promotes regional peace and security.”⁸⁷

While strengthening security ties with the U.S., the Aquino administration also prioritized boosting security cooperation with fellow U.S. allies. Rather than seeking to create independent sources of security cooperation, the Aquino administration viewed security cooperation with fellow U.S. allies as reinforcing the U.S. alliance network, and cooperation with these states largely took place within the broader context of U.S.-Philippine security relations. A major advancement in the Philippines relations with Australia occurred in November 2015 when the two countries signed the *Joint Declaration on Australia-The Philippines Comprehensive Partnership*. The agreement elevated the bilateral relationship to the comprehensive level and committed both sides to “strengthen and expand [the] relationship.” In the defense field, the countries committed to expand “bilateral and multilateral exercises, education and training, and maritime cooperation” and negotiate a mutual logistics support agreement.⁸⁸ The two countries also inaugurated an annual strategic dialogue between Defense and Foreign Ministry officials, which facilitated regular strategic discussions at the two-star level.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ The Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America, *Agreement between the Government of The Republic of the Philippines and The Government of The United States of America on Enhanced Defense Cooperation* (April 24, 2014), <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2014/04apr/20140428-EDCA.pdf>.

⁸⁷ Carl Thayer, “Analyzing the U.S.-Philippines Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement,” *The Diplomat* (May 2, 2014), <https://thediplomat.com/2014/05/analyzing-the-us-philippines-enhanced-defense-cooperation-agreement/>.

⁸⁸ Australia and the Republic of the Philippines, “Joint Declaration on Australia-The Philippines Comprehensive Partnership,” November 18, 2015, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/joint-declaration-on-australia-the-philippines-comprehensive-partnership>.

⁸⁹ Harold et al., *The Thickening Web of Asian Security Cooperation*, 198.

The Aquino administration also sought to bolster the U.S. alliance network through deepening security cooperation with Japan. In 2011, the two countries established a strategic partnership, which led to the two sides signing the *Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges*. Soon after, the countries upgraded their existing Vice-Ministerial Policy Dialogue to the Vice-Ministerial Strategic Dialogue to “promote discussions and cooperation on regional and global issues of mutual concern and interest, such as maritime issues, counter-measures against terrorism and international organized crimes, the reform of the United Nations, disarmament and non-proliferation, and environment and climate change.” The next year, the Japanese Defense Minister and Philippine Defense Secretary inked a bilateral maritime security agreement that facilitated high-level dialogues between defense officials and reciprocal visits between naval commanders. The countries also agreed to advance participation in multilateral logistic staff talks, HA/DR and logistics training, and exchange visits between defense staff colleges.⁹⁰

In January 2015, Japan and the Philippines signed an upgraded version of their 2011 DCA, committing to increase cooperation in maritime security, HA/DR, and defense equipment and technology.⁹¹ Later in 2015, during an official visit to Tokyo, President Aquino and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe signed a joint declaration on a “Strengthened Strategic Partnership” and initiated talks on a VFA that would allow JSDF access to Philippine bases. One major motivation for the signing of a VFA was that it would enable JSDF participation in Philippine-U.S. exercises on Philippine soil, including Balikatan.⁹² The 2015 joint declaration also

⁹⁰ Cruz De Castro, “The Duterte administration’s Foreign Policy”; Adam Westlake, “Japan signs military agreement, pledges support for Philippines,” *Japan Daily Press* (July 9, 2012).

⁹¹ “Japan, PH Renew Vow to Strengthen Maritime Security Cooperation,” *Rappler* (February 1, 2015), <https://www.rappler.com/nation/japan-philippines-defense-ministers-meeting>

⁹² Prashanth Parameswaran, “Japan, Philippines Seeking New Pact on Military Bases,” *The Diplomat* (June 5, 2015), <https://thediplomat.com/2015/06/japan-philippines-seeking-new-pact-on-military-ases/>.

expressed bilateral commitment to enhanced security dialogues, strengthen disaster relief cooperation, expand bilateral and multilateral training and exercises, and initiate negotiations to conclude a defense equipment and technology transfer agreement.⁹³ Several months later in February 2016, Japan and the Philippines followed through on their commitment and concluded the *Agreement Concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology*.

Defense cooperation with South Korea also expanded under the Aquino administration, though cooperation was more limited than cooperation with Australia and Japan. In 2013, the Philippines and South Korea signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on military exchanges and training and in 2015 signed a classified military information protection agreement.⁹⁴ While the Aquino administration did make several efforts to expand security cooperation beyond the U.S. alliance network, cooperation with other regional actors remained relatively limited. In 2011, the Philippines signed a MOU on naval intelligence exchange with Vietnam and established a hot line between their respective Coast Guards.⁹⁵ The Philippines also signed DCAs with East Timor and New Zealand in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Yet defense cooperation with these countries was far more limited than cooperation with close U.S. allies.

In total, the Aquino administration signed eleven DCAs with states in the region from 2010 to 2016. Eight of these agreements were with the U.S. and its close allies Australia, Japan, and South Korea. Rather than pursue a diversification strategy, the Aquino administration

⁹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Japan-Philippines Joint Declaration A Strengthened Strategic Partnership for Advancing the Shared Principles and Goals of Peace, Security, and Growth in the Region and Beyond,” (June 4, 2015), https://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea2/ph/page4e_000280.html. https://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea2/ph/page4e_000280.html.

⁹⁴ Raul Hernandez, “Statement: The DFA on the President’s State Visit to the Republic of Korea,” *Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines* (October 14, 2013), <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2013/10/14/statement-the-dfa-on-the-presidents-state-visit-to-the-republic-of-korea/>; Prashanth Parameswaran, “South Korea, Philippines Deepen Military Ties,” *The Diplomat* (September 14, 2015), <https://thediplomat.com/2015/09/south-korea-philippines-deepen-military-ties/>.

⁹⁵ Le Hong Hiep, *Vietnam’s Alliance Politics in the South China Sea* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2015).

focused on strengthening its alliance with the U.S. and reinforcing these ties with increased cooperation within the U.S. alliance network. The Aquino administration’s lack of diversification closely aligns with its strong commitment to the U.S. alliance.

5.4.2.2 Defense Agreements of the Duterte Administration

While the defense agreements signed by the Aquino administration focused on strengthening security ties with the U.S. and its close allies, those signed by the Duterte administration focused on broadening Philippine security ties with middle states throughout the region, both within and outside the U.S. alliance network. Whereas nearly three-fourths of DCAs signed by the Aquino administration were with the U.S. and its close allies, less than twenty percent of DCAs signed by the Duterte administration were with the U.S. and its allies. Under the Duterte administration’s diversification strategy, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Russia have emerged as important security partners, and security cooperation with Australia, Japan, and South Korea has continued to expand. Yet rather than viewing security cooperation with fellow U.S. allies as reinforcing the U.S.-Philippine alliance, security ties with these countries is viewed more as alternatives to U.S. security cooperation under the Duterte administration. The Philippines’ pattern of diversification also closely follows the predictions concerning which states are more likely to form security partnerships. In its diversification efforts, the Philippines’ closest security partners are states with whom it who shares common security partners, faces a common adversary, are close economic partners, and have similar foreign policy preferences.

Philippine DCAs	Total signed	No. w/US & Allies	Percentage
Aquino (2010-2016)	11	8	73%
Duterte (2016-Present)	6	1	17%

Figure 5.5: DCAs signed by The Philippines under the Aquino and Duterte Administrations

An initial priority of the Duterte administration was to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. Within months of assuming office, the administration cancelled the annual PHIBLEX and Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training maritime exercises with the U.S. Total participation in Balikatan would also drop from 11,700 and 8,600 in 2015 and 2016, respectively, to a low of 5,500 in May 2017.⁹⁶ Remaining combined exercises turned their focus to HA/DR and counterterrorism, including the newly initiated Kamandag and Sama Sama exercises, rather than the combat operations emphasized under the Aquino administration. At the same time, Duterte stated his willingness to “revise or abrogate agreements” and threatened to cancel the EDCA.⁹⁷ Over the next several years, Duterte would also make repeated threats to cancel the VFA with the U.S. In February 2020 after the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines declined to reinstate the visa of a political ally of Duterte who had played a prominent role in the anti-drug campaign, the Duterte administration officially filed to terminate the VFA.⁹⁸ Though the administration would withdrawal the termination notification in July 2021 after extending the

⁹⁶ Erik Estrada, “Philippines, U.S. Start Exercise Balikatan 2016,” *U.S. Department of Defense* (April 7, 2016), <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/715540/philippines-us-start-exercise-balikatan-2016/>; Renato Cruz De Castro, “U.S.-Philippines Balikatan Exercise in the Face of Chinese Island Building”; “U.S., Philippines Scale Back next Month’s Military Drills, No More ‘war Games’,” *Reuters* (April 24, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-usa-defence/u-s-philippines-scale-back-next-months-military-drills-no-more-war-games-idUSKBN17Q120>.

⁹⁷ “Duterte Warns End to U.S. Defence Pact during Japan Visit,” *Al Jazeera* (October 25, 2016), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/duterte-warns-defence-pact-japan-visit-161025141718165.html>; Martin Petty and Linda Sieg, “Philippines’ Duterte Hits out at U.S., Then Heads to Japan,” *Reuters* (October 25, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-philippines-idUSKCN12O2P1>; Motoko Rich, “Rodrigo Duterte, in Japan, Calls for U.S. Troops to Exit Philippines in 2 Years,” *The New York Times* (October 26, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/27/world/asia/philippines-president-rodrigo-duterte-japan.html>.

⁹⁸ “Philippines’ Duterte Threatens to End Military Deal with the United States,” *Reuters* (January 23, 2020), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-usa-duterte/philippines-duterte-threatens-to-end-military-deal-with-the-united-states-idUSKBN1ZM2IZ>; Karen Lema, Martin Petty, and Phil Stewart, “Duterte Terminates Philippines Troop Pact, U.S. Calls Move ‘unfortunate’,” *Reuters* (February 10, 2020), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-usa-defence/duterte-terminates-philippines-troop-pact-us-calls-move-unfortunate-idUSKBN2050E9>.

cancellation notice multiple times, no U.S.-Philippine security agreement appeared sacrosanct as the administration sought to reduce its dependence on the U.S.⁹⁹

As the Duterte administration made immediate steps to downgrade Philippine security ties with the U.S., it quickly sought to develop security ties with other partners. Russia was the target of some of the administration's earliest efforts to establish new partnerships. During an official visit to Moscow, Duterte described the Philippines' lack of relations with Russia as "an oversight of strategic proportion" which he vowed to correct. He also openly criticized Philippine security dependence on the U.S., emphasizing his country's desire for "fairness, equality, and mutual respect" in its relations with powerful countries and the need for friends and partners who "respect our independence to make sovereign decisions." The administration's 2018 *National Defense Strategy* identified Russia as an "emerging security partner" and in May 2017, the two countries signed their first DCA.¹⁰⁰ According to the Philippines' ambassador to Russia, the DCA advances "official visits, exchange and experiences in consultation, participation of observers in military training exercises, [and] military port calls."¹⁰¹ The DCA also established the Joint Working Group as an annual defense dialogue mechanism to coordinate bilateral defense cooperation activities.¹⁰² Enabled by the bilateral DCA, port visits and maritime training have become important elements of bilateral defense relations, and Russian naval vessels made port calls to the Philippines six separate times from early 2017

⁹⁹ "Duterte Cancels Order to Terminate VFA with U.S.," *CNN Philippines* (July 30, 2021), <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/7/30/Visiting-Forces-Agreement-Philippines-United-States-Duterte-Austin.html>.

¹⁰⁰ The Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense, *National Defense Strategy: 2018-2022*, Department of National Defense (2018).

¹⁰¹ Pia Ranada, "PH, Russia Sign Defense Agreement, 9 Other Deals," *Rappler* (May 25, 2017), <https://www.rappler.com/nation/philippines-russia-defense-agreement-deals>.

¹⁰² "PH, Russia Finalize Military Cooperation Activities for 2019," *Rappler* (November 10, 2018), <https://www.rappler.com/nation/philippines-russia-plan-military-cooperation-activities-2019>.

through the end of 2019, conducting passing exercises and confidence-building measures with the Philippine Navy during the visits.¹⁰³ Significantly, the Philippine Navy made a historic first port call to Russia in September 2018 when it visited Vladivostok.¹⁰⁴ The Philippine Navy returned to Russia in July 2019 to participate in Russia's eightieth Navy Day celebrations.¹⁰⁵

While the Philippine's outreach to Beijing and Moscow received the most attention, it is fellow middle states in the region who are the primary focus of Duterte's diversification strategy. India has emerged as one of the Philippines' most important security partners, and in November 2017 during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Philippines, the first visit for an Indian leader in over three decades, the two countries signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on Defense Industry and Logistics Cooperation*. The MOU serves as a framework agreement for facilitating bilateral military logistics support and strengthening the development, joint production, and procurement of defense equipment.¹⁰⁶ Several Indian Navy port visits to the Philippines followed, and have become increasingly common in recent years.¹⁰⁷ In conjunction

¹⁰³ Janvic Mateo, "Chinese Military Aircraft Lands in Davao City?" *The Philippine Star* (January 10, 2018), <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/06/10/1823235/chinese-military-aircraft-lands-davao-city>; Michael Peck, "The Philippines May Be About to Jump Ship For Russia," *The National Interest* (October 6, 2019), <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/philippines-may-be-about-jump-ship-russia-85816>.

¹⁰⁴ Jeannette I. Andrade, "Philippine Navy Ship Makes Historic 1st Port Call in Russia," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (October 2, 2018), <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/170196/pn-brp-tarlac-florente-guagua-russia-port>.

¹⁰⁵ Republic of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs, "PH Navy Participates in Russia's 80th Navy Day Celebrations," August 15, 2019, <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/news-from-our-foreign-service-postupdate/24077-ph-navy-participates-in-russia-s-80th-navy-day-celebrations>.

¹⁰⁶ Republic of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs, "PH-India Relations," <https://newdelhipe.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/2014-04-14-03-09-43>.

¹⁰⁷ Mandeep Singh, "India, Philippines Boost Cooperation with Cruise Missile Deal," *Indo-Pacific Defense Forum* (January 26, 2021), <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2021/01/india-philippines-boost-cooperation-with-cruise-missile-deal/>.

with port visits, the Indian Navy regularly conducts small-scale exercises with the Philippine Navy in the SCS, including a recent exercise conducted in August 2021.¹⁰⁸

Indonesia has emerged as one of the Philippines most important defense partners within ASEAN under the Duterte administration's diversification strategy. In April 2017, Duterte and Indonesian President Joko Widodo pledged to increase cooperation to combat "terrorism, violent extremism, piracy at sea, and transnational crimes," and in 2020, the two countries signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on Logistics and Defense Industry Cooperation*.¹⁰⁹ The two countries have also continued regular high-level defense dialogues and exchanges, including the Joint Defense and Security Cooperation Committee and the Philippines-Indonesia Military Cooperation Meeting.

Indonesia has also been a primary partner in the administration's efforts to expand multilateral defense cooperation outside the U.S. alliance network. In June 2017, coordinated patrols between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines began along the countries' shared maritime borders in the Sulu and Celebes Seas as part of the *Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement to address Security Issues in the Maritime Areas of Common Concern* (TCA). The patrols seek to establish safe shipping corridors between the three countries and combat "piracy, kidnapping, terrorism and other transnational crimes in regional waters."¹¹⁰ Under the TCA, the three

¹⁰⁸ "India and Philippines Conduct Maritime Exercises," *The Manila Times* (August 30, 2021), <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/08/30/expats-diplomats/india-and-philippines-conduct-maritime-exercises/1812752>.

¹⁰⁹ Raul Dancel, "Philippines and Indonesia Eye Launch of Coordinated Maritime Patrols against Piracy, Terrorists Soon," *The Straits Times* (April 28, 2017), <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/philippines-and-indonesia-eye-launch-of-coordinated-maritime-patrols-against-piracy>; Prashanth Parameswaran, "What's in the New Indonesia-Philippines Defense Industry Deal?" *The Diplomat* (February 29, 2020), <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/whats-in-the-new-indonesia-philippines-defense-industry-deal/>.

¹¹⁰ Euan McKirdy, Kathy Quiano, and Ivan Watson, "Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines Launch Joint Patrols to Tackle ISIS Threat," *CNN* (June 19, 2017), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/06/19/asia/indonesia-malaysia-philippines-isis/index.html>.

countries have initiated a series of port visits, combined exercises, and joint air patrols, which began in October 2017.¹¹¹ Of note, both the U.S. and China have requested to join the trilateral patrols, but the three countries have preferred to keep the trilateral cooperation mechanism independent of great power involvement.¹¹² In 2019, the three states also conducted their first trilateral land exercise focused on border security.¹¹³ Building on trilateral cooperation success, the three countries joined Brunei, Singapore, and Thailand in launching the *Our Eyes* intelligence sharing agreement in early 2018. Inspired by the *Five Eyes* intelligence sharing agreement between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the U.S., the *Our Eyes* agreement establishes regular meetings to share intelligence on terrorist organizations and establishes a shared extremist database.¹¹⁴

Philippine defense relations with Cambodia have also developed under the Duterte administration, arising from basic non-existence under previous administrations. In 2017, the two countries signed a MOU on Defense Cooperation and established the vice-ministerial Philippines-Cambodia Joint Defense Cooperation Committee (JDCC). The JDCC held its inaugural meeting in 2019 and discussed issues ranging from cyber security, counter-terrorism,

¹¹¹ Sumisha Naidu, "First Joint Air Patrols over Sulu Sea Launched by Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia," *Channel News Asia* (October 12, 2017), <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/first-joint-air-patrols-over-sulu-sea-launched-bymalaysia-9304708>; Prashanth Parameswaran, "What's with the New Sulu Sea Trilateral Air Patrols?" *The Diplomat* (October 13, 2017), <https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/whats-with-the-new-sulu-sea-trilateral-air-patrols/>; Ian Storey, "Trilateral Security Cooperation in the Sulu-Celebes Seas: A Work in Progress," *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute*, no. 48 (2018).

¹¹² Trinna Leong "After Naval Patrols, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines Launch Air Surveillance Ops over Sulu Sea," *The Straits Times* (October 12, 2017), <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/after-naval-patrols-malaysia-indonesia-and-philippines-launch-air-surveillance-ops-over>.

¹¹³ Prashanth Parameswaran, "What's Behind the First Sulu Sea Trilateral Land Exercise?" *The Diplomat* (June 17, 2019), <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/whats-behind-the-first-sulu-sea-trilateral-land-exercise/>.

¹¹⁴ Tom Allard, "Southeast Asian States Launch Intelligence Pact to Counter Islamist Threat," *Reuters* (January 25, 2018), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-asia-intelligence/southeast-asian-states-launch-intelligence-pact-to-counter-islamist-threat-idUSKBN1FE163>.

and peacekeeping operations.¹¹⁵ While bilateral defense cooperation remains nascent, the MOU and JDCC signal growing alignment on regional security issues and establishes a common framework for expanding cooperation.

Singapore has also emerged as an important security partner under the Duterte administration. In January 2017, Philippine Defense Secretary Lorenzana announced his intent to revive the combined Philippines-Singapore military exercises Anoa-Singa, which initially began in 1994 but were halted two years later due to delays in the Philippines Senate over a VFA with Singapore.¹¹⁶ While difficult VFA issues have yet to be resolved, the Philippines and Singapore have pressed forward with expanding bilateral defense relations. In September 2019, Duterte and Singapore President Halimah Yacob met in Manila and agreed to strengthen defense and security cooperation, including “strengthening defense dialogues and training exchanges between military and special forces.”¹¹⁷ Through regular meetings of the assistant secretary-level “Informal Consultations on the Philippines-Singapore Action Plan,” the two states have agreed to “intensify coordination and cooperation in the areas of maritime domain awareness, counterterrorism, defense industry development, intelligence exchange, joint military training, and law enforcement.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense, “Philippines, Cambodia Boost Defense Cooperation,” March 14, 2019, <https://www.dnd.gov.ph/Postings/Post/Philippines%2C%20Cambodia%20Boost%20Defense%20Cooperation/>; Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense, “Philippines, Cambodia Hold Defense Cooperation Conference,” March 26, 2019, <https://www.dnd.gov.ph/Postings/Post/Philippines%2C%20Cambodia%20Hold%20Defense%20Cooperation%20Conference/>; Prashanth Parameswaran, “What’s in the New Philippines-Cambodia Defense Meeting?” *The Diplomat* (March 27, 2019), <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/whats-in-the-new-philippines-cambodia-defense-meeting/>.

¹¹⁶ “Manila Says It May Revive Military Pact with S’pore,” *The Straits Times* (January 28, 2017), <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/manila-says-it-may-revive-military-pact-with-spore>.

¹¹⁷ “Philippines, Singapore to Intensify Defense, Economic Cooperation,” *Xinhua* (September 9, 2019), http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-09/09/c_138378819.htm.

¹¹⁸ Republic of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs, “Philippines, Singapore Agree to Enhance Defense, Trade and Investment, Labor, Health Cooperation in Bilateral Consultations,” July 16, 2021,

The Duterte administration has also prioritized efforts to strengthen cooperation with Thailand as part of a broader diversification effort. Similar to the Philippines, Thailand's alliance with the U.S. has been strained in recent years due to Thailand's 2006 and 2014 coups, and Thailand has made similar efforts to expand its security relations beyond the U.S. In 2017, the Philippines and Thailand finalized agreements for the establishment of the Joint Committee on Military Cooperation, which provides an assistant secretary-level venue for exchanging views on regional security issues and coordinating bilateral defense activities.¹¹⁹ In March 2021, the two countries signed a MOU to expand defense industrial cooperation and establish a formal framework for the further development of joint defense industrial research, development, and production.¹²⁰

In addition to signing new security agreements with states outside the U.S. alliance network, the Duterte administration has made significant strides towards strengthening relations with fellow U.S. allies. Australia, Japan, and South Korea all play a central role in the administration's diversification strategy, and bilateral exercises, training, joint patrols, and arms sales with each of these countries have expanded under Duterte. Increasingly, Philippine cooperation with these close U.S. allies now takes place in the context of bilateral, rather than multilateral cooperation with the U.S. While much of this expansion in security ties is facilitated by agreements signed under the Aquino administration rather than in the form of new

<https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/dfa-releasesupdate/29256-philippines-singapore-agree-to-enhance-defense-trade-and-investment-labor-health-cooperation-in-bilateral-consultations>.

¹¹⁹ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Philippines-Thailand Military Ties in the Spotlight with New Committee," *The Diplomat* (September 1, 2017), <https://thediplomat.com/2017/09/philippines-thailand-military-ties-in-the-spotlight-with-new-committee/>.

¹²⁰ Jon Grevatt, "Thailand Ratifies Defence Industry MOU with Philippines," *Janes* (March 4, 2021), <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/thailand-ratifies-defence-industry-mou-with-philippines>.

agreements, several important security agreements have been signed with each of these countries.

Australia remains the country's most significant security partner after the U.S., and cooperation with Australia has grown considerably under the Duterte administration.¹²¹ Australia is the only country other than the U.S. to share a VFA with the Philippines, and this allows the two countries to conduct combined exercises and joint operations on Philippine soil. As a path to reduce dependence on the U.S., the Australia-Philippines VFA provides the Philippines a viable supplement, and in some cases a limited alternative, to U.S. military support during contingencies. For example, during the Marawi campaign in 2017, the VFA facilitated the deployment of two Australian P-3C Orion surveillance aircraft that provided valuable intelligence support to ongoing counterterrorism operations.¹²² Later that year, the two countries reached a deal for Australian mobile training teams to provide in-country urban warfare and counterterrorism training to the AFP. Along with the enhanced training, the two countries also agreed to increase joint ISR operations in Mindanao to "strengthen information sharing, maritime security engagement, and bilateral maritime patrols."¹²³ Annual bilateral exercises Dawn Caracha and Dusk Caracha have also grown under the Duterte administration, as well as

¹²¹ Patricia Lourdes Viray, "Lorezana: Philippines Eyes Greater Defense Ties with Australia," *The Philippine Star* (March 7, 2017), <https://www.adas.ph/2017/03/07/lorenzana-philippines-eyes-greater-defense-ties-with-australia/>.

¹²² Jaqueline Williams and Felipe Villamore, "Australia to Send Spy Planes to Help Philippines Recapture Marawi," *The New York Times* (June 23, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/23/world/asia/australia-philippines-planes-marawi.html>.

¹²³ Andrew Greene, "Islamic State: Australia Offers to Send Special Forces to Help Fight IS in Philippines City of Marawi," *ABC News* (August 28, 2017), <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-29/australia-offers-troops-to-help-philippines-fight-is/8851750>; Willard Cheng, "Philippines, Australia Agree on Measures to Boost Military Cooperation," *ABS-CBN News* (October 24 2017), <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/10/24/17/philippines-australia-agree-on-measures-to-boost-military-cooperation>.

Australian participation in Balikatan, despite falling U.S. participation.¹²⁴ Maritime cooperation is also a significant part of the bilateral defense relationship, and in 2017, Secretary Lorenzana identified “increasing interoperability...and maritime cooperation” with Australia as “necessary” for advancing Philippine defense capabilities.¹²⁵ Toward this end, the Royal Australian Navy and the Philippines Navy inaugurated the annual Navy-to-Navy strategy talks in 2017 and expanded participation in the annual bilateral maritime exercise Lumbas.¹²⁶

Following the U.S. and Australia, Japan has emerged as one of the Philippines’ closest and most important security partners. While a more complete discussion on Philippine security cooperation with Japan is provided later in this chapter, I highlight several of the major defense agreements signed between Manila and Tokyo under the Duterte administration. Shortly after Duterte’s announced “separation” from the U.S. in October 2016, Duterte met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo where the two leaders held discussions primarily focused on bilateral defense cooperation. In a joint statement released following the visit, all but two of the fifteen measures identified for expanded bilateral cooperation referred to commitments to strengthen security cooperation. Highlighted areas for cooperation included a Japanese commitment to strengthen Philippine maritime capabilities, the signing of an official development assistance loan for the purchase of Japanese naval patrol vessels, and a commitment

¹²⁴ Approximately 80 Australian soldiers participated in Balikatan in both 2016 and 2017. Carmela Fonbuena, “Australia Joins Balikatan War Games for the First Time,” *Rappler* (May 17, 2014), <https://www.rappler.com/nation/australia-balikatan>; “Philippines, U.S. Start Exercise Balikatan 2016,” *U.S. Department Of Defense*, April 7, 2016, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/715540/philippines-us-start-exercise-balikatan-2016/>; Atchley, “U.S., Philippine Forces ‘shoulder-to-Shoulder’ Exercise Strengthens Interoperability.”; “U.S., Philippines Begin Small-Scale Annual Military Exercises,” *Agencia EFE* (May 8, 2017), <https://www.efe.com/efe/english/portada/us-philippines-begin-small-scale-annual-military-exercises/50000260-3259503>.

¹²⁵ Nicole Forrest Green, “Australia and the Philippines, Strategic Allies and Partners.”

¹²⁶ Australian Embassy, The Philippines, “Phil-Aussie Maritime Exercise Kicks-Off,” October 22, 2012; <https://philippines.embassy.gov.au/mnla/medrel121023.html>; Aiswarya Lakshmi, “Exercise Enhances Maritime Security,” *Marine Link* (October 22, 2017), <https://www.marinelink.com/news/exercise-enhances430550>.

to elevate bilateral defense and policy dialogues.¹²⁷ In a reciprocal visit to the Philippines in January 2017, Abe reaffirmed Japanese commitment to build Philippine maritime security capacity and the two sides signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to enhance security cooperation between the two countries' coast guards.¹²⁸

While Philippine security cooperation with Australia and Japan encompasses extensive training, exercises, and defense policy consultation, Philippine security cooperation with South Korea is primarily focused on procurement and defense industrial cooperation. Though the importance of South Korean arms and defense industrial cooperation to the Duterte administration's diversification strategy will be discussed in the next section, I highlight several important advancements in bilateral security relations here. The Philippines' 2018 *National Defense Strategy* cites defense cooperation with South Korea as a "continuation of both countries shared commitment to regional stability" and affirms the Philippines' commitment to expand bilateral cooperation.¹²⁹ President Duterte affirmed this commitment with South Korean President Moon Jae-in during an official visit to Seoul in June 2018, where the two leaders highlighted growing bilateral security ties and their commitment to expand cooperation in addressing "traditional and emerging threats...including terrorism, transnational crimes, and piracy at sea." In a significant expansion of bilateral defense cooperation, the two countries

¹²⁷ Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Japan-Philippines Joint Statement*, 26 October 2016, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000198399.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Republic of the Philippines, Presidential Communications Operations Office, "Japan, Ph Sign Several Agreements to Enhance Bilateral Ties," January 12, 2017, <https://pcoo.gov.ph/japan-ph-sign-several-agreements-to-enhance-bilateral-ties-12-jan-2017/>.

¹²⁹ The Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense, *National Defense Strategy: 2018-2022*, Department of National Defense (2018).

signed a broad ranging DCA in 2019 that provides a framework for future defense industrial cooperation.¹³⁰

Growing Philippine security cooperation with Australia, Japan, and South Korea is a powerful example of how common security ties can facilitate closer bilateral security relations. Shared U.S. alliance membership creates broad bilateral familiarity and a high degree of mutual trust that can facilitate cooperation independent from the U.S. Alliances with the U.S. have also influenced the military doctrine, operating procedures, and military equipment of each of these countries, which creates a common foundation for bilateral security cooperation and removes considerable cooperation challenges. China also serves as a common adversary for these countries (to varying extents), and Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines each have territorial disputes with China and have recently participated in MIDs against China. Common adversarial relations with China also serves as a basis for greater cooperation with India, who in recent years has worked to intertwine its security in the U.S. alliance network through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with Australia, Japan, and the U.S. Close economic relations with these countries has also facilitated deeper security ties, and Japan and South Korea are the Philippines' two largest trade partners after the U.S. and China.¹³¹

The defense agreements signed by the Aquino and Duterte administrations clearly reflect the anticipated behavior of middle states in their decisions to pursue diversification. The Aquino administration, who maintained a strong commitment to the U.S. alliance throughout its tenure, almost exclusively focused on strengthening security ties with the U.S. and its closest allies. In

¹³⁰ DJ Yap, "PH Signs 'Defense Cooperation' MOU with S. Korea," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (November 26, 2019), <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/182276/ph-signs-defense-cooperation-mou-with-s-korea>.

¹³¹ World Integrated Trade Solution, Philippines, *The World Bank*, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountrySnapshot/en/PHL>.

contrast, the Duterte administration, who holds a weak commitment to the U.S. alliance, has heavily focused on extending security agreements to states outside the U.S. alliance network. Close U.S. allies Australia, Japan, and South Korea remain central partners under the Duterte administration's diversification strategy, yet cooperation with these countries is viewed more as an alternative to U.S. security cooperation under the administration's diversification strategy rather than as reinforcing the U.S.-Philippines alliance. As the Duterte administration has sought to diversify, its closest security agreements have been primarily with states with whom it shares common security partners, faces a common adversary, and has close economic relations. The contrast between the defense agreements signed by the Duterte and Aquino administrations provides strong evidence that weak alliance commitment is a primary contributor to diversification.

5.4.3 Arms Procurement

Arms procurement is another primary indicator of a state's diversification behavior. Arm sales constitute a major aspect of interstate security relations, and arm sales can foster greater bilateral military cooperation as well as create avenues for states to exercise influence. For example, arm sales can facilitate equipment-specific training, combined military exercises, and closer interaction between defense industries. Common equipment also enables interoperability that can be leveraged during combined contingency operations. At the same time, dependencies in arms procurement and supply chains can create power asymmetries that arms producing states may seek to exploit to influence dependent states. For example, the U.S. State Department halted the planned sale of tens of thousands of assault rifles to the Philippines national police in response to concerns that the guns would be used against innocent civilians in Duterte's war on

drugs, partly in the hope that blocking the weapons sale would influence the Duterte administration to stop extrajudicial killings.¹³² As previously cited, Indonesian officials still describe the U.S.’ severance of military ties and arms transfers with Indonesia following reported human rights violations by the TNI in East Timor as “traumatic.”¹³³

In this section, I assess the relation between Philippine alliance commitment and diversification by analyzing the arms procurement patterns of the Aquino and Duterte administrations. If my hypothesis concerning the relation between alliance commitment and diversification is correct, Philippine arms procurement under the Aquino administration, which held a strong commitment to the U.S. alliance, should be primarily dependent on the U.S. Arms procurement under the Duterte administration, which holds a weak commitment to alliance, should be less dependent on the U.S. and incorporate a broader range of partners.

5.4.3.1 Aquino Administration Arms Procurement

Throughout the Philippines’ history, the U.S. has traditionally served as the AFP’s primary supplier of arms and military equipment. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), from 1950-2010, nearly eighty percent of Philippine arms imports were from the U.S.¹³⁴ The Philippines has also been the frequent recipient of transfers of used U.S. military equipment under the U.S. Excess Defense Articles program. Several of the AFP’s major weapons systems are transfers of retired U.S. military and coast guard equipment,

¹³² “Exclusive: U.S. Stopped Philippines Rifle Sale That Senator Opposed - Sources,” *Reuters* (October 31, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-usa-rifles-idUSKBN12V2AM>.

¹³³ Scott W. Harold et al., *The Thickening Web of Asian Security Cooperation*.

¹³⁴ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Military Expenditure Database* (2021), <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

including several of the Philippine Navy's flagship vessels and the Philippine Air Force's most advanced aircraft.

Philippine reliance on U.S. arms continued under the Aquino administration. During Aquino's tenure, the U.S. accounted for nearly fifty percent of all Philippine arms imports. Major acquisitions from the U.S. included the purchase of two C-130 aircraft and the transfer of two Hamilton-class cutters and 114 armored personnel vehicles.¹³⁵ As the primary source of Philippines arms, the U.S. held significant influence over AFP doctrine, capability development, and its ability to conduct contingency operations.

Close U.S. allies South Korea and Japan also constituted important sources of arms under the Aquino administration, but acquisitions from these countries still paled in comparison to those from the U.S. The Philippines largest defense acquisition from South Korea under the Aquino administration was the purchase of twelve FA-50 light attack and jet trainer aircraft, with the first of these aircraft delivered in December 2015.¹³⁶ The Aquino administration also negotiated a \$314 million contract with South Korea for the purchase of two frigates for the Philippines Navy, which the Duterte administration formally approved shortly after taking office.¹³⁷ Additionally, the Aquino administration signed a \$50 million contract for amphibious assault vehicles for the Philippines Marine Corps with South Korea, and was the recipient of a

¹³⁵ Prashanth Parameswaran, "U.S. Gives Philippines 114 Military Vehicles," *The Diplomat* (December 12, 2015), <https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/us-gives-philippines-114-military-vehicles/>; "Philippines to Purchase Two U.S. C-130 Aircraft," *U.S. Indo-Pacific Command* (January 9, 2015), <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/564997/philippines-to-purchase-two-us-c-130-aircraft/>.

¹³⁶ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Philippines Receives 2 New Fighter Jets from South Korea," *The Diplomat* (December 1, 2015), <https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/philippines-receives-2-new-fighter-jets-from-south-korea/>.

¹³⁷ "PH Buys 2 New Frigates from South Korean Firm," *ABS-CBN News* (October 25, 2016), <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/10/25/16/ph-buys-2-new-frigates-from-south-korean-firm>.

South Korean landing craft utility ship and rubber boats for disaster response.¹³⁸ Japan also provided key defense equipment to the Philippines during Aquino's tenure, and in 2015 the two countries signed a landmark defense agreement that covered the transfer of defense equipment and technology. Shortly after the agreement was signed, Japan leased five TC-90 patrol aircraft to the Philippine Navy and delivered the first of ten multi-role response vessels to the Philippine Coast Guard, which were financed through an official development assistance loan from Tokyo.¹³⁹

5.4.3.2 Duterte Administration Arms Procurement

In contrast to the Aquino administration's continued reliance on U.S. arms exports, the Duterte administration has made a concerted effort to diversify Philippine arms sources away from the U.S. As stated by Defense Secretary Lorenzana in a December 2016 interview, difficulties in sourcing spare parts for U.S. military equipment after the expiration of the MBA and departure of U.S. troops in the early 1990s "left a mark in our psyche that it's not good to rely on one country for your defense."¹⁴⁰ Under the Duterte administration, Philippine arms purchases from the U.S. decreased by over half, dropping from a total of nearly \$200 million in imports during the last four years of the Aquino administration (2013-2016) to \$97 million from

¹³⁸ Rene Acosta, "Navy Receives Landing Craft Utility from South Korea," *Business Mirror* (July 1, 2015), www.businessmirror.com.ph/navy-receives-landing-craft-utility-from-south-korea/.

¹³⁹ "Philippines Accepts First of 10 Japan-Funded Patrol Vessels to Beef up Coast Guard," *The Japan Times* (August 18, 2016), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/08/18/national/philippines-accepts-first-10-japan-funded-patrol-vessels-beef-coast-guard/>; Carmela Fonbuena, "PH Navy Receives 2 TC-90 Patrol Planes from Japan," *Rappler* (March 27, 2017), <https://www.rappler.com/nation/philippine-navy-japan-maritime-patrol-aircraft>.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Peel and Victor Mallet, "Philippines Rearms in Wake of Heightened Tensions in the Pacific," *Financial Times* (December 8, 2016), <https://www.ft.com/content/59cacac2-bb91-11e6-8b45-b8b81dd5d080>.

2017-2020.¹⁴¹ Arms from the U.S. now account for only twelve percent of Philippine arms imports. In the place of U.S. arms acquisitions and transfers, the Philippines has broadened its sources of arms and signed several defense agreements focused on arms transfers and defense industrial cooperation with other states in the region. Significantly, South Korea has replaced the U.S. as the Philippines' most important arms provider and has accounted for over fifty percent of Philippine arms imports since 2017. Philippine arms acquisitions under the Duterte administration have also diversified towards other arms-producing states, including Israel, Indonesia, and Germany.¹⁴² In diversifying its sources of arms and security, the Philippines directly reduces its security dependence on the U.S. and limits the degree of influence the U.S. may exert through its equipping of the AFP.

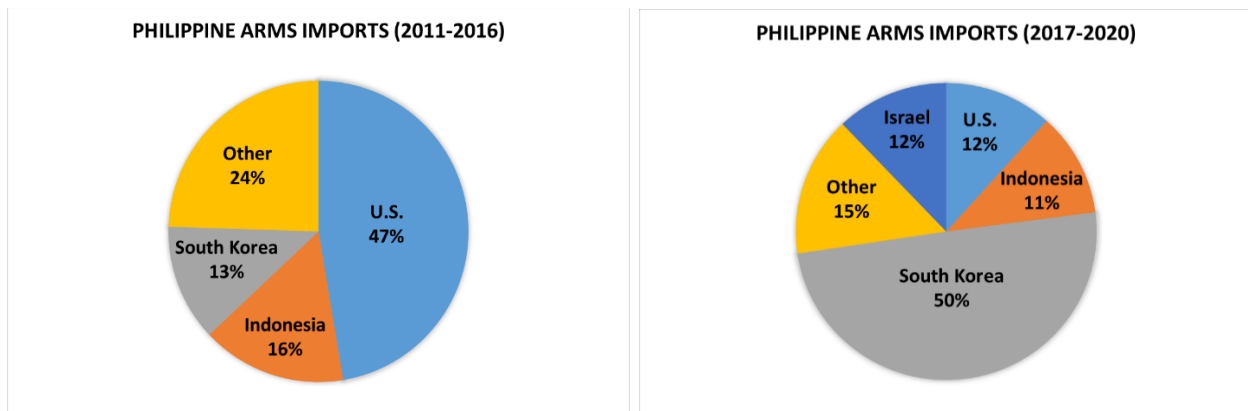


Figure 5.6: Sources of Philippine Arms Imports under Presidents Aquino and Duterte¹⁴³

As the Philippine's top supplier of arms, South Korea plays a prominent role in the Duterte administration's diversification strategy. For the Philippines, South Korean arms offer an attractive alternative to U.S. weapons due to their high quality and interoperability with existing

¹⁴¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Military Expenditure Database* (2021), <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

U.S. equipment. South Korean arm sales also tend to be free of the political strings that often accompany U.S. weapons, and South Korea has shown little interest in seeking to influence Philippines domestic politics through weapon sales. For example, despite South Korean protests following the death of a South Korean businessman during Duterte's violent anti-drug campaign, the Korean National Police Agency proceeded with the donation of 130 patrol cars to the Philippine National Police. While the transfer drew the ire of human rights groups and South Korean protestors, South Korea demonstrated its commitment to a "no-strings attached" approach to weapon sales that aligns with Manila's efforts to preserve its autonomy.¹⁴⁴ It is in part for these reasons that Duterte asserted the "importance of friends like South Korea" to his independent foreign policy during an official visit to Seoul in June 2018.¹⁴⁵ Notable arms deals between Manila and Seoul under the Duterte administration include Manila's purchase of two frigates and the transfer of an aging anti-submarine naval vessel for the symbolic price of \$100.¹⁴⁶ In a significant expansion of the two countries' defense industrial cooperation, the two countries signed a broad ranging DCA in 2019 that provides a framework for future defense purchases.¹⁴⁷

Japan has also become an important source of maritime security equipment for the Philippines as the Duterte administration seeks to develop alternatives to U.S. arms. Following Duterte's initial visit to Tokyo in October 2016, Japan provided a \$157 million loan to Manila

¹⁴⁴ "South Korea's Blind Eye to Philippine 'Drug War' Abuses," *Human Rights Watch*, May 31, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/31/south-koreas-blind-eye-philippine-drug-war-abuses>.

¹⁴⁵ Richard Javad Heydarian, "With a Wary Eye on China, Duterte Looks to Moon," *Asia Times* (June 7, 2018), <https://asiatimes.com/2018/06/with-a-wary-eye-on-china-duterte-looks-to-moon/>.

¹⁴⁶ "South Korea Gives Anti-Submarine Warship to Philippines, for \$100," *Reuters* (April 27, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-southkorea-idUSKBN17T1AA>.

¹⁴⁷ DJ Yap, "PH Signs 'Defense Cooperation' MOU with S. Korea," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (November 26, 2019), <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/182276/ph-signs-defense-cooperation-mou-with-s-korea>.

for the purchase of two 90-meter patrol vessels. Three months later during Abe’s visit to Manila, the two countries finalized an agreement for Japan’s provision of counter-terrorism equipment to the AFP and speedboats to the Philippines Coast Guard, which were delivered between November 2017 and February 2019.¹⁴⁸ Since late 2017, Japan has also funded the construction of several coast guard radar stations on Philippine islands in the Sulu and Celebes Seas and provided training to Philippine Coast Guard personnel.¹⁴⁹

Aside from expanding defense industrial ties with fellow U.S. allies, Manila has also pursued arms deals with a broad range of countries throughout the region. In 2020, Indonesia and the Philippines signed a MOU covering defense industry cooperation. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Defense, the agreement serves as a “legal umbrella” for defense industry cooperation, including procurement, technology transfer, and defense material exports.¹⁵⁰ Defense industrial cooperation with India has also expanded, and in 2017 the two countries signed an agreement to facilitate the development, joint production, and procurement of defense equipment.¹⁵¹ Lastly, as one of the Duterte administration’s most significant arms agreements, the Philippines signed an implementation agreement in 2021 for the purchase of Indian-made BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, which the Philippines identified as a part of its modernization program to enhance territorial defense.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Betheena Kae Unite, “Coast Guard Receives 2 Speed Boats from Japan,” *Manila Bulletin* (February 27, 2019), <https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/02/27/coast-guard-receives-2-speed-boats-from-japan/>.

¹⁴⁹ Tim Kelly and Nobuhiro Kubo, “Japan to Build Four Radar Stations for the Philippines to Counter Piracy Surge: Sources,” *Reuters* (November 8, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-philippines-radar/japan-to-build-four-radar-stations-for-the-philippines-to-counter-piracy-surge-sources-idUSKBN1DA0A5>.

¹⁵⁰ Prashanth Parameswaran, “What’s in the New Indonesia-Philippines Defense Industry Deal?” *The Diplomat* (February 29, 2020), <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/whats-in-the-new-indonesia-philippines-defense-industry-deal/>.

¹⁵¹ Republic of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs, “PH-India Relations,” <https://newdelhi.pe.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/2014-04-14-03-09-43>.

¹⁵² Kiran Sharma and Cliff Venzon, “Philippines Set to Be First Buyer of India-Russia Cruise Missile,” *Nikkei Asia* (November 22, 2020), <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Philippines-set-to-be-first->

Russia has also emerged as an important source of arms for the Philippines under the Duterte administration. During the Marawi campaign, Moscow provided key counter-terrorism assistance to Manila, including assault rifles, armored vehicles, and intelligence on foreign Islamic State fighters operating in the region. Shortly thereafter, the Philippines reportedly agreed to purchase 16 Mi-17 medium-lift helicopters from Russia. In 2019, Defense Secretary Lorenzana stated the Philippines was exploring purchasing Russian multi-role jet fighters, warships, and even Kilo-class submarines, similar to those purchased by Vietnam from Russia in 2009.¹⁵³ As a sign of the increasing importance of bilateral defense relations, Moscow deployed its first defense attaché to Manila in 2019. In a thinly veiled reference to Manila's frequent criticism of the second-hand military equipment donated by the U.S., one Russian diplomat boasted, "What we can assure you, if you are going to procure military equipment from us, we are going to give you brand new ones and not second hand."¹⁵⁴

In its efforts to diversify Philippine security away from the U.S., the Duterte administration has dramatically reduced Philippine arms purchases from its sole treaty ally and formed cooperative defense industrial agreements with a number of states across the region. Under the administration's diversification strategy, South Korea has replaced the U.S. as the Philippines most important source of arms, and South Korea now accounts for over half of all Philippine arms imports. Japan, Indonesia, India, and Russia have also emerged as important arms providers, and will form important alternatives to U.S. military equipment as defense

buyer-of-India-Russia-cruise-missile; Xavier Vavasseur, "Philippines and India Sign Deal Paving the Way for BrahMos Missile Procurement," *Naval News* (March 8, 2021), <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/03/philippines-and-india-sign-deal-paving-the-way-for-brahmos-missile-procurement/>.

¹⁵³ Jaime Laude, "AFP Eyes Military Hardware from Russia," *The Philippine Star* (October 2, 2019), <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/10/02/1956768/afp-eyes-military-hardware-russia>.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

industrial relations develop. As these relations expand, Philippine arms dependence on the U.S. will reduce, decreasing U.S. influence over Philippine security in the process and engendering greater security cooperation opportunities between Manila and its arms providers. Patterns of Philippine arms procurement behavior under the Duterte administration provide strong evidence in support of the claim that weak alliance commitment is a primary contributor to diversification.

Official Philippine national security publications, defense agreements, and arms purchases under the Aquino and Duterte administrations each convey a similar theme: Those of the Aquino administration signaled a strong commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance and a narrow focus on strengthening security cooperation with the U.S. and its closest allies, while those of the Duterte administration signaled a weak commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance and demonstrated a broad, concerted effort to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. and strengthen ties with other middle states. As the Duterte administration sought new security partners to increase its security and preserve its autonomy, it built its strongest partnerships with ‘like-minded’ states with whom it shares common security partners, faces a common adversary, and has close economic relations.

5.5 Competing Explanations for Philippine Diversification

In this chapter, I have focused on the degree of alliance commitment of successive Philippine government administrations to explain Philippine diversification behavior. In this section, I explore three competing explanations for Philippine diversification: increased threat to Philippine sovereignty after June 2016, Duterte’s personal umbrage to U.S. criticism of his anti-drug campaign, and the Duterte administration’s desire to bolster the U.S.-Philippine alliance.

While the motives for the administration's chosen foreign policy and national security strategy are beyond any single factor, I find little evidence for each of these alternate explanations as the fundamental cause of Philippine diversification. The wealth of evidence pointing to the Duterte administration's weak commitment to the U.S. alliance, and lack of evidence for each of these alternate explanations, strengthens confidence in identifying weak alliance commitment as a primary contributor to middle state diversification.

5.5.1 Increased threat to Philippine sovereignty

The first competing explanation for the observed Philippine diversification behavior under the Duterte administration is that diversification is a response to an increased threat to Philippine sovereignty after the Duterte administration came to power. In this explanation, the Philippines faced a more severe security threat from China under Duterte than under Aquino, and the diversification efforts of the Duterte administration are in response to this greater threat. Indeed, this explanation aligns with my claim that states who face a significant security threat from the rising power will be more likely to diversify. However, it is clear from the statements and actions of Aquino and his senior administration officials that the Aquino administration also perceived China to pose a significant threat to Philippine sovereignty, particularly after the 2012 Scarborough Shoal crisis and the acceleration of Chinese land reclamation in the SCS. Yet rather than pursue a diversification strategy that sought to build security ties with middle states throughout the region, the Aquino administration focused on strengthening ties with the U.S.

The March 2011 Reed Bank incident and April 2012 Scarborough Shoal crisis had a dramatic influence on Philippine perceptions of the threat China posed to Philippine-claimed

sovereignty in the SCS.¹⁵⁵ Throughout the course of his Presidency, Aquino and his senior administration officials frequently warned domestic Philippine leaders and the international community of the threat China posed to the Philippines and to regional peace and stability. During a 2013 interview, Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario described China's actions against Philippine fishermen within the Philippine EEZ as "aggressive unilateral actions" and described the presence of Chinese military and paramilitary ships around Scarborough Shoal as a threat to regional peace and stability. In the same interview, del Rosario described China's intentions in the SCS as "economic and militarily expansionist," and predicted "chaos and anarchy" throughout the region were China to become the predominant power in Asia. Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin also frequently spoke of the threat China posed to Philippine interests, and described bilateral patrols with the U.S. as aimed at deterring Chinese aggression against Philippine sovereignty. Moreover, President Aquino, on multiple occasions, went so far as to compare China's actions in the SCS to those of Nazi Germany prior to World War II, and encouraged international leaders to stand up to Chinese expansionism.¹⁵⁶

As China's threat to Philippine sovereignty grew under Aquino's tenure, the administration also had valid reasons to doubt U.S. willingness and ability to respond to Chinese aggression. In the aftermath of the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff, Philippine leaders largely blamed the U.S. for the loss of the Shoal.¹⁵⁷ Manila viewed China's actions as a clear violation of

¹⁵⁵ Renato Castro, "The Aquino administration's 2011 Decision to Shift Philippine Defense Policy from Internal Security to Territorial Defense: The Impact of the South China Sea Dispute," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 24 (January 1, 2012): 67–87.

¹⁵⁶ Bradsher, "Philippine Leader Sounds Alarm on China"; "China Behaving like Nazi Germany in South China Sea, Says Benigno Aquino," *The Guardian* (June 3, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/03/china-nazi-germany-south-china-sea-philippine-president-benigno-aquino>.

¹⁵⁷ Senior Duterte administration officials also blamed the U.S. for the loss of Scarborough Shoal. Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. summed up Manila's frustration towards the U.S. following the dispute, stating, "Obama said, 'Oh well such is life.' And it's [China] never left. Thanks America. Everybody acknowledges the U.S. cost us that reef." See Dona Z. Pazzibugan, "Locsin Blames U.S. for Loss of Panatag Shoal to China," *Philippine*

Philippine sovereignty, which the U.S. was obliged to protect under the MDT.¹⁵⁸ To these accusations, U.S. officials demurred, dismissing the crisis as a “rock dispute” over “uninhabited rocks of no intrinsic importance.”¹⁵⁹ U.S. apathy towards China’s occupation of Scarborough Shoal and its reluctance to view China’s actions as triggering a response under its MDT obligations drew sharp criticism from Manila and fueled concerns of U.S. reliability as an alliance partner.¹⁶⁰ In the face of Chinese land reclamation and construction of military facilities in the Philippine-claimed Spratly Islands and EEZ, the U.S. also appeared impotent. U.S. rhetorical condemnation of Chinese actions, increased naval presence in the SCS, and sporadic freedom of navigation operations in the vicinity of disputed features did little to slow the pace of Chinese reclamation and construction, and often served as a convenient justification for China’s militarization of reclaimed features.

Despite the crystallization of the threat posed by China and the existence of doubts concerning U.S. alliance credibility, the Aquino administration remained committed to its alliance with the U.S. As a result, defense efforts remained focused on reinforcing security ties with the U.S. and its closest allies rather than pursuing a broader diversification strategy aimed at strengthening security ties with middle states throughout the region. The threat posed by China and doubts concerning U.S. alliance credibility remained as the Duterte administration assumed

Daily Inquirer (January 28, 2020), <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/184585/locsin-blames-us-for-loss-of-panatag-shoal-to-china.>; Gordon G. Chang, “America, Not Duterte, Failed the Philippines,” *The National Interest* (April 16, 2017), <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america-not-duterte-failed-the-philippines-20195>; Gordon G. Chang, “2012 Scarborough Shoal Crisis: The Blueprint for Joe Biden’s China Policy?,” *The National Interest* (August 24, 2020), <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/2012-scarborough-shoal-crisis-blueprint-joe-bidens-china-policy-167575>.

¹⁵⁸ Javier Hernandez, “Benigno Aquino Says U.S. Must Act If China Moves on Reef in South China Sea,” *The New York Times* (May 19, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/20/world/asia/benigno-aquino-philippines-south-china-sea.html>; Hernandez, “South China Sea.”

¹⁵⁹ Chang, “America, Not Duterte, Failed the Philippines.”

¹⁶⁰ Carlyle Thayer, “Standoff at Scarborough Shoal: Implications for U.S.-China Relations,” *China-U.S. Focus* (May 9, 2012), <https://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/standoff-at-scarborough-shoal-implications-for-us-china-relations>.

power in late June 2016 and as the administration dramatically shifted Philippine security strategy and foreign policy just a few short weeks later. The divergence in the diversification behavior of the Aquino and Duterte administrations, in spite of the significant threat China posed to Philippine sovereignty under both administrations, points to variance in alliance commitment as a primary cause of diversification.

5.5.2 Offense to U.S. Criticism

The second competing explanation for the observed Philippine diversification behavior under the Duterte administration is that diversification was primarily driven by Duterte's personal umbrage to U.S. criticism of the widespread human rights violations associated with his anti-drug campaign. In this explanation, it is not the weak alliance commitment of the Duterte administration, but Duterte's personal offense and mercurial tendencies that led to his administration's efforts to downgrade U.S.-Philippine security relations and expand security cooperation with states throughout the region. While Duterte's personal umbrage to U.S. criticism may have certainly influenced the timing and tenor of his administration's efforts to reduce U.S.-Philippine security relations, these explanations do not take account of Duterte's longstanding animosity towards the U.S. and his perception of Philippine subservience to U.S. interests, which closely align with enduring traditions of Filipino nationalism.

Several observers have highlighted the impact of U.S. criticisms of Duterte's war on drugs as an important factor motivating the Duterte Administration's efforts to downgrade U.S.-Philippine security relations. In the weeks leading up to Duterte's statements on the termination of several U.S.-Philippine defense activities, the U.S. Embassy in Manila issued a rare formal statement criticizing the extrajudicial killings inspired by Duterte's anti-drug campaign and his

disparaging remarks about the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines.¹⁶¹ Duterte would volley the criticism by evoking the U.S. killing of hundreds of Moros during the Philippine-American War in 1906 and condemning racial inequalities in the U.S. Duterte would slander U.S. President Barack Obama as well, referring to him as “the son of a whore.” In response, the U.S. cancelled bilateral talks between Obama and Duterte scheduled to occur on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Laos.¹⁶² The following week, Duterte called for the removal of U.S. Special Forces in Mindanao. As Duterte’s calls to downgrade security relations with the U.S. escalated over the coming weeks, his announcements were often in conjunction with complaints of U.S. criticism towards his policies and lack of respect for the Philippines. Duterte’s attacks on the U.S.-Philippine VFA also appear to be partially motivated by Duterte’s sensitivity to U.S. criticism. After the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines cancelled the visa of Senator Ronaldo dela Rosa, a former police chief who played a prominent role in Duterte’s anti-drug campaign, Duterte angrily declared he would terminate the VFA if the U.S. did not reinstate dela Rosa’s visa. One month later after the U.S. declined to restore dela Rosa’s visa, the Duterte administration officially filed to terminate the treaty.¹⁶³

While U.S. criticisms certainly played a role in Duterte’s attacks against the U.S.-Philippine security relationship, it is likely that U.S. criticism simply provided a convenient context to initiate actions Duterte long believed necessary. Duterte’s animosity towards U.S. security dependence existed long before his Presidential election and U.S. criticisms of this anti-

¹⁶¹ U.S. Embassy, Manila, “Press Release,” August 12, 2016, <https://ph.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-statement/>.

¹⁶² Duterte would later apologize for this reference to Obama. “Transcript: Duterte on Obama,” *Rappler* (September 6, 2016), <https://www.rappler.com/nation/145337-transcript-duterte-obama-human-rights>.

¹⁶³ Philippines’ Duterte Threatens to End Military Deal with the United States”; “Duterte Terminates Philippines Troop Pact, U.S. Calls Move ‘unfortunate’.”

drug campaign. Those who closely followed Duterte's political career prior to his presidential election describe his statements as "consistent" with his personal beliefs and his actions as mayor of Davao City.¹⁶⁴ As a self-described leftist "socialist" politician with close ties to the Philippines communist movement (which strongly opposes U.S. military presence), Duterte has openly criticized U.S.-Philippines relations for decades. While mayor of Davao City, he blocked joint Philippine-U.S. military exercises in 2007 and denied access to the city's airport for U.S. drone operations in Mindanao in 2013. During his presidential campaign, Duterte also openly criticized the EDCA and VFA with the U.S., describing them as an offense to Philippine sovereignty.¹⁶⁵ While U.S. criticisms may have instigated the Duterte administration's actions to downgrade U.S.-Philippine security relations, the root cause of Philippine diversification runs much deeper.

It is also interesting to note that though Australia made protests similar to those of the U.S. against Duterte's controversial rhetoric and anti-drug campaign, Duterte made no threats to downgrade security relations with Australia (the Philippines' closest defense partner after the U.S.) or cancel the Philippines-Australia VFA.¹⁶⁶ Australian criticism of Duterte was particularly harsh in response to Duterte's offensive comments about the rape and murder of an Australian missionary in the Philippines. While Duterte did lash out against Australia during his presidential campaign, Australia's security ties with the Philippines never faced a similar fate as those of the U.S., despite Canberra's similar criticism.

¹⁶⁴ Cruz De Castro, "The Duterte administration's Foreign Policy: Unravelling the Aquino administration's Balancing Agenda on an Emergent China"; Heydarian, "Tragedy of Small Power Politics."

¹⁶⁵ Germelina Lacorte, "Duterte: Scrap VFA, EDCA if these Will Trample upon PH Justice System," *Mindanao Inquirer* (October 22, 2014), <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/113197/duterte-scrap-vfa-edca-if-these-will-trample-upon-ph-justice-system#ixzz3uJnQWrv4>.

¹⁶⁶ "Australia Urges Philippines: Stop Extrajudicial Killings," *The Philippine Star* (October 4, 2016), <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/10/04/1630253/australia-urges-philippines-stop-extrajudicial-killings>.

Though Duterte's personal umbrage to U.S. criticisms may have influenced the timing and tenor of his administration's efforts to downgrade U.S.-Philippine security relations, Duterte's animosity towards Philippine dependence and traditions of Filipino nationalism began long before the U.S. criticized Duterte's war on drugs. This condition, coupled with the administration's disinterest in downgrading security relations with Australia, reinforces the importance of factors other than personal umbrage in explaining Philippine diversification behavior.

5.5.3 Bolster the U.S. Alliance Network

A final competing explanation for the observed Philippine diversification behavior under the Duterte administration is that Philippine diversification is directed towards bolstering the U.S. alliance network rather than seeking to reduce security dependence on the U.S. In this explanation, rather than the administration's weak alliance commitment, the Duterte administration's efforts to expand security ties with states throughout the region is driven by U.S. calls for its allies to build a "principled security network" to reinforce the existing U.S.-led regional security order.¹⁶⁷ However, this explanation overlooks the concerted efforts of the Duterte administration to weaken the U.S.-Philippine alliance and longstanding Philippine concerns of its security dependence on the U.S.

Throughout its incumbency, the Duterte administration has made repeated efforts to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. The administration cancelled joint patrols

¹⁶⁷ Ash Carter, "Remarks on The Future of the Rebalance: Enabling Security in the Vital & Dynamic Asia-Pac," *U.S. Department of Defense* (September 29, 2016), <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/959937/remarks-on-the-future-of-the-rebalance-enabling-security-in-the-vital-dynamic-a/>; Lisa Ferdinando, "Carter, ASEAN Ministers Reaffirm Commitment to Regional Security," *U.S. Department of Defense* (October 1, 2016), <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/961370/carter-asean-ministers-reaffirm-commitment-to-regional-security/>.

with the U.S. in the SCS, cancelled and downgraded combined military exercises, obstructed implementation of the EDCA, filed to terminate the VFA, and called for a review of the MDT to reduce Philippine liability in case of U.S.-China conflict. These actions are not consistent with the behavior of a state who seeks to bolster its alliance or strengthen U.S. presence in the region. While resistance from the Philippine defense establishment and U.S.-friendly domestic political leaders may have obstructed some of the Duterte administration's efforts to downgrade U.S.-Philippine security relations, it is clear that the Duterte administration's primary aim has been to reduce security dependence on the U.S.

Each of these competing explanations fail to adequately explain the shift in Philippine diversification behavior under the Duterte administration. China posed a significant threat to Philippine sovereignty under the Aquino as well as the Duterte administration, Duterte's animosity towards the U.S. existed long before the U.S. criticized his anti-drug campaign, and Philippine concerns of security dependence on the U.S. are longstanding. Rather than either of these explanations, Philippine diversification behavior is primarily driven by the Duterte administration's weak level of commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance.

5.6 Diversification in-depth: Japan – Philippine Security Cooperation

In this section, I take a closer look at growing Philippine security cooperation with Japan, who has become one of the Philippines' most important partners in its diversification strategy. As Manila's relations with Washington deteriorated in the early stages of the Duterte administration, Tokyo emerged as a reliable partner who was willing to set aside differences in views toward U.S. security relations and assist the Philippines in strengthening its security.

Shared military doctrine and common military equipment between the AFP and JSDF as fellow U.S. allies, concerns of China's growing power, as well as favorable Philippine perceptions and a high degree of trust in Japan as indicated by public surveys, made Tokyo an ideal security partner in Manila's initial diversification efforts.¹⁶⁸ For Japan, the Duterte administration's desire to strengthen cooperation with states across the region neatly dovetailed with Japan's desire to increase its influence in Southeast Asia and counter China's growing influence. In this section, I describe in greater detail the growth of Philippine security relations with Japan under the Duterte administration. I focus on developments in three areas central to bilateral security cooperation—senior leader exchanges, combined military exercises, and arms procurement—and analyze the Philippine's rationale for greater bilateral security cooperation with Japan amid intensifying U.S.-China rivalry.

5.6.1 Senior Leader Exchanges

As previously described, within days of Duterte's announced "separation" from the U.S. in October 2016 in Beijing, Duterte traveled to Tokyo where he met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Despite Japanese concerns of Duterte's 'pivot' away from the U.S. and towards China, it is clear from Duterte's statements during the visit that his criticism of the U.S. alliance did not extend to fellow U.S. allies. In a joint statement with Prime Minister Abe, Duterte described Japan as "closer than a brother" and affirmed the strong ties between the two

¹⁶⁸ "Fourth Quarter 2017 Social Weather Survey: Net Trust 'Very Good' for the United States, Canada, and Japan; 'Moderate' for Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, and Vietnam; 'Neutral' for Myanmar, Cambodia, China, and Laos; 'Poor' for North Korea," *Social Weather Stations* (February 28, 2018), <https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artcldisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20180228140019>; "Third Quarter 2019 Social Weather Survey: Net Trust for China Falls to 'Bad' -33; Net Trust Stays 'Excellent' for the United States, 'Good' for Australia and Japan, and 'Moderate' for Singapore," *Social Weather Stations* (November 20, 2019), <https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artcldisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20191120154738>.

countries while committing to strengthen bilateral relations.¹⁶⁹ Judging from the joint statement published following the visit, it is clear that a central priority of the Duterte administration during the visit was to lay the groundwork for strengthening security cooperation with Japan amid reduced cooperation with the U.S. In a joint statement released at the end of the visit, only two of the fifteen measures identified for increased bilateral cooperation did not relate to security cooperation or a joint commitment to strengthen regional security and stability. Maritime security featured prominently in the statement, which specified commitments for Japan's lease of TC-90 maritime surveillance aircraft and the training of Philippine Navy pilots, the signing of an official development assistance loan for the purchase of Japanese naval patrol vessels, Japan's provision of high-speed boats to the Philippine Coast Guard, and the elevation of bilateral defense and policy dialogues.¹⁷⁰

During the visit, Duterte also spoke openly of his animosity towards Philippine security dependence on the U.S. and his desire to forge an independent Philippine foreign policy. While speaking to business leaders in Tokyo, Duterte declared his intent to free the Philippines of U.S. military presence, "revise or abrogate agreements," and terminate "war games" with the U.S.¹⁷¹ Yet as Duterte asserted his intent to reduce Philippine cooperation with the U.S., he made clear the importance of strengthened cooperation with Japan to Philippine foreign policy independence. Philippine scholar Cruz de Castro identified Japan's ability to serve as a counter-

¹⁶⁹ Shinzo Abe and Rodrigo Roa Duterte, "Joint Statement of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Philippine President Rodrigo Roa Duterte," *Presidential Communications Operations Office* (October 26, 2016), <https://pcoo.gov.ph/oct-26-2016-joint-statement-of-japanese-prime-minister-shinzo-abe-and-philippine-president-rodrigo-roa-duterte/>.

¹⁷⁰ Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Japan-Philippines Joint Statement," 26 October 2016, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000198399.pdf>.

¹⁷¹ Rodrigo Roa Duterte, "Speech of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during the Philippine Economic Forum," *Presidential Communications Operations Office* (October 26, 2016), <https://pcoo.gov.ph/oct-26-2016-speech-of-president-rodrigo-roa-duterte-during-the-philippine-economic-forum/>.

weight to the expected increase in Chinese influence in Manila as an important factor in motivating closer ties with Japan amid Duterte's outreach to China.¹⁷² Whereas maintaining close ties with the U.S. would draw the Philippines further into growing U.S.-China rivalry, ties with Japan, with whom the Philippines does not share a direct alliance, allowed the Philippines to gain security assistance without being entangled in a potential conflict between the great powers.

In January 2017, Abe made a reciprocal visit to Manila and Davao City, where Duterte hosted the Prime Minister as the first head of state to visit the Philippines since his inauguration.¹⁷³ During the visit, Abe affirmed Japan's commitment to aid the Philippines in building its maritime security capacity and the two sides signed a Memorandum of Cooperation between their coast guards to enhance maritime security cooperation.¹⁷⁴ Duterte would visit Japan twice more over the next two years, including in October 2017 and May 2019. During the October 2017 visit, Duterte stated the two countries would expand "defense and security cooperation to combat terrorism, violent extremism and transnational crimes," and thanked Japan for its support in the Marawi campaign.¹⁷⁵ Japan also pledged to enhance Philippine maritime

¹⁷² Renato Cruz de Castro, "President Duterte Maintains Philippine-Japanese Partnership as He 'Pivots' to China," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (October 19, 2016), <https://amti.csis.org/president-duterte-maintains-philippine-japanese-partnership-pivots-china/>.

¹⁷³ "Japan's Abe Arrives in PH to Meet Duterte," *Rappler* (January 12, 2017), <https://www.rappler.com/nation/japan-prime-minister-shinzo-abe-arrives-philippines-duterte>.

¹⁷⁴ Republic of the Philippines, Presidential Communications Operations Office, "Japan, Ph Sign Several Agreements to Enhance Bilateral Ties," January 12, 2017, <https://pcoo.gov.ph/japan-ph-sign-several-agreements-to-enhance-bilateral-ties-12-jan-2017/>.

¹⁷⁵ Rodrigo Roa Duterte, "President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's Speeches and Interviews" *Presidential Communications Operations Office* (October 2017), <https://pcoo.gov.ph/october-2017-president-rodrigo-roa-dutertes-speeches-interviews/>.

safety and coastal surveillance, citing the recent launching of a mobile Japanese Coast Guard team to support Philippine capacity building and bilateral training exercises.¹⁷⁶

Alongside frequent visits between the two countries' heads of state, Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana has regularly met with his Japanese counterpart. Prior to the slowing of in-person exchanges during the COVID-19 pandemic, the defense leaders met regularly at annual defense ministerial meetings and on the sidelines of regional multilateral fora. Regular video conferences between the two defense leaders have continued throughout the pandemic. During each of the visits, the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen bilateral security cooperation.¹⁷⁷

As seen in the frequent exchanges between senior leaders, the expansion of ties between the two countries in recent years clearly signals the importance the Duterte administration places on Japan as a central partner in its diversification efforts. On more than one occasion, Duterte has referred to Japan and the Philippines entering a “golden age for [their] Strategic Partnership.”¹⁷⁸ Japan appears to hold the growing bilateral relationship in a similar regard. Speaking of the relationship, Philippine Ambassador to Japan claimed Japan treats the Philippines as its “most important partner country,” though Japan’s bilateral relationship with the U.S. is “on an altogether different strategic and economic level.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Rambo Talabong, “Lorenzana Meets with Japan Defense Minister in Tokyo,” *Rappler* (April 18, 2019), <https://www.rappler.com/nation/228489-lorenzana-meets-japan-defense-minister-tokyo-april-2019/>.

¹⁷⁸ Rodrigo Roa Duterte, “Statement of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during the Joint Press Event,” October 30, 2017.

¹⁷⁹ Richard Javad Heydarian, “What Duterte Really Sees in Abe,” *Asia Times* (May 31, 2019), <https://asiatimes.com/2019/05/what-duterte-really-sees-in-abe/>.

5.6.2 Combined Military Exercises

Combined military exercises between Japan and the Philippines have also expanded in recent years. Within weeks of cancelling combined military exercises with the U.S., Duterte expressed his desire to expand exercises with Japan. During his initial visit to Japan in October 2016, Duterte responded to questions concerning military exercises with Japan, stating “Joint exercises? Yes, of course...No problem.” During the same visit, Duterte expressed his willingness to welcome Japanese patrols in Philippine territorial waters in the SCS. Duterte stated, “as a matter of fact, I also told them, they can go near my territorial waters, and park there if you want.”¹⁸⁰ Tellingly, just the month prior, Duterte had cancelled joint patrols in the SCS with the U.S. As with his criticism towards the U.S. alliance, it is clear that Duterte’s desire to reduce security cooperation with the U.S. did not extend to fellow U.S. allies like Japan.

Whereas Japanese defense cooperation with the Philippines primarily took place under the umbrella of U.S.-Philippine security cooperation in previous administrations, cooperation with Japan under the Duterte administration is increasingly bilateral. Bilateral cooperation now extends across all warfighting domains. In the maritime domain, the two countries conducted nearly twenty combined naval drills from 2015 through July 2021.¹⁸¹ Port visits by the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Forces (JMSDF) have also ramped up under Duterte, who personally visited a Japanese flotilla during a visit to Subic Bay in September 2018.¹⁸² In the air domain, the

¹⁸⁰ “Duterte Says Open to Idea of Military Exercises with Japan,” *The Japan Times* (October 27, 2016), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/10/27/national/politics-diplomacy/duterte-says-open-idea-military-exercises-japan/>.

¹⁸¹ “Japan and Philippines to Hold First Joint Air Force Exercises,” *Nikkei Asia* (July 1, 2021), <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Japan-and-Philippines-to-hold-first-joint-air-force-exercises>; “First Air-to-Air Bilateral Training on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief between Japan Air Self-Defense Force and the Philippine Air Force,” *ReliefWeb* (July 8, 2021), <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/first-air-air-bilateral-training-humanitarian-assistance-and-disaster-relief>.

¹⁸² Jaime Laude, “Duterte Visits Japan Navy Ships in Subic,” *The Philippine Star* (September 2, 2018), <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/09/02/1847915/duterte-visits-japan-navy-ships-subic>; Prashanth

two countries conducted their first bilateral air-to-air training event focused on HA/DR in July 2021 at Clark Air Base. According to AFP Chief of Staff General Gilbert Gapay, the Philippines has also expressed its desire to partner with Japan to strengthen cooperation in cyber defense and drone capabilities.¹⁸³

As bilateral Japanese-Philippine security cooperation has accelerated, Japan's role in Philippine-U.S. combined exercises continues to expand. In 2018, Japan deployed an armored vehicle unit to the Philippines as part of a Philippine-U.S. exercise, marking the first time Japanese armored military vehicles have deployed overseas since WWII.¹⁸⁴ Increased exercises with Japan have also motivated continued discussions on a bilateral VFA.¹⁸⁵ A VFA between the two countries would mark the third such agreement for the Philippines, who currently has agreements with the U.S. and Australia. A VFA would allow Japan to more fully participate in exercises on Philippine soil, including the annual Balikatan exercise with the U.S., in which Japan regularly participates but in a relatively limited role.

In describing the motivation for growing security cooperation and combined exercises, Japanese and Philippine leaders frequently speak in broad, ambiguous terms, citing the two countries' shared interests in regional peace and stability as a foundation for cooperation. Prior to

Parameswaran, "Destroyer Visit Puts Japan-Philippines Military Ties in the Spotlight," *The Diplomat* (February 2, 2018), <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/destroyer-visit-puts-japan-philippines-military-ties-in-the-spotlight/>; Frances Mangosing, "U.S., Japanese, Australian Warships Dock in PH This Week amid Sea Tensions," *Inquirer.net* (April 11, 2018), <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/165618/us-japanese-australian-warships-dock-ph-week-amid-sea-tensions/>.

¹⁸³ "Philippines Eyes Partnership with Japan on Cyberdefense and Drones," *The Japan Times* (October 13, 2020), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/10/13/national/philippines-eyes-partnership-japan-cyber-defense-drones/>.

¹⁸⁴ Christopher Woody, "Japanese Armored Vehicles First Military Exercise on Foreign Soil," *Business Insider* (October 6, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/japanese-armored-vehicles-first-military-exercise-on-foreign-soil-2018-10>.

¹⁸⁵ For reference, the Philippines' VFA with Australia took seven years before it received final approval; "Philippines, Japan Still Discussing Visiting Forces Accord," *Kyodo News* (October 10, 2018), <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/10/11/18/philippines-japan-still-discussing-visiting-forces-accord>.

the 2019 bilateral meeting between Duterte and Abe, Duterte stated the SCS would be a primary point of discussion in upcoming talks between the two leaders: “Peace and stability in the region is a mutual concern to both the Philippines and Japan. And the South China Sea is central in this regard.”¹⁸⁶ Military leaders also tend to speak in broad terms about the motivations for increased security cooperation. During a welcoming ceremony for visiting members of the JMSDF, Commodore Antonio Paules, commander of the Philippine Navy’s Sealift Amphibious Assault Force, stated “Both navies share strategic partnership and common interests of a peaceful and stable region and rules-based approach to international engagements and resolution of conflict.” Similarly, JMSDF Rear Admiral Tatsuya Fukuda described growing security cooperation with the Philippines as aimed at “enhancing interoperability” to “contribute to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific Region.”¹⁸⁷ However, observers and scholars often speak more pointedly to the two countries’ shared concerns of China’s rising maritime assertiveness as a motivating factor for growing bilateral security cooperation. As described by Grønning, increased security cooperation between Japan and the Philippines is strongly driven by a desire to “diplomatically oppose and tactically complicate...Chinese maritime revisionism.”¹⁸⁸ For the Philippines, increased security cooperation with Japan allows it to strengthen its ability to complicate Chinese efforts to assert its claims in the SCS while reducing security dependence on the U.S.

¹⁸⁶ “Duterte, Abe Expected to Discuss Peace in South China Sea,” *BusinessWorld Online* (May 24, 2019), <https://www.bworldonline.com/duterte-abe-expected-to-discuss-peace-in-south-china-sea/>.

¹⁸⁷ Jamie Laude, “Duterte Visits Japan Navy Ships in Subic,” *The Philippine Star* (September 2, 2018), <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/09/02/1847915/duterte-visits-japan-navy-ships-subic>.

¹⁸⁸ Bjørn Elias Mikalsen Grønning, “Japan’s Security Cooperation with the Philippines and Vietnam,” *The Pacific Review* 31, no. 4 (July 4, 2018): 533–552.

5.6.3 Arms Procurement

The relative weakness of the AFP, and its dependence on the U.S., is a problem long recognized by Philippine leaders. The Duterte administration openly addresses this condition in its 2017 NSP, describing the AFP as “one of the most poor-equipped forces in the world” and asserting its commitment to achieve self-reliance in defense.¹⁸⁹ In its efforts to modernize its military and reduce U.S. dependence, Japan has emerged as one of the Philippine’s most important sources of defense equipment. The high quality of Japanese equipment, its interoperability with existing U.S. equipment, and the generous terms offered by Tokyo make Japan an indispensable partner in Manila’s efforts to modernize its armed forces.

Philippine arms agreements with Japan have thus far primarily focused on strengthening Philippine maritime capabilities. The previously mentioned five TC-90 maritime patrol aircraft, two 90-meter patrol vessels, and thirteen coast guard speedboats go a long way in advancing the Philippines’ limited maritime capabilities, and in February 2020, the two sides signed a contract for the delivery of two multirole response vessels for the Philippine Coast Guard. Upon delivery, these ships will constitute the fleet’s largest vessels.¹⁹⁰ These procurements, in addition to Japan’s construction of four radar stations on islands in the Sulu and Celebes Seas, led Philippine Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Hermogino to describe Japan as the “number one benefactor for the PCG.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines, *National Security Policy for Change and Well-being of the Filipino People - 2017-2022* (Manila, Philippines, 2017), 27.

¹⁹⁰ Prashanth Parameswaran, “Coast Guard Ship Deal Highlights Growing Japan-Philippine Security Ties,” *The Japan Times* (February 16, 2020), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/02/16/national/politics-diplomacy/coast-guard-ship-deal-japan-philippine-security-ties/>.

¹⁹¹ Tim Kelly and Nobuhiro Kubo, “Japan to Build Four Radar Stations for the Philippines to Counter Piracy Surge: Sources,” *Reuters* (November 8, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-philippines-radar/japan-to-build-four-radar-stations-for-the-philippines-to-counter-piracy-surge-sources-idUSKBN1DA0A5>.

Japanese arms agreements extend well beyond the Coast Guard, and in August 2020 the Philippines signed a \$100 million agreement with Japan's Mitsubishi Electric Corporation to export an air radar system to the AFP to enhance Philippine air and maritime domain awareness. Japan has also provided disaster relief equipment to the AFP through official developmental assistance funds, including a recent package of over \$1.1 million in sonars, jackhammers, and other disaster-relief tools.¹⁹² Moreover, Japan has provided millions of dollars in anti-terrorism equipment and helicopter parts to the AFP to strengthen its domestic and maritime security capabilities.¹⁹³

Aside from modernizing Philippine defense equipment, arms procurement also facilitates greater defense cooperation between Japan and the Philippines. Personnel training often accompanies arms acquisitions, which increases familiarity between the AFP and JSDF and opens the door for future cooperation. Common equipment also fosters interoperability, which can facilitate future combined exercises and operations.

In light of rapidly expanding Japan-Philippine security cooperation, Philippine scholar Richard Javad Heydarian describes the bilateral defense relationship as having “arguably never been stronger in the post-World War II era.”¹⁹⁴ Bilateral senior leader exchanges, combined military exercises, and arms deals have reached new heights under the Duterte administration's diversification strategy. As U.S.-China rivalry intensifies, deepening relations between Manila and Tokyo allows Manila to reduce strategic dependence on both Washington and Beijing, who

¹⁹² “Philippine Armed Forces Become First Foreign Military to Get Gear via Japanese ODA,” *The Japan Times* (May 4, 2021), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/05/04/national/japan-philippine-military-oda/>.

¹⁹³ Tim Kelly and Nobuhiro Kubo, “Japan Said to Offer Chopper Parts to Philippines as Counter to China,” *The Japan Times* (August 11, 2017), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/08/11/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-said-offer-chopper-parts-philippines-counter-china/>.

¹⁹⁴ Heydarian, “What Duterte Really Sees in Abe.”

form Manila's sole treaty ally and largest trading partner, respectively.¹⁹⁵ By increasing security cooperation with other middle states, the Philippines strengthens its security and preserves its autonomy in the face of intensifying U.S.-China great power rivalry.

5.6.4 Japanese Motivations for Security Cooperation with the Philippines

While Manila's motivations for increased security cooperation with Japan seem clear—reduced dependence on the U.S., access to advanced military equipment, increased opportunities to train with capable Japanese forces—what does Tokyo gain from training with the admittedly “poorly equipped” AFP and providing discounted military equipment to the Philippines? For Tokyo, the benefits are primarily four-fold. Increasing defense cooperation with Manila and strengthening Philippine defense capabilities complicates China's ability to control sea lines of communication critical to Japan's economy, provides the JSDF opportunities to conduct valuable overseas military training, expands Japan's arms export markets, and strengthens Japan's influence in Southeast Asia.

First, Japan's efforts to strengthen Philippine defense capabilities increase the Philippine's ability to complicate potential Chinese efforts to control sea lines of communication critical to Japan's economy. Radar stations, maritime patrol aircraft, and patrol vessels may not be able to directly challenge PRC actions, but it does increase Philippine maritime domain awareness, which can be shared with Japan and the U.S. Beijing must also account for improved Philippine defense capabilities in SCS contingency planning, which may

¹⁹⁵ Richard Javad Heydarian, “Duterte's Pivot to Japan,” *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (June 14, 2019), <https://amti.csis.org/dutertes-pivot-to-japan/>.

have a deterrent effect on certain actions. Complicating China's actions in the SCS may also reduce pressure on Japan's completing claims with China in the East China Sea.

Second, defense cooperation with the Philippines increases JSDF experience in conducting overseas operations. As Tokyo seeks to expand the JSDF's role beyond its limited post-WWII construct, it needs to provide the JSDF opportunities to deploy its forces and conduct overseas military training, including with forces other than the U.S. military. Japan's deployment of an armored vehicle unit to the Philippines as part of a 2018 exercise, and its conduct of air-to-air training out of Clark Air Base in 2021 provides the JSDF opportunities such opportunities.

Third, Japan's provision of military equipment to the Philippines not only complicates Chinese military strategy and decision making, but also opens the door for future Japanese arms sales to Manila. Since overturning its arms exports ban in 2014, Tokyo has sought to create an export-driven arms industry as part of a broader effort to "recover [its] national prestige" and strengthen its role in international affairs.¹⁹⁶ Through equipping the AFP and Philippine Coast Guard, Tokyo expands its arms export markets and improves its reputation as a source of high-quality, advanced military weaponry.

Lastly, Japan's defense cooperation with the Philippines strengthens Japan's reputation as an active and important player in Southeast Asia. Extensive security cooperation with Manila demonstrates Japan's willingness to contribute to regional security, the depth of its military capacity, and the positive role Tokyo can play in enhancing regional stability. Japan's defense cooperation with the Philippines also coincides with expanding security cooperation with

¹⁹⁶ John Wright, "An Inoffensive Quest: Can Japan's Defense Exports Take Off?," *The Diplomat* (April 5, 2022), <https://thediplomat.com/2021/01/an-inoffensive-quest-can-japans-defense-exports-take-off/>; Alexandra Sakaki and Sebastian Maslow, "Japan's New Arms Export Policies: Strategic Aspirations and Domestic Constraints," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 74, no. 6 (November 1, 2020): 649–669.

Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, and other ASEAN states. Through extensive defense cooperation with Manila, Tokyo seeks to enhance its reputation in the region and create avenues for expanded influence.

5.7 Conclusion

While Manila's relations with Beijing and Washington dominate much of the discussion concerning Duterte's 'pivot' to China, it is Manila's relations with other middle states that forms the central pillar of the Duterte administration's response to intensifying U.S.-China rivalry. Over the last five years, the Duterte administration has pursued a clear diversification strategy that seeks to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. while strengthening security cooperation with middle states throughout the region. The diversification strategy of the Duterte administration stands in sharp contrast to the strategy pursued by the Aquino administration, which primarily focused on reinforcing the U.S.-Philippine alliance through extensive security agreements and expanded cooperation within the U.S. alliance network. As made clear in the official national security publications, defense agreements, and arms purchases of the Aquino and Duterte administrations, Philippine diversification under Duterte is primarily driven by his administration's weak commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance.

As the Duterte administration has pursued a diversification strategy, it has formed its strongest partnerships with 'like-minded' states with whom the Philippines shares common security partners, faces a common adversary, and has close economic relations. Following the U.S., the Philippines' closest security partners are fellow U.S. allies, with whom the Philippines shares common military doctrine, operating procedures, and interoperable equipment. Yet Manila's relations with these fellow U.S. allies should not be seen as merely a proxy for security

cooperation with the U.S. Manila views its security relations with each of these countries as distinct from its relations with Washington. As Philippine-U.S. security relations suffered crisis after crisis under Duterte, security cooperation with Australia, Japan, and South Korea steadily increased. Even as Duterte declared his “separation” from the U.S., cancelled combined military exercises, and notified the U.S. of its cancellation of the U.S.-Philippine VFA, he made groundbreaking visits to Tokyo filled with commitments for increased defense cooperation and the provision of advanced military equipment. Though Canberra filed similar protests as Washington against human rights violations linked to Duterte’s anti-drug campaign, the Duterte administration made no threats to cancel the Philippines’s VFA with Australia or suspend combined exercises. And during Duterte’s tenure, South Korea has replaced the U.S. as the Philippines’ most important arms provider. Under the Duterte administration’s diversification strategy, security relations with fellow U.S. allies are critical to strengthening Philippine security and preserving its autonomy in the face of growing U.S.-China rivalry.

India, Indonesia, and Malaysia have also emerged as central partners in the Duterte administration’s diversification efforts. Each of these countries share close economic ties with Manila and have deep concerns of growing Chinese power. Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines each have competing claims against China in the SCS, and India is actively involved in a longstanding border dispute with China. These commonalities, and the shared desire to increase security and preserve autonomy amidst growing U.S.-China rivalry, encourages greater security cooperation between these states.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ While Indonesia does not have a territorial dispute with China, China and Indonesia have overlapping maritime claims due to China’s Nine-Dash Line claim and the EEZ Indonesia derives from its sovereignty claims over the Natuna Islands.

Philippine diversification under the Duterte administration is reflective of the broader trend of diversification among middle states throughout the Indo-Pacific. Rather than just focusing on maintaining a proper balance in their relations with the U.S. and China, middle states throughout the region are increasingly strengthening cooperation among themselves. While the Philippines' experience points to variation in alliance commitment as a primary cause of diversification, few states in the region have formal alliances, which raises the question of the applicability of these findings to other states. A primary motive for the weak alliance commitment of the Duterte administration—the desire to reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. and pursue an independent foreign policy—may broaden this finding's applicability to other states in the Indo-Pacific. As referenced in Chapter Three, themes of “non-alignment” and “foreign policy independence” are common throughout the national security strategies and foreign policies of states in the region. This struggle for autonomy and independence from dominant powers, especially in light of the historical patterns of colonialism in the region, can similarly form a powerful motivation for diversification.

Philippine diversification efforts under the Duterte administration also highlight several important policy implications for the U.S. as it seeks to promote its vision for the regional security order. As the U.S. seeks to advance its position as the region's “security partner of choice,” it would do well to understand that the U.S. is no longer the only security partner with whom Indo-Pacific states are choosing to partner. Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and others, are also increasingly attractive security partners, and security cooperation with these states in some ways may be preferable to cooperation with the U.S. Most prominently, many middle states are cautious against forming too close a relationship with Washington in fear of being perceived as balancing against China. Increased dependence on the U.S. also increases

vulnerability in case of U.S. retrenchment, which remains a persistent concern among many Indo-Pacific leaders. U.S. dependence also increases the likelihood of being drawn into a potential conflict between the U.S. and China, which middle states desperately seek to avoid. As shown in this chapter, even longtime U.S. allies such as the Philippines maintain deep nationalistic sentiments that are strongly opposed to U.S. dependence and are deeply concerned that close alignment with the U.S. will drag the country into unwanted great power conflict. In the next chapter, I close this dissertation by discussing these implications for U.S. strategy in greater depth.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

In *The Origin of Alliances*, Stephan Walt states “more than anything else, the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union has been a competition for allies.”¹ In a similar way, great power competition between the U.S. and China has become a competition for partners. In the Indo-Pacific, U.S. officials frequently promote the U.S. as the region’s “security partner of choice” and proclaim the benefits of a “free and open Indo-Pacific.”² Similarly, Beijing advocates for an “Asia for Asians” and a regional security architecture centered on China with a diminished role for the U.S.³ Between these competing great powers lie middle states who seek to preserve their autonomy and the benefits of engagement with both great powers, while strengthening their security in case competition turns to conflict.

To increase their security, middle states in the Indo-Pacific, up to this point, have largely shunned the traditional strategies of balancing and bandwagoning, and the formal alliances that these strategies prescribe. Instead, most middle states are seeking to maintain positive relations with and engage both the U.S. and China. But middle states are doing more than just hedging. For many middle states, diversification has become a central strategy to reduce their reliance on either great power while strengthening security cooperation among themselves. Through

¹ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, pg 3.

² R. Clarke Cooper, “America as the Security Partner of Choice: Highlights of 2019 and a Look Ahead to 2020,” *U.S. Department of State FPC Briefing* (January 15, 2020), <https://www.state.gov/america-as-the-security-partner-of-choice-highlights-of-2019-and-a-look-ahead-to-2020/>; R. Clarke Cooper, “America as the Partner of Choice” *U.S. Department of State* (October 31, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/america-as-the-partner-of-choice/>; U.S. Department of Defense, “Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region,” (Washington, D.C., June 1, 2019); Charles Hooper, “Defense Security Cooperation Agency Chief on the Value of Partnerships,” *Defense News* (December 2, 2019), <https://www.defensenews.com/outlook/2019/12/02/defense-security-cooperation-agency-chief-on-the-value-of-partnerships/>.

³ Xi Jinping, “New Asian security concept for new progress in security cooperation,” (speech, Shanghai, China, May 21, 2014), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml; Teddy Ng, “Xi Calls for ‘Asian People to Uphold Asia’s Security’ as He Aims to Sideline U.S.,” *South China Morning Post* (May 21, 2014), <https://www.scmp.com/article/1517256/xi-calls-asian-people-uphold-asias-security-he-aims-shut-out-us>.

diversification, middle states seek to increase the quantity and quality of security cooperation with other middle states. In doing so, middle states reduce their dependence on a single source for support in strengthening their military capabilities, reduce their vulnerability to coercion, increase the number of partners they are able to call on to meet security challenges, and expand their sources of diplomatic support. Though no single middle state partner will be able to replace the security assistance offered by a great power, ties with many smaller states can provide substantial security benefits in the aggregate. Moreover, most middle states are not necessarily concerned with matching the military power of a potential aggressor, but with possessing a sufficiently capable military response that can inflict sufficient costs to deter aggression. By avoiding significant security cooperation with either competing great power, middle states avoid being further drawn between the dueling great powers, as well as avoid incurring the displeasure of the other great power who may seek to punish the middle state through costly diplomatic, economic, or military retribution.

Rather than forming alliances, most middle states in the Indo-Pacific are turning to more limited forms of security institutions. Over the last two decades, DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises have proliferated throughout the region. Since 2000, over 230 DCAs have been signed, and nearly 100 formalized bilateral defense dialogues have been established. While Washington's and Beijing's efforts to gain security partners accounts for part of this increase, the majority of these institutions are between middle states. Whereas the U.S. and China accounted for over seventy percent of all DCAs and over fifty percent of defense dialogues signed in the Indo-Pacific from 1980 to 2009, they account for less than one-fifth of DCAs and less than a third of defense dialogues established since 2010.

One central reason for the proliferation of these forms of security institutions among middle states is the suitability of these institutions to middle state strategies of hedging and diversification. The lack of formal alignment obligations inherent in these types of security institutions allows middle states to form them with both competing powers without signaling close alignment with either. Additionally, the institutional design characteristics of these institutions allow middle states to form them with many other middle states, providing flexibility to conduct various security cooperation activities on a range of shared security interests. In doing so, middle states strengthen their ability to address their most pressing security challenges while reducing their dependence on one partner.

While the proliferation of these forms of security institutions throughout the Indo-Pacific has been widespread, it has not been even. While many states have formed agreements with numerous states across the region, other states have formed very few. States' choices in who they form these security institutions with is also diverse. Middle states are not just forming security institutions with every other middle state in the region, nor are they just forming them with their neighbors. In this dissertation, I demonstrated that middle states who face a significant threat from the rising power, have a weak commitment to alliance, are militarily capable, or who are economically developed are more likely to employ a diversification strategy. I have also shown that as middle states diversify, they are more likely to form security ties with states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, share a common security partner, or who face a common adversary.

6.1 Traditional Assumptions

The proliferation of DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises in the Indo-Pacific challenges several common assumptions concerning security cooperation and the role of middle states and security institutions in great power rivalry. To begin, the prospects for cooperation in security affairs is traditionally assumed to be “impoverished” due to the security dilemma.⁴ Under the security dilemma, one state’s efforts to increase its security can decrease the security of others. Accordingly, states would be foolish to assist another in strengthening its security when those capabilities may be used against it in the future.⁵ However, the regularity with which states sign DCAs, coordinate defense policy in regular senior defense dialogues, and conduct combined military exercises demonstrates that security cooperation is indeed possible, and even desirable for middle states who derive substantial benefits from these arrangements.

The proliferation of DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises under the shadow of increasing great power rivalry also challenges the continued emphasis on alliances in the security literature. Balance of power theory emphasizes the importance of alliances as states seek to respond to the threat posed by a rising power. Yet no new alliances have been formed in the Indo-Pacific since the early days of the Cold War, and states such as the Philippines and Thailand have sought to distance themselves from their alliance with the U.S. China, the rising power itself, has even forsworn alliances, referring to

⁴ Lipson, “International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs”; Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions.”

⁵ Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1978), 167-214.

them as a “relic of the Cold War” and calling for a “new model of security partnerships.”⁶ Yet the security literature remains focused on alliances. Alliances will certainly continue to play an important role in evolving U.S.-China rivalry, as U.S. alliances with Australia, Japan, and South Korea have strengthened in the face of rising Chinese power. However, continuing to view emerging U.S.-China rivalry through a lens focused on alliances misses the growing importance of other forms of security institutions that states design to respond to great power rivalry.

A final assumption challenged by the evolution of security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific concerns the distribution of benefits states derive from institutions and cooperation. Institutions are traditionally seen as epiphenomenal, or merely reflections of the underlying power distributions between partner states.⁷ Yet observations suggest that this may not be the case in the formation of DCAs and more limited forms of security agreements between more powerful and less powerful states. As great powers compete to influence the alignment of middle states, middle states are often able to leverage their ‘middle’ position and triangular politics to elevate their bargaining position. As previously highlighted in Nepal’s security cooperation with the U.S. and China, Nepal has received hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid and military assistance from both the U.S. and China. Both great powers have established bilateral security arrangements that focus on the domestic security needs of Nepal, and Nepal has thus far avoided having to choose between the U.S. and China. The institutional design characteristics of DCAs, defense dialogues, and combined military exercises, combined with the dynamics of great power competition, make these forms of security institutions optimal security institutions for

⁶ People’s Republic of China, *China’s National Defense in the New Era* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the PRC, July 2019); People’s Republic of China, *China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the PRC, January 2017).

⁷ Stephen D. Krasner, *Structural Conflict: The Third World against Global Liberalism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).

middle states who seek to modernize their militaries and strengthen their security while preserving their autonomy.

The observation that middle states can benefit in certain ways from competition between the great powers suggests that the view that U.S.-China rivalry is entirely negative for the region is not fully accurate. In some regards, competition between the U.S. and China drives both great powers to invest in the region in ways that can advance the security capabilities and economic development of middle states. As intensifying U.S.-China rivalry has turned middle states into the primary battle ground of great power competition, both the U.S. and China have provided foreign aid, security assistance, and economic inducements to middle states in an effort to win their alignment.⁸ The advances in economic development and military modernization that can flow from assistance and inducements from the great powers can provide lasting benefits to regional development and stability.

The responses of the U.S. and China to several recent crises in the region demonstrate one way middle states may benefit from U.S.-China competition. Following the seizure of Marawi, Philippines by Islamic State fighters in 2017, Washington was eager to demonstrate its indispensability as an alliance partner following the Duterte administration's efforts to downgrade bilateral security ties. The U.S. offered extensive operational support to the AFP, including communications support, intelligence, and counterterrorism training.⁹ Beijing, seeking to nurture Duterte's pivot away from the U.S., was also quick to respond, donating over 150 million RMB for Marawi relief and rehabilitation efforts, medical care for wounded troops, and

⁸ Brian Willis, "Debt, Foreign Aid, and China's Expanding Security Network," Working Paper.

⁹ Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, "DoD Efforts to Train, Advise, Assist, and Equip the Armed Forces of the Republic of the Philippines," January 31, 2019, <https://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/Article/1747248/dod-efforts-to-train-advise-assist-and-equip-the-armed-forces-of-the-republic-o/>.

military assistance. Beijing also donated millions of dollars in heavy equipment and weapons to the Philippines, including the rifle which Duterte claimed AFP soldiers used to kill the leader of the Islamic State in the Philippines. Duterte's response to China's assistance appeared to be precisely the acclaim Beijing was seeking in its bid to be seen as a reliable security partner at the center of the regional security order: "During the critical stage of the Marawi incident, where we needed help badly, it was China who responded immediately to our cry for help."¹⁰

Washington's and Beijing's responses to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013 also demonstrates how middle states can benefit from U.S.-China competition, and the great powers' responses to the Typhoon have a continuing influence on their respective approaches to natural disaster response in the region today. Typhoon Haiyan was one of the Philippines' deadliest natural disasters, killing over 6,300 people and injuring tens of thousands. Following the typhoon, Washington rapidly deployed military assets to the Philippines to support recovery operations, including the USS George Washington Carrier Strike Group which arrived in the Philippines less than a week after the typhoon.¹¹ In contrast, Beijing, upset over Manila's submission of its claims against China with the Permanent Court of Arbitration, donated a "paltry" \$100,000 in relief assistance.¹² China increased its donation to \$1.6 million after being "shamed" by media outlets and analyst, and eventually sent its hospital ship, the Peace Ark, to aid recovery efforts.¹³ Regional criticism of China's half-hearted response to Typhoon Haiyan

¹⁰ Dharel Placido, "China Announces P1.1-Billion Marawi Aid," *ABS-CBN News* (November 15, 2017), <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/15/17/china-announces-p11-billion-marawi-aid>.

¹¹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "FACT SHEET: U.S. Response to Typhoon Haiyan," November 19, 2013, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/19/fact-sheet-us-response-typhoon-haiyan>.

¹² Lucy Williamson, "China's Philippine Aid Controversy," *BBC News* (November 14, 2013), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-24938874>.

¹³ Will Oremus, "Peace Ark: China Finally Sending Hospital Ship to Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan," *Slate* (November 20, 2013), <https://slate.com/technology/2013/11/peace-ark-china-finally-sending-hospital-ship-to-philippines-after-typhoon-haiyan.html>; Frank Langfitt, "China Sends 'Peace Ark' To Philippines Via Choppy

appears to have since motivated Beijing to more fully demonstrate its willingness and ability to support, and lead, regional HA/DR efforts. Following the 2015 Gorkha earthquake in Nepal, which killed over 8,000 people, China executed its largest-ever military deployment for an international humanitarian mission, deploying over one thousand PLA soldiers and eleven military transport aircraft to Nepal within days of the earthquake.¹⁴ The Peace Ark has also since become an important tool for PRC diplomacy, making regular visits to underdeveloped states throughout the region to provide medical care and respond to natural disasters.¹⁵ As China's rapidly growing military capabilities raise alarms throughout the region, Beijing is eager to demonstrate the soft edge of its hard power. As Beijing seeks to demonstrate its leadership and responsiveness in region-wide crisis response efforts, it will face a U.S. who is determined to show its commitment to the region and maintain its position as the region's traditional security provider. For middle states in the natural disaster prone-Indo-Pacific, competition between the U.S. and China to be the first to have their aircraft carrier or medical ship on scene following a natural disaster is not necessarily a bad thing.

6.2 Future Research

While a more complete discussion on how the dynamics of great power competition can provide derivative benefits to middle states is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it does

Political Seas," *NPR* (November 20, 2013), <https://www.npr.org/2013/11/20/246409431/chinas-peace-ark-to-philippines-arrives-through-choppy-political-waters>.

¹⁴ Peng Lin, "China's Evolving Humanitarian Diplomacy: Evidence from China's Disaster-Related Aid to Nepal," *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 6, no. 3 (September 1, 2021): 221–237; "中国军方支援尼泊尔抗震救灾兵力为新中国成立以来出境规模最大 (The Chinese military's support for Nepal's earthquake relief is the largest since the founding of the People's Republic of China)," *Xinhua*, May 7, 2015, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-05/07/c_1115213933.htm.

¹⁵ Chris Harris, "Geopolitical Objectives Fuel China's Peace Ark," *East Asia Forum* (October 12, 2018), <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/10/13/geopolitical-objectives-fuel-chinas-peace-ark/>.

highlight one area for potential future research. This dissertation also highlights several other areas for further research. I discuss several of these areas below.

One area in particular is the uniqueness of diversification to current U.S.-China rivalry and to the Indo-Pacific. While the middle state strategy of diversification is widespread in the Indo-Pacific today, it is less clear to what extent diversification occurred in the context of previous great power rivalries. The conventional view of the Cold War, for instance, viewed the rivalry as defined by two competing allied blocs separated by the “Iron Curtain.” Interaction between the Western Bloc, anchored by the U.S. and its NATO allies, and the Eastern Bloc, anchored by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, was relatively limited. Close alignment and defense pacts dominated the security landscape, and more limited forms of security institutions were not as commonplace. This environment appears markedly different from the prevalence of diversification and hedging that is occurring in the Indo-Pacific today.

In an effort to distance themselves from both the U.S. and Soviet Union, some middle states formed the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Under the NAM, dozens of states joined together under a common desire to avoid ridged alignment and security commitments with either great power. Yet despite the enthusiasm of its founding members (which included several Indo-Pacific states), the movement struggled to gain relevance amid the powerful blocs dominated by the U.S. and Soviet Union. Additionally, many members who joined the Movement were actually closely aligned with the Soviet Union or China. The NAM also lacked an overarching framework for security cooperation among member states and was devoid of substantial intra-organizational efforts to improve members’ security.¹⁶

¹⁶ Leo Mates, “Security Through Non-Alignment,” *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 20, no. 2 (1989): 167–173.

These general characterizations of middle state-to-middle state relations during the Cold War require closer scrutiny, as do other historical cases of great power rivalry. How significant were the relations between those states who sat between the competing great powers, and what strategies did they employ to advance their security and preserve their autonomy? Have balance of power theory's deeply entrenched lenses of balancing and bandwagoning obscured important nuances in how middle states responded to previous great power rivalries?

The relevance of diversification to other historical periods also prompts the question of the relevance of diversification to regions other than the Indo-Pacific. U.S.-China competition for influence, and the potential instability caused by China's rise, is most keenly felt in the Indo-Pacific. However, China's growing influence is increasingly felt in more distant regions, including Africa, Central Asia, and South America. Rising Chinese influence in these regions generates friction and brings Beijing into conflict with the traditional powers in these regions, including Russia in Central Asia and the U.S. in South America. As China's influence expands and competition between China and the region's traditional power grows, do middle states respond in ways beyond the strategies of balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging?

The durability of diversification as a viable strategy for middle states under the shadow of great power rivalry also demands close monitoring. If U.S.-China rivalry continues to intensify and the potential for conflict increases, do alignment-avoidance strategies like hedging and diversification become untenable? Many states in the Indo-Pacific today fear they may be forced to choose between the U.S. and China, and scholars have theorized that middle states' space for hedging shrinks as rivalry intensifies.¹⁷ As the potential for great power conflict grows and the

¹⁷ Alexander Korolev, "Shrinking Room for Hedging: System-Unit Dynamics and Behavior of Smaller Powers," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 419–452.

pressure from the great powers to choose a side increases, how effective are the dense security ties middle states have formed among themselves at allowing middle states to avoid alignment? As U.S.-China rivalry evolves, close monitoring of how middle states adapt their strategies to strengthen their security and preserve their autonomy will provide important avenues for consequential research.

A final area for further research concerns detailed state-level research on the evolving positions of individual states within the Indo-Pacific security network. The network diagrams and centrality measures in Chapter 3 highlight the increasingly central positions of Australia, India, and Japan in the Indo-Pacific security network. Research concerning the security cooperation behavior and motives of each of these states to strengthen their role in regional security is likely to reveal important findings regarding regional security dynamics.

Understanding how other states in the region, including the U.S. and China, respond to the increasingly central positions of these states in the regional security network is also important to understanding their implications for regional stability.

6.3 Policy Implications for the United States

The dramatic growth of security cooperation among middle states in the Indo-Pacific has important implications for U.S. policy and strategy. First, increased security cooperation among middle states largely aligns with long-term U.S. interests. Middle state efforts to share intelligence, develop effective deterrence capabilities, build defense capacity, and jointly respond to regional security challenges, including terrorism, natural disasters, and piracy, all strengthen the security of individual states and contribute to greater regional stability. In strengthening their military capacity, middle states also improve their ability to remain free from foreign influence

and domination. This reduces the ability of one state to establish a sphere of influence, which aligns with the longstanding U.S. aim of preventing the rise of a regional hegemon in Asia.¹⁸

Second, greater security cooperation among middle states has the potential to have a deterrent effect on Chinese assertiveness. Complex security ties among middle states increase the number of potential participants in any dispute. Even if states do not have formal commitments to each other through an alliance, close security partners may be willing to offer diplomatic, economic, or even limited military support, such as access or equipment, to their partner during a conflict. If a state is less confident in its ability to confine a conflict to a bilateral setting, for which Beijing has demonstrated a strong preference, it may have a moderating impact on aggressive behavior.¹⁹ By increasing uncertainty concerning the potential for multilateral action, China may be less willing to engage in what may be perceived as aggressive behavior.²⁰

Third, the most central states in the emerging regional security network are states whose regional security preferences closely align with those of the U.S. As security cooperation among middle states has increased, close U.S. allies Australia, Japan, and South Korea have emerged as some of the most central states in the regional security network. These states' visions for regional security, perceptions of China, and interest in a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," though not identical, largely align with those of the U.S. U.S. interests are advanced as these states gain

¹⁸ The White House of the United States of America, "National Security Strategy of the United States of America" (Washington, D.C., December 2017); Joseph S. Nye, "The Case for Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 4 (1995): 90–102; Thomas G. Mahnken, ed., *Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century: Theory, History, and Practice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014).

¹⁹ For example, see "China reiterates to resolve territorial disputes via bilateral negotiations," *Xinhua* (April 26, 2013), http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-04/26/c_132343314.htm.

²⁰ Patrick M. Cronin, Richard Fontaine, Zachary M. Hosford, Oriana Skylar Mastro, Ely Ratner and Alexander Sullivan, "The Emerging Asia Power Web: The Rise of Bilateral Intra-Asian Security Ties," *Center For New American Security* (June 10, 2013), <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/the-emerging-asia-power-web-the-rise-of-bilateral-intra-asian-security-ties>.

influence in the region. India is also one of the most important actors in the emerging regional security network, and this is a positive development for the U.S. The compatibility of New Delhi's and Washington's visions for the regional security order, and their willingness to cooperate on regional security challenges, is most prominently seen in their cooperation with Australia and Japan in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. The increasing prominence of Australia, India, Japan, and South Korea in the regional security network is complementary to U.S. security interests and challenges China's ability to establish a security order that minimizes the U.S. and its alliances.

While it may be tempting for Washington to view the expanding security cooperation networks of Australia, Japan, and South Korea as an extension of the U.S. alliance network, it is important to note that other states do not necessarily view their security cooperation with close U.S. allies in the same way they view security cooperation with the U.S. Rather than viewing their cooperation with U.S.-allied states as reinforcing a U.S.-led regional security order, they may view cooperation with Australia, Japan, or South Korea as part of a broader diversification strategy that seeks to reduce their reliance on the U.S. As seen in the Duterte administration's diversification efforts, expanding security cooperation with Japan is motivated more by a desire to develop alternatives to U.S. security cooperation and reduce Philippine security dependence on the U.S. rather than to reinforce the Philippine-U.S. alliance. It is also important to note that while India's vision for the regional security order largely aligns with that of the U.S., there are distinct differences, and it is currently far less confrontational to Beijing or Moscow than that of the U.S.²¹

²¹ For example, see: Narendra Modi, "Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 01, 2018)," <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29943/Prime+Ministers+Keynote+Address+at+Shangri+La+Dialogue+June+01+2018>.

The rise of Australia, India, Japan, South Korea, and other states as increasingly central actors in the regional security network calls attention to the U.S.' position as the region's "preferred security partner." U.S. officials have long proclaimed the U.S. as the region's "security partner of choice" and an indispensable partner for aiding the region's military modernization and ensuring regional stability. Yet as other states have emerged as important actors in the regional security network, the U.S. is no longer the only major player in regional security cooperation. Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, as well as China, are increasingly important security partners for many states in the region, and security cooperation with these states may in some instances be preferable to cooperation with the U.S. The U.S. will certainly remain a dominant actor in the regional security network (if it chooses to do so), and many states are likely to continue to view security cooperation with the U.S. as critical to regional and national security. However, America's position as the primary security partner for many states in the region should not be taken for granted amid growing U.S.-China rivalry and the rising importance of other states in the regional security network.

Nevertheless, increased security cooperation among middle states does not necessarily translate into reduced middle state cooperation with the U.S. States can expand their security cooperation with the U.S. while also increasing cooperation with others, as many states in the Indo-Pacific have done over the last decade. In fact, middle states have not only increased their security cooperation with the U.S. and other middle states, but also with China. Though U.S. policy makers may be quick to view any security cooperation between a middle state and China as negative, the zero sum lens does not necessarily apply to middle state security cooperation with the great powers. Just as U.S. security cooperation with middle states often focuses on advancing a middle state's capacity to address its domestic and regional security challenges, so

does PRC security cooperation with middle states. Middle state security cooperation with China also does not necessarily lead to policy concessions, as the anarchic design characteristics of DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and combined military exercises emphasize individual state autonomy. Growing middle state security cooperation with China should also be viewed in the context of rising middle state security cooperation with other middle states as well, and not just a competition between the U.S. and China for security partners. Despite differences in Beijing's vision for regional security from that of the U.S., or their competing motives for security cooperation, increasing middle state security cooperation with China should be seen as a positive development, rather than a challenge to the America's dominant position.

While increasing security cooperation among middle states in the region is largely beneficial to U.S. regional interests, it should be recognized that it does present several potential challenges to U.S. interests. One driving motivation for increased security cooperation among middle states is to reduce reliance on a single partner for security assistance, arms procurement, and aid in military modernization. As middle states seek to expand their sources for defense cooperation, reduced reliance on the U.S. in some cases may translate into diminished U.S. influence.

Public U.S. government documents do not conceal that a fundamental objective of U.S. security assistance programs is to increase U.S. influence in the partner country. The U.S. IMET program, the U.S.' flagship foreign military aid program, characterizes itself as an "instrument of U.S. national security and foreign policy." It identifies the facilitation and development of "important professional and personal relationships which have proven to provide the U.S. access and influence in a critical sector of society that often plays a pivotal role in supporting, or transitioning to, democratic governments" as a primary purpose of the program. IMET also

identifies exposing foreign military and civilian personnel to the importance of democratic values and human rights as one of the program's primary objectives.²² As states increase their number of security partners, U.S. influence is potentially diluted. Moreover, reduced reliance on the U.S. for security assistance may in some ways reduce the ability of the U.S. to leverage that reliance for gaining "access and influence" during future contingencies.

Increased security cooperation among states in the Indo-Pacific necessitates a reevaluation of the degree of support the U.S. expects other states to provide during future contingency operations. Amid middle state diversification efforts, middle states do not rely on just the U.S. for their security needs, and Beijing has become a valued security partner for many states in the region. U.S. military leaders may seek to strengthen defense cooperation with middle states with the expectation that peacetime cooperation will translate into cooperation during future conflict. But unlike alliances, DCAs and other anarchic forms of security institutions provide no commitments for cooperation during war, and even alliances have their concerns with abandonment. Despite "paying it forward," DCAs, institutionalized defense dialogues, and regularized combined military exercises offer no guarantees of airfield or port access, logistic support, or troop commitments in a future contingency. In a vast Indo-Pacific region where geographic access is critical, uncertain access presents a major challenge to contingency planning and operations.

In sum, diversification and the growth of security cooperation among middle states presents important opportunities and challenges for U.S. policy and strategy. Increasing security cooperation among middle states largely benefits the U.S. and aligns with long-term U.S.

²² Bureau of Public Affairs Department of State, The Office of Electronic Information, "International Military Education and Training (IMET)," <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/pm/65533.htm>; Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *International Military Education and Training*, <https://www.dsca.mil/international-military-education-training-imet>

interests. Though U.S. influence in the region may somewhat diminish as middle states seek to expand their sources for security cooperation, the influence of close U.S. allies Australia, Japan, and South Korea will grow, ensuring the emerging regional security order remains largely friendly to U.S. interests. Even limited middle state security cooperation with China can have positive benefits for regional development and stability, and the U.S. should welcome China's contributions to advance middle state's military modernization. At the same time, the U.S. should evaluate its expectations concerning the degree of support it expects to receive from Indo-Pacific states in the event great power competition turns to conflict. As U.S. military leaders and policy makers design policies and strategies focused on long-term competition with China, they must also account for how the diversification strategies of middle states are shaping the regional security order and impacting U.S. national interests.

6.4 Conclusion

As competition between the U.S. and China intensifies, the middle state strategy of diversification furthers the prospects for peace. If great power competition remains bound within the developing institutional frameworks, the efforts of Beijing and Washington to influence the alignment of middle states, and the corresponding efforts of middle states to strengthen ties among themselves, can result in more prosperous and secure middle states and region. While the U.S. and China are certain to play a primary role in determining the peace and stability in the region, it is the strategies of middle states that will shape this competition and the future regional security order.

APPENDIX

Appendix 2.1 Full Text of 2015 DCA between Indonesia and Japan



REPUBLIK INDONESIA

**MEMORANDUM
BETWEEN
THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
AND
THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF JAPAN
ON
COOPERATION AND EXCHANGES IN THE FIELD OF DEFENCE**

The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Defense of Japan, hereinafter referred to as "the Participants" and individually referred to as a "Participant";

Recognizing the mutual benefits of cooperation and exchanges between the Participants in the field of defence;

Realizing that the development of the good relationship in the field of defence will promote mutual understanding and trust between the Republic of Indonesia and Japan, and contribute to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond;

Desiring to further strengthen defence cooperation and exchanges between the Republic of Indonesia and Japan based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit and full respect of sovereignty, and territorial integrity;

Have decided to make this Memorandum;

Paragraph 1**Purpose**

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide a framework for promoting bilateral cooperation and exchanges based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit and full respect of sovereignty, and the respective countries' territorial integrity.

Paragraph 2**Scope of Cooperation and Exchanges**

The scope of cooperation and exchanges of this Memorandum will include:

1. Defence Ministerial Level Meetings.
2. Dialogue and consultation between the defence institutions, the Indonesian National Defence Forces (INDF) and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), and respective services through exchanges of high ranking and working level officials.
3. Cooperation between the Participants on capacity building.
4. Exchange of information on defence institutions and matters, exchange and sharing of views and knowledge on mutual interests at various levels, particularly in the following areas:
 - a. Regional situation
 - b. Maritime security
 - c. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR)
 - d. Military medicine
 - e. Counter terrorism
 - f. Cyber defence
 - g. Regional frameworks such as ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting

Plus (ADMM-Plus), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and other multilateral defence dialogue or fora.

5. Cooperation on education and training through exchanges and visits of students, experts and researchers.
6. Promotion of cooperation between the INDF and JSDF.
7. Promotion of cooperation between the Participants in international peace cooperation activities, including cooperation between INDF Peacekeeping Center (PKC) and JSDF units and educational/research institutions, and international disaster relief activities.
8. Promotion of cooperation on defence equipment and technology including cooperation between defence industries of the two countries.
9. Promotion of cooperation on logistical support.
10. Other forms of cooperation and exchanges as may be mutually decided upon by the Participants.

Paragraph 3
Information Security

The Participants will ensure that any information acquired in the process of their defence cooperation and exchanges is treated appropriately and will not be released to third parties without prior consent of the originating Participant, subject to the relevant laws and regulations of the respective countries and by fully taking into account the requests from the originating Participant.

Paragraph 4
Implementing Arrangement

If required, for better conduct of this Memorandum, the Participants will

make implementing arrangements for specific defence cooperation or exchanges.

Paragraph 5
Expenses

Each Participant will bear its own expenses arising from conduct of this Memorandum unless otherwise mutually decided in writing by the Participants.

Paragraph 6
Consultations

Any dispute arising from this Memorandum with respect to its interpretation or conduct will be settled by conducting consultations and negotiations between the Participants.

Paragraph 7
Non-Binding Effect

This Memorandum does not give rise to legally binding rights or obligations under international law, and the cooperation and exchanges under this Memorandum will be conducted subject to the laws and regulations of the respective countries.

Paragraph 8
Final Matters

1. The cooperation and exchanges under this Memorandum will commence on the date of signature.

2. This Memorandum may be modified upon mutual consent in writing by the Participants.
3. This Memorandum will continue for a period of 5 (five) years and will automatically be extended for another 5 (five) years unless either Participant ends it by giving written notification to the other Participant at least 90 days prior to its intention to suspend or end this Memorandum.

Signed in Tokyo on 23 March 2015, in duplicate, in the English, Indonesian and Japanese languages. In case of any divergence in the interpretation of this Memorandum, the English text will prevail.

For the Ministry of Defence
of the Republic of Indonesia

Signed

Ryamizard Ryacudu
Minister of Defence of
the Republic of Indonesia

For the Ministry of Defense
of Japan

Signed

Gen Nakatani
Minister of Defense
of Japan

Appendix 3.1 Data Collection Process

Appendix 3.1.1 Indo-Pacific DCA Dataset (1980-2020)

The data collection process for the Indo-Pacific DCA Dataset is adapted from the DCAD data collection process. Similar to the DCAD, I focus on identifying “formal bilateral agreements that establish long-term institutional frameworks on various aspects of defense and military cooperation, including defense policy, military industries and weapons procurement, defense-related research and development, training and officer exchange, joint exercises, and sharing of classified information.” Yet my focus is on identifying said agreements among Indo-Pacific states, including the U.S. Similar to the DCAD, I do not include “defense pacts, nonaggression pacts, status of forces agreements, strategic partnerships, one-shot arms deals, joint research limited to specific programs (e.g., the F35 JSF), military aid agreements, nuclear cooperation or assistance deals, security agreements that primarily involve internal ministries and/or civilian security agency agreements, agreements surrounding border disputes or prior conflicts, arms limitation agreements, or that are narrowly limited only to specific countries or contexts.”¹

To identify DCAs between Indo-Pacific states, I conducted three systematic sweeps of different information sources. First, I consulted the United Nations Treaty Series (UNTS) publication and existing datasets of defense-related agreements, including the DCAD and “U.S. Security-Related Agreements in Force Since 1955 Dataset.” The UNTS contains all treaties and international agreements registered with the United Nations (UN). Numerous defense-related agreements in the Indo-Pacific DCA Dataset were identified through the UNTS. However, the UNTS is not a comprehensive source of all defense agreements. Governments often fail to report signed agreements (especially security-related agreements) and there is a potential lag from the

¹ Brandon J. Kinne, “The Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset (DCAD).”

time states register an agreement and the UNTS is published. I also referenced the DCAD and identified all agreements between Indo-Pacific states (including the US) from 1980-2010, and sought to confirm their existence through the process described below. I also referenced the “U.S. Security-Related Agreements in Force Since 1955 Dataset,” which identifies all known security-related treaties and agreements signed by the U.S. from 1955 to 2012.² Many DCAs involving the US and Indo-Pacific states were identified through this dataset.

Second, I referenced individual country sources, including defense and foreign ministry publications and ministry websites. This includes official Defense White Papers, which often reference defense agreements in the text of the document or in an appendix. Publicly-accessible defense and foreign ministry websites also frequently include descriptions of a state’s bilateral relations with other states in the region, and identify the existence of any formal defense-related agreements with the respective state. The majority of agreements in the dataset come from these official country sources.

To fill the gaps left by the first two sweeps, I lastly conducted extensive online searches, looking for news articles and publications that reference defense agreements between Indo-Pacific states. I systematically conducted an online search for each dyad in the region, including the names of both countries in the dyad and the terms “defense cooperation agreement”; “defense agreement”; “security cooperation agreement”; “security agreement”; “military cooperation agreement”; and “military agreement.” I was also able to identify numerous DCAs between Indo-Pacific states in published books, journal articles, and research organization publications as I conducted extensive research on Indo-Pacific security relations.

² Jennifer Kavanagh, *U.S. Security-Related Agreements in Force Since 1955: Introducing a New Database* (RAND Corporation, December 17, 2014), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR736.html.

Following the DCAD, I classify DCAs either as “General” or “Sector” DCAs. General DCAs are broad framework agreements that “attempt to coordinate and institutionalize the entirety of their signatories’ current and prospective defense relations.”³ Sector DCAs are more limited in scope and focus on cooperation in one of three categories: defense industrial cooperation agreements, training and exercises, and intelligence exchange.

Appendix 3.1.2 Indo-Pacific Institutionalized Defense Dialogue Dataset (1980-2020)

The data collection process for the Indo-Pacific Institutionalized Defense Dialogue Dataset is similar to that of the Indo-Pacific DCA dataset, with exception of reference to existing treaty repositories or datasets. I am unaware of any existing dataset of regular bilateral defense dialogues.

My primary source for identifying institutionalized defense dialogues are individual country sources. These include defense and foreign ministry publications and ministry websites for each individual country in the Indo-Pacific. Official Defense White Papers are particularly helpful in identifying institutionalized defense dialogues, which often reference regular dialogues in the text of the document or in an appendix. Publicly-accessible defense and foreign ministry websites also frequently include descriptions of a state’s bilateral relations with other states in the region, and identify regular bilateral defense dialogues. Ministry websites also often publish pictures and readouts of recent dialogues, referencing the event as the “(Number) annual defense dialogue between the Ministries of Defense/Armed Forces of (State A) and (State B)” (e.g., Fourth Annual Vietnam-Philippines Defense Minister Dialogue). The majority of institutionalized dialogues in the dataset come from these official country sources.

³ Brandon J. Kinne, “The Defense Cooperation Agreement Dataset (DCAD).”

I supplement these official country sources by conducting extensive online searches, looking for news articles and publications that reference regular defense dialogues between Indo-Pacific states. I systematically conducted an online search for each dyad in the region, including the names of both countries in the dyad and the terms “defense dialogue”; “defense meeting”; “security dialogue”; “security meeting”; “military dialogue”; “military meeting” and confirmed which dialogues were of an institutionalized nature. I also identified additional institutionalized defense dialogues between Indo-Pacific states in published books, journal articles, and research organization publications as I conducted extensive research on Indo-Pacific security relations.

I code dialogues according to the highest level official from either state who attends the dialogue. I include a categorical variable in the dataset that identifies the most senior dialogue participant. Values include ministerial, vice-ministerial, chief of defense, vice-chief of defense, service chief, vice-service chief, and working level. Dialogues involving the defense minister (or deputy minister) or chief of the armed forces (or vice chief) from at least one of the countries are coded as senior-level dialogues. Sometimes, the level of the dialogue is elevated from the working group level to the senior level, and vice versa. When this occurs, the working-level dialogue is considered terminated in the dataset and a new entry is included in the year the dialogue was initiated.

Appendix 3.1.3 Indo-Pacific Institutionalized Combined Military Exercise Dataset (1980-2020)

The data collection process for the Indo-Pacific Institutionalized Combined Military Exercise Dataset is similar to that of the Defense Dialogue dataset. I also reference the existing

Multinational Military Exercise dataset in constructing the dataset.⁴ The Multinational Military Exercise includes information on over 3,500 combined military exercises conducted from 1980 to 2010 by states throughout the world. Whereas this dataset, as well the Joint Military Exercise Dataset compiled by Bernhardt (2020), focuses on individual occurrences of combined military exercises rather than institutionalized exercises that occur on a regularly scheduled, reoccurring basis, the dataset is useful in identifying reoccurring exercises.⁵ However, the dataset is rather incomplete and missing numerous individual and institutionalized exercises.

My primary source for identifying institutionalized combined military exercises are individual country sources. These include defense ministry publications (including Defense White Papers) and ministry websites. Defense White Papers often contain appendices identifying regular combined exercises or reference the occurrence of an exercise in the text. State defense ministry websites also often include descriptions of a state's bilateral relations with other states in the region, and identify the existence of any regular exercises with the respective states. Ministry websites also often publish pictures and reports of recent exercises.

I supplement these official country sources by conducting extensive online searches, looking for news articles and publications that reference institutionalized combined exercises between Indo-Pacific states. I systematically conducted an online search for each dyad in the region, including the names of both countries in the dyad and the terms "military exercise"; "security exercise"; "joint exercise" "exercise"; and "military drill", and confirmed which exercises were of an institutionalized nature. I also identified additional institutionalized military

⁴ Raymond Kuo and Brian Dylan Blankenship, "Deterrence and Restraint: Do Joint Military Exercises Escalate Conflict?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (July 25, 2021), 22.

⁵ Jordan Bernhardt, "Introducing the Joint Military Exercise Dataset," (2020), working paper; Vito D'Orazio, "International Military Cooperation: From Concepts to Constructs," Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA. (2013).

exercises between Indo-Pacific states in published books, journal articles, and research organization publications as I conducted extensive research on Indo-Pacific security relations.

The dataset also includes information concerning the scale and scope of the institutionalized exercise when the data was readily available. This includes information concerning the type of military activities conducted during the exercise (e.g., HA/DR, anti-submarine warfare, counter-terrorism), type of military equipment involved in the exercise, and the number of participants involved from each country.

Appendix 3.2 Expanded Regional Security Network Centrality Measures

Table A.1: Indo-Pacific DCA Network Centrality Measures (2008, 2010, 2012, and 2020)

	2008			2010			2012			2020		
	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector
USA	18	75.2	1.0	21	94.3	1.0	21	97.6	1.0	22	59.3	1.0
CHN	15	38.5	0.89	15	38.8	0.85	15	41.2	0.73	16	21.9	0.75
VNM	9	5.9	0.76	12	29.6	0.83	14	25.4	0.87	17	11.9	0.92
INS	8	1.9	0.69	13	31.5	0.88	13	30.1	0.85	15	10.8	0.82
MAL	11	7.9	0.88	12	5.3	0.88	12	5.3	0.84	16	7.6	0.90
ROK	9	7.1	0.63	12	9.8	0.81	12	8.0	0.80	14	5.1	0.82
IND	10	11.8	0.74	11	14.1	0.73	13	20.9	0.76	21	57.8	0.98
AUL	9	5.3	0.69	11	5.5	0.78	11	4.6	0.75	18	18.3	0.94
PHI	10	4.1	0.84	10	3.0	0.76	12	8.2	0.81	15	7.2	0.87
SIN	7	1.3	0.65	10	4.5	0.74	10	4.4	0.71	10	0.8	0.65
BRU	8	1.9	0.71	8	0.7	0.65	8	0.6	0.62	12	1.8	0.75
JPN	4	0.5	0.37	5	0.4	0.41	6	0.1	0.48	15	7.0	0.85

Table A.2: Indo-Pacific Senior Defense Dialogue Network Centrality Measures (2008, 2010, 2012, and 2020)

	2008			2010			2012			2020		
	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector
CHN	12	50.9	1.0	12	46.0	1.0	13	48.8	1.0	16	72.6	1.0
USA	7	13.5	0.70	10	36.3	0.85	10	29.6	0.79	11	29.4	0.81
MAL	8	28.4	0.66	8	21.4	0.67	8	23.7	0.57	9	13.2	0.63
IND	6	23.1	0.56	6	21.1	0.55	7	38.7	0.54	13	70.0	0.84
INS	5	10.7	0.50	5	9.6	0.47	6	13.7	0.50	10	17.3	0.74
SIN	4	1.9	0.50	5	8.6	0.52	5	7.6	0.48	8	9.0	0.62
JPN	5	7.6	0.55	5	7.1	0.54	6	3.4	0.65	8	8.0	0.73
AUL	5	3.8	0.56	5	2.7	0.53	8	8.8	0.73	9	3.9	0.75
THI	3	6.9	0.33	4	8.7	0.46	4	7.3	0.39	6	2.3	0.50
PHI	4	2.4	0.52	4	1.7	0.51	4	1.3	0.43	9	6.4	0.69
VNM	2	0.0	0.28	3	1.0	0.41	6	3.4	0.65	12	19.3	0.90
ROK	2	0.0	0.23	2	0.0	0.24	5	0.3	0.58	7	0.6	0.65

Table A.3: Indo-Pacific Bilateral Combined Military Exercise Network Centrality Measures (2008, 2010, 2012, and 2020)

	2008			2010			2012			2020		
	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector	Degree	Btwnness	Eigenvector
USA	14	85.8	1.00	15	91.0	1.00	16	85.5	1.00	18	95.4	1.00
IND	9	43.4	0.61	10	47.4	0.64	11	36.5	0.69	15	68.6	0.85
AUL	9	24.8	0.85	10	30.0	0.83	11	33.5	0.82	13	46.9	0.85
SIN	7	4.5	0.80	8	9.1	0.81	8	5.2	0.78	8	1.7	0.72
INS	8	7.0	0.87	8	6.8	0.83	9	7.9	0.84	10	7.6	0.79
MAL	8	6.8	0.83	8	6.6	0.79	8	6.0	0.74	10	11.5	0.76
THI	7	10.3	0.74	7	6.5	0.73	7	3.5	0.71	7	0.4	0.67
BRU	6	3.8	0.67	6	4.0	0.64	6	3.8	0.60	6	2.7	0.51
CHN	3	2.0	0.22	4	2.5	0.33	5	2.5	0.43	12	39.5	0.78
PHI	4	0.0	0.51	4	0.0	0.48	4	0.0	0.47	4	0.0	0.39
NEW	3	0.0	0.34	3	0.0	0.32	3	0.0	0.29	3	0.0	0.27
JPN	1	0.0	0.14	2	0.0	0.26	3	1.0	0.34	3	0.0	0.31

Appendix 4. 1 Who Diversifies?

Appendix 4.1.1. Descriptive Analysis

To accompany the chart describing the DCA formation behavior of individual middle states in the Indo-Pacific, I include charts similar charts for institutionalized senior defense

dialogues (Figure A.1) and combined military exercises (Figure A.2). In addition to identifying a state's total number of dialogue or exercise partners, the charts also indicate whether each state has an institutionalized defense dialogue or combined military exercise with the U.S. (blue), China (red), both the U.S. and China (green), or neither the U.S. nor China (black) during the specified time periods. Similar to the DCA chart, states are divided into four groups based on their number of partner states.⁶ I exclude China and the U.S. from the total count of defense dialogue and combined military exercise partners.

	≤ 1			2 - 4		5 - 7	≥ 8
2000	AFG	LAO	PNG	AUL	THI	MAL	
	BHU	JPN	PRK	IND			
	BNG	MAD	ROK	INS			
	BRU	MON	SIN	NEW			
	CAM	MYA	SRI	PAK			
	DRV	NEP		PHI			
2010	AFG	MON		AUL	JPN		MAL
	BHU	MYA		BNG	PAK		
	DRV	NEP		BRU	PHI		
	ETM	PNG		CAM	ROK		
	LAO	PRK		IND	SIN		
	MAD	SRI		INS	THI		
2020	AFG	MYA		BRU		JPN	AUL
	BHU	NEP		CAM		ROK	DRV
	BNG	PNG		LAO		PHI	IND
	ETM	PRK		NEW		SIN	INS
	MAD	SRI		PAK			MAL
	MON			THI			

Legend

Sr DD w/US

Sr DD w/PRC

Sr DD w/US & PRC

Sr DD w/neither US or PRC

Figure A.1: Total Institutionalized Senior Defense Dialogue Partners (Indo-Pacific States)

⁶ The thresholds for the four groups are somewhat arbitrary and meant to optimize the distribution of states for the 2020 time period among four equally spaced bins.

	≤ 1			2 - 4		5 - 7		≥ 8	
2000	AFG	JPN	PAK	IND				AUL	
	BHU	MAD	PNG	PHI					
	BNG	MON	PRK	THI					
	CAM	MYA	ROK						
	DRV	NEP	SRI						
	LAO	NEW							
2010	AFG	LAO	PAK	NEW		BRU		AUL	
	BHU	JPN	PNG	PHI		INS		IND	
	BNG	MAD	PRK			MAL			
	CAM	MON	ROK			SIN			
	DRV	MYA	SRI			THI			
	ETM	NEP							
2020	AFG	MAD	PRK	JPN		BRU		AUL	
	BHU	MON	ROK	DRV		SIN		IND	
	BNG	MYA	SRI	NEW		THI		INS	
	CAM	NEP		PHI				MAL	
	ETM	PAK							
	LAO	PNG							

Legend

CME DD w/US

CME w/PRC

CME w/US & PRC

CME w/neither US or PRC

Figure A.2: Total Institutionalized Combined Military Exercise Partners (Indo-Pacific States)

The general trends of institutionalized defense dialogue and combined military exercise formation are similar to those of the DCA network, with several important exceptions. Overall, both charts show a significant increase in the number of security partners for middle states broadly, and a general trend towards forming these institutions with both the U.S. and China. Concerning senior defense dialogues, states generally tend to form dialogues with both the U.S. and China (even close U.S. allies), as these dialogues not only serve to coordinate defense policy and defense cooperation activities, but can also serve as mechanisms to manage bilateral tensions and facilitate confidence building measures. It is also important to note that while some states may not have a regular senior defense dialogue with either the U.S. or China, or both, they may have a lower-level defense dialogue or general foreign policy dialogue that addresses bilateral security issues. This is the case with Indonesia, who holds the annual *Defense Security Consultation Talks* with China at the ministerial-level while holding the annual *U.S.-Indonesia Bilateral Defense Discussions* with the U.S. at the military flag officer level.

The regional combined military exercise network (Figure A.2), in general, is not as diversified as the DCA or senior defense dialogue network. States generally have fewer regular bilateral combined military exercise partners than DCA or defense dialogue partners, and numerous regular exercises in the region take place in multilateral settings, such as the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) series of exercises. Many states also conduct some form of combined military exercise with the U.S. on an annual basis, such as through the U.S. Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) series of exercises. However, it is clear that states are increasing the number of states with whom they hold regular combined military exercises and are increasingly holding these exercises with China.

Appendix 4.1.2 Logit Regression

Table A.4: Middle State Likelihood of Forming a DCA, Establishing an Institutionalized Defense Dialogue, or Combined Military Exercise

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	Establish DCA, Def Dialogue, or Combined Mil Ex							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Mil Expenditures	0.504*** (0.051)				0.316*** (0.060)	0.342*** (0.061)		
GDP per capita		0.439*** (0.061)					0.464*** (0.071)	0.449*** (0.072)
MID against PRC			1.824*** (0.270)		0.771* (0.316)		0.997** (0.311)	
Active Terr Dispute w/PRC				1.050*** (0.200)		0.609* (0.246)		0.225 (0.246)
Contiguous States					0.179*** (0.042)	0.158*** (0.044)	0.314*** (0.042)	0.330*** (0.044)
Democracy					0.253 (0.225)	0.305 (0.225)	0.172 (0.231)	0.227 (0.231)
US Ally					0.412 (0.294)	0.506 (0.288)	0.735* (0.287)	0.968*** (0.275)
Constant	-7.300*** (0.733)	-3.724*** (0.492)	-0.516*** (0.097)	-0.507*** (0.103)	-5.559*** (0.791)	-5.946*** (0.803)	-5.381*** (0.614)	-5.290*** (0.614)
Observations	546	546	546	546	546	546	546	546
Log Likelihood	-304.548	-346.013	-347.424	-360.811	-287.699	-287.769	-280.232	-285.189
Akaike Inf. Crit.	613.097	696.026	698.848	725.622	587.399	587.538	572.464	582.378

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Results from the logit regressions are reported in Table A.3. The independent and control variables are the same as those used in the negative binomial regression. Models 1-4 test the independent variables separately, while Models 5-8 test the independent variables jointly and include the control variables. Military expenditures and GDP per capita, as well as MIDs against China and active territorial disputes against China are tested separately to avoid multicollinearity between the variables. Each of the primary independent variables are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), though the active territorial dispute with China variable loses its significance when tested with the GDP per capita variable in Model 8. Predicted probability graphs of the primary independent variables are displayed in Figure A.3 and are based on coefficient estimates from models 6 and 7.

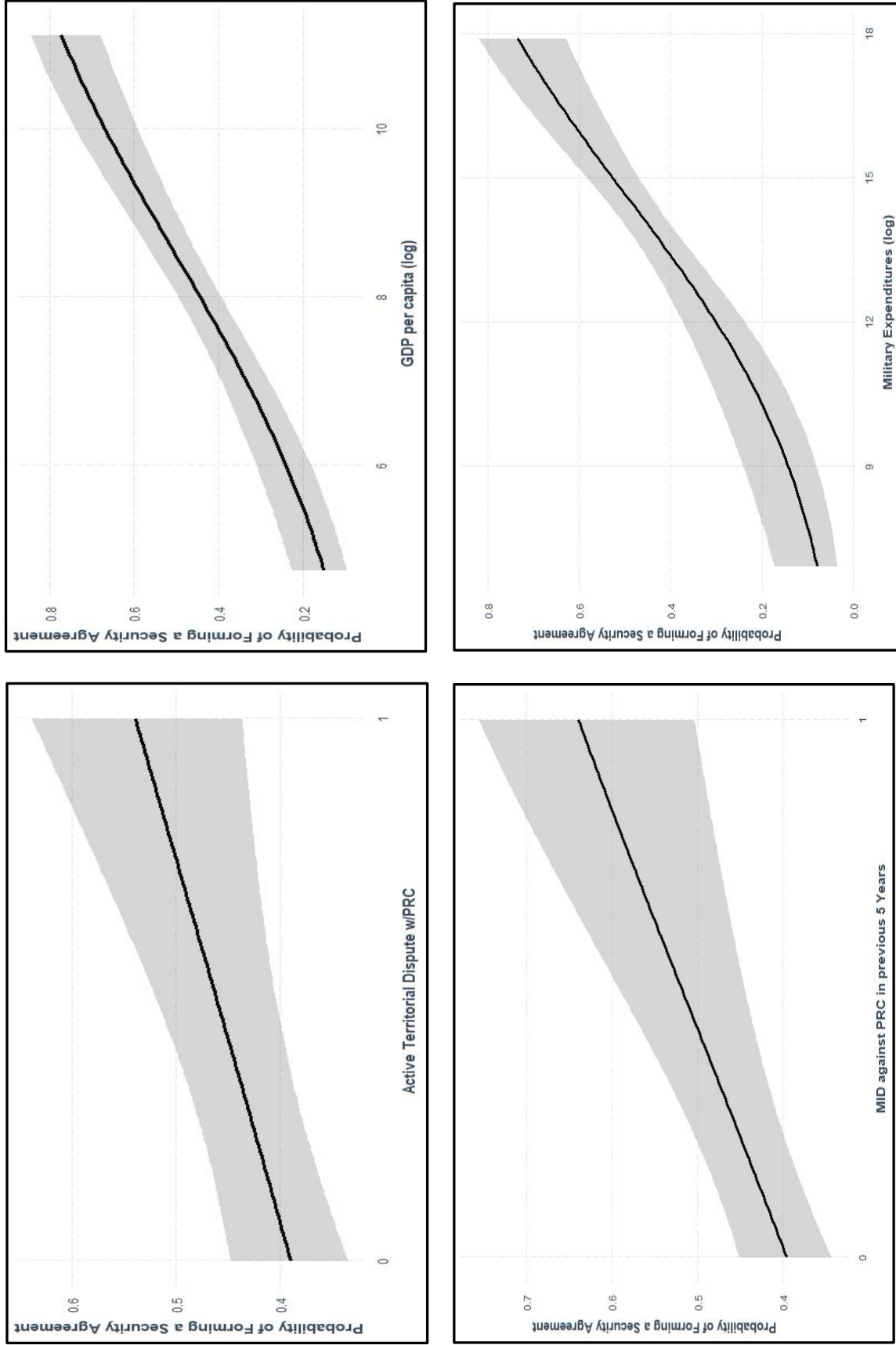


Figure A.3: Predicted Probabilities for Security Agreement Formation (2000-2020)

Appendix 4.2. Who Diversifies with Whom:

Appendix 4.2.1 Alternate Model Specification using Logistic Regression

Though logistic regression does not allow for directly accounting for the endogeneities described in Chapter Four, it does allow for consideration of the exogenous independent variables that are central to the hypotheses. While these endogeneities lead coefficient estimates to be susceptible to bias, significant findings in line with those from the TERGM, which does account for these endogeneities, increases confidence in the hypotheses.

I conduct several logit tests using a non-directed dyad-year panel dataset of all DCAs between Indo-Pacific states (excluding the U.S. and China) for the years 2000-2020. I use the existence of a DCA between a pair of states as the dependent variable. Primary independent variables include UN voting ideal point distance, log of total bilateral trade, a binary variable indicating whether both states in the dyad have an active territorial dispute with China, and a binary variable indicating whether both states in the dyad experienced a MID against China in the five years previous to the year of observation.⁷ The ideal point distance and trade variables are lagged by one year to reduce the potential for reverse causation. I also control for contiguity (including those states separated by 400 miles of water or less) and mean dyadic CINC score.

⁷ I do not use fixed effects in the logit regressions due to the lack of variation on the DV over the entire period for many of the dyads. Many dyads either never signed a DCA or have maintained a DCA for the entire observed period. With no variation in the DV, the use of fixed effects will drop these observations from the model and introduce significant bias into the regression.

Table A.5: DCA Formation: Indo-Pacific DCA Network (2000-2020) – Logit Regression

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	DCA	
	(1)	(2)
Total Bilateral Trade	0.508*** (0.024)	0.497*** (0.024)
Ideal Point Distance	-0.170* (0.079)	-0.197* (0.080)
Terr Dispute w/China	1.355*** (0.164)	
MID against China		1.577*** (0.247)
Contiguity	0.043 (0.124)	0.219 (0.123)
CINC	-7.903* (4.003)	-8.147* (4.098)
Constant	-4.457*** (0.167)	-4.335*** (0.166)
Observations	3,630	3,630
Log Likelihood	-1,257.583	-1,269.657
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,527.167	2,551.314
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

Results are shown in Table A.5. Consistent with the hypotheses and the TERGM results, middle states are more likely to form a DCA with states who have similar foreign policy preferences, are close economic partners, or who face a common adversary. All primary independent variables, including both operationalizations of threat from the rising power, are significant and in the anticipated direction. Predicted probability charts for the primary independent variables are in Figure A.4.⁸

⁸ Predicted probability estimates are drawn from Model 1 for bilateral trade, ideal point distances, and territorial dispute with China variables, and Model 2 for the MID against China variable.

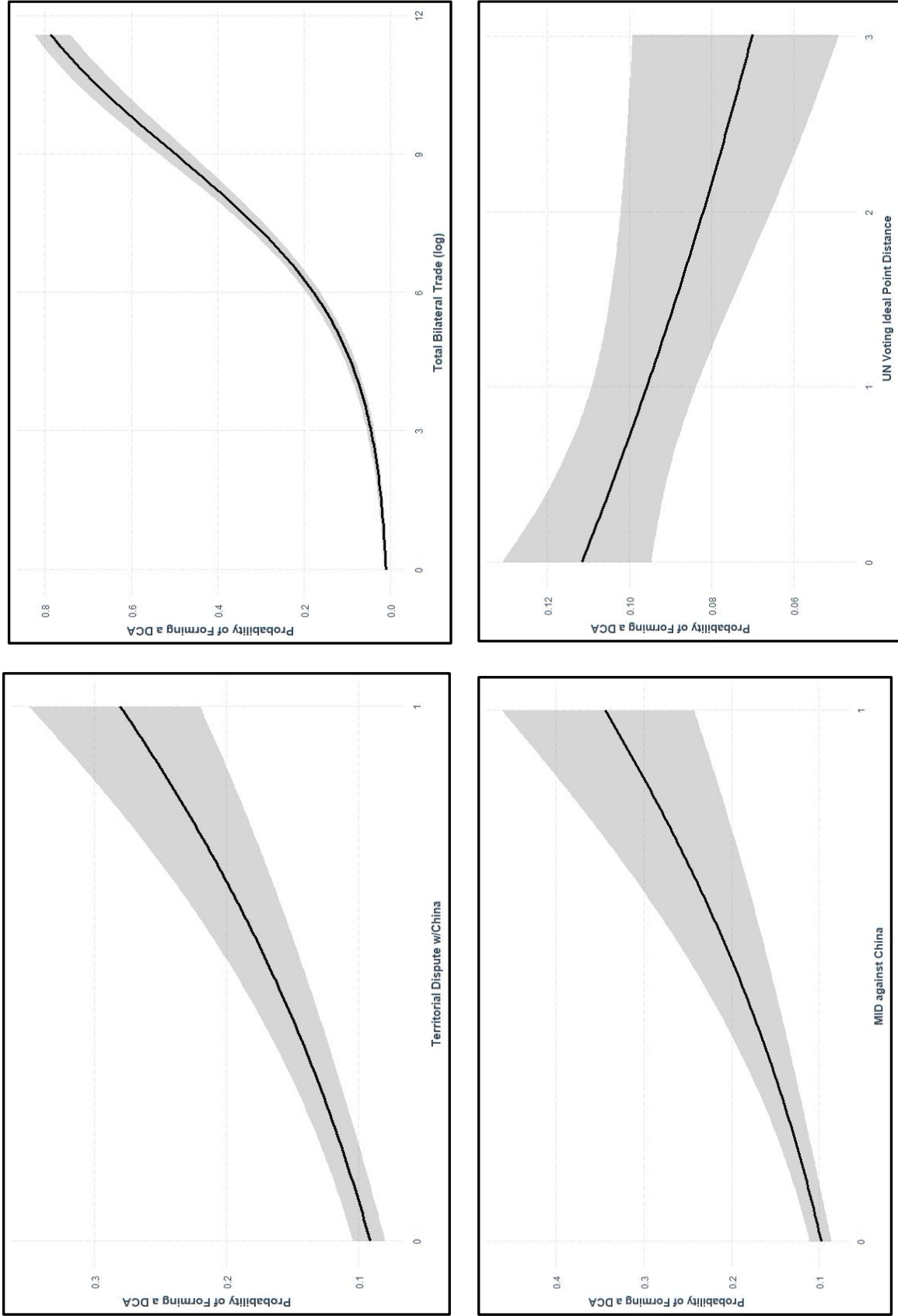


Figure A.4: Predicted Probabilities for DCA Formation (2000-2020) (Logistic Regression)

Appendix 4.2.2 TERGM including the U.S. and China

Table A.6: DCA Formation: Indo-Pacific DCA Network (2000-2020) – TERGM (including the U.S. and China)

	Model 1	Model 2
Ideal Point Distance	0.05 (0.14)	-0.11 (0.14)
Trade	1.08*** (0.22)	0.40 (0.22)
Dispute w/PRC (Nodematch)	-0.42 (0.58)	-0.38 (0.58)
Dispute w/PRC (Nodefactor)	0.33 (0.22)	0.02 (0.22)
Contiguity	1.06*** (0.23)	0.90*** (0.24)
CINC	-1.21 (2.37)	1.79 (2.79)
GWESP	0.12 (0.09)	-0.60*** (0.14)
GWDSP	-0.08* (0.04)	0.23*** (0.04)
GWDeg		-6.09*** (0.73)
Edges	-4.61*** (0.26)	-1.79*** (0.36)
Num. vertices	560	560
AIC	988.57	870.25
BIC	1048.65	937.02

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Appendix 4.2.3 TERGM Diagnostics

The MCMC diagnostic tests for Model 3 from the TERGM analysis are included in Figure A.5. The diagnostics are generated to reveal any significant differences between the statistics calculated for the observed regional DCA network and the sample DCA networks generated from the model coefficients. The diagrams on the left show statistics from individual samples, while those on the right show the distribution of sample statistics. As seen in the diagrams, the sample statistics for each of the primary exogenous and endogenous variables are centered around zero, with some (but not extreme) variance from sample to sample. The results indicate that the specified model has converged and suggests the model produces networks consistent with the observed regional DCA network.

Sample statistics

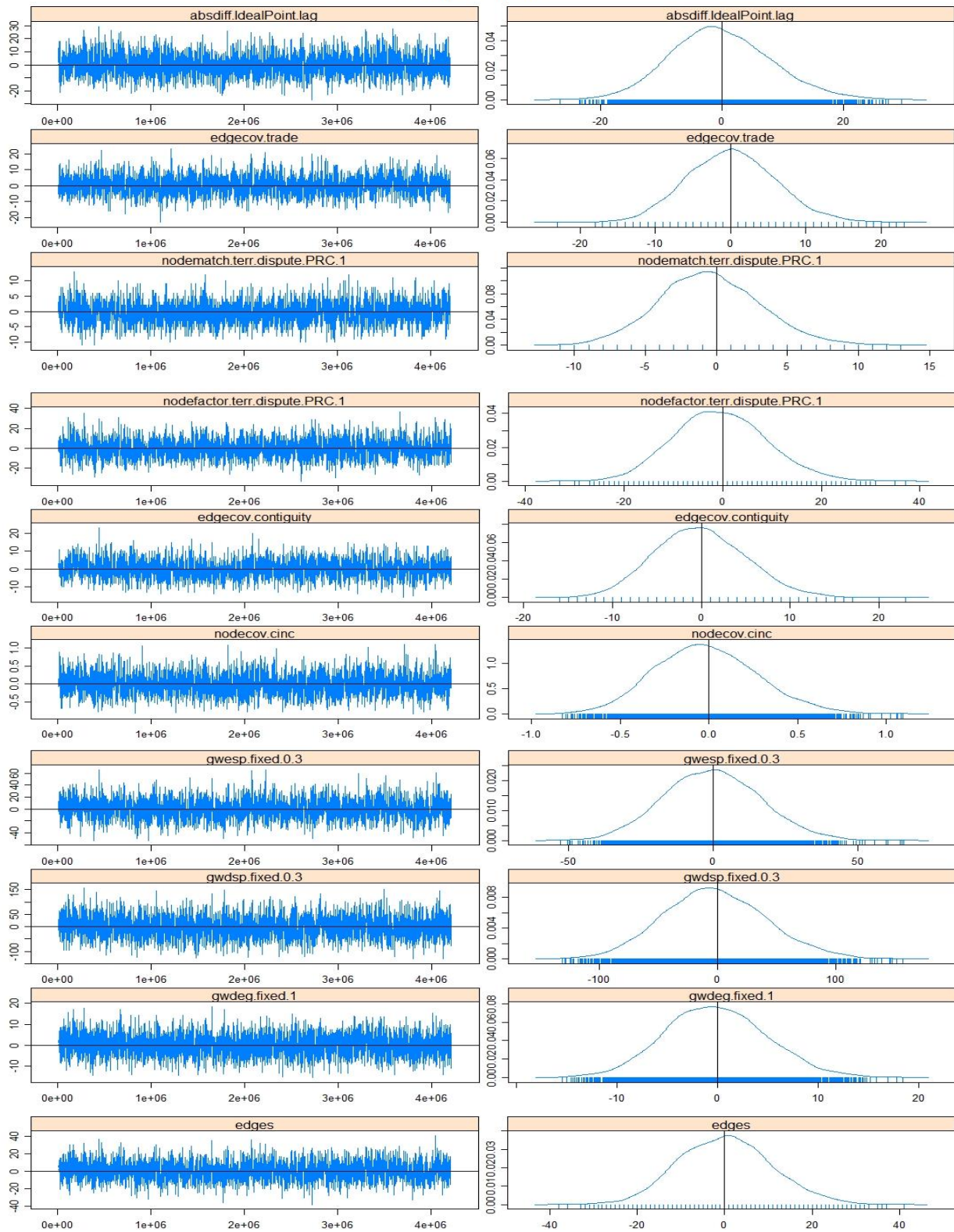


Figure A.5: Regional DCA Network TERGM Diagnostics and Sample Statistics (TERGM Model 3)

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