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**Roy Kamphausen, Director of National Security Affairs
The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)**

Introduction

In his first testimony to Congress on the posture of Pacific Command, the new PACOM commander, Admiral William Fallon, identified that as a result of “fundamental, dynamic, and rapid change in Asia and the Pacific region” the world power “center of gravity” was moving to Asia.¹ Indeed, the growth of national power within Asia – in its economic, political, military, and diplomatic forms – presents new strategic challenges to the world order that has been in place since the end of World War II.² The combination of Asian economic powerhouses coupled with tremendous and growing military power make Asia both a dynamic and potentially dangerous place. From a security perspective, the world’s six largest militaries are in the Asia-Pacific, and two (the United States and China) are modernizing in significant ways; moreover, the region contains two of the world’s flashpoints – North Korea and Taiwan – where the use of military power could spark great power confrontation.

Even as Asia is in the midst of fundamental change, the U.S. Department of Defense has undertaken paradigm-shifting reforms as well, with potentially huge ramifications for U.S. involvement in Asia. Rooted in the convictions of key U.S. leaders that change in U.S. defense policy – transformation – was necessary even before assuming office, Bush Administration leaders accelerated the process after the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001. Now, nearly four years after the attacks in September 2001, the outlines of re-written U.S. strategy, policy, and force presence plans are coming into full view.

Assessing that the level of understanding regarding regional dynamics of the Asia-Pacific is much higher among this distinguished audience, it seemed more appropriate to place greater emphasis in this paper on a discussion of U.S. defense policy and application. In so doing, several questions seem to be most helpful in framing the issue: What is the nature of fundamental U.S. defense and security policy changes? How are these changes likely to affect

¹ Admiral William Fallon, Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture, March 8, 2005 at http://131.84.1.218/speeches/sst2005/050308fallon_sasc.shtml.

² These changes are so fundamental as to warrant new terminology. NBR coined the term “Strategic Asia” to help capture this new dynamic and began an annual study effort that looks at this dynamic on a cross-cutting regional basis. In the inaugural volume of this now-annual effort completed just prior to the attacks of 9-11, Aaron Friedberg observed that “Strategic Asia” – the geographical area stretching from the eastern half of the Eurasian landmass to the arc of off-shore islands in the Western Pacific – had become a zone of “strategic interaction” in which military, intelligence and diplomatic efforts were increasingly interdependent, and likely to have regional and global ramifications. See Aaron Friedberg, “Introduction” to *Strategic Asia 2001-2002*: National Bureau of Asian Research, Seattle, Washington, 2001, pp. 5-6.

U.S. policy and presence in the Asia-Pacific in a second George W. Bush Administration?
What are the most relevant trends and implications of a transforming U.S. defense policy and posture in Asia?

To answer these questions, this paper is organized into three sections. The first section considers those recently released Department of Defense (DoD) initiatives and documents that govern how the DoD operates worldwide. The second section addresses how these documents manifest themselves in the posture and presence of the United States armed forces in the Asia-Pacific region. Finally, the third section briefly analyzes some trends likely to continue into the second George W. Bush Administration and addresses the implications thereof.³

Key Department of Defense efforts and documents

Since mid-2004, a number of key DoD documents and processes have emerged that essentially govern DoD efforts worldwide. These include the National Defense Strategy, Global Posture Realignment effort, Base Realignment and Closure Commission process, and ultimately in the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review. Of foremost in importance to understanding how DoD analyzes the present and future security environments is the Department of Defense-authored National Defense Strategy. Below is a summary of the important elements of the National Defense Strategy.

The National Defense Strategy (NDS)⁴

The current National Defense Strategy, promulgated in March 2005, contains key elements for understanding the Pentagon's strategy for both war fighting and peace winning, including in Asia.

The NDS states that the United States remains the most powerful state in the world, *with no peer competitor*. But, the NDS notes, the *U.S. has vulnerabilities* in the accomplishment of its national security goals, which include the potential for allied/partner non-support of U.S. aims, domestic bureaucratic resistance to defense transformation, and even resentment of U.S. power and influence abroad.

Moreover, the United States faces an array of threats that employ both asymmetric and conventional capabilities intent on thwarting the achievement of U.S. goals. Unwilling to be surprised again as on 9-11, but unable to precisely predict where the threats will manifest themselves, DoD has determined that *uncertainty* characterizes today's strategic environment. The Department must therefore prepare for surprise.

³ While I previously served in the Pentagon, I should be careful to add a caveat that my comments do not represent the Department of Defense.

⁴ National Defense Strategy of The United States of America, March 2005, at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nds1.pdf>. The National Military Strategy published by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the document which derives military missions from analysis of the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy and security environment. It is a good and useful resource for those who desire to better understand how the U.S. military forces will operationalize the concepts found within the NDS. It can be found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf>.

The NDS then organizes the type of threats/challenges in the following way in order to better manage the risk of surprise:

Traditional challenges – employment of conventional military forces in understood means of conflict;

Irregular challenges – unconventional methods and means to challenge traditional power.

Catastrophic challenges – acquisition and use of WMD or creating the effects of WMD use;

Disruptive challenges – the use of new technologies to negate U.S. advantages in key domains.

The NDS also characterizes the *international environment* as comprised of *international partnerships* - the “principal source of U.S. strength;” *key states* – which could emerge as rivals in certain security dimensions or on a regional basis; *problem states* – which are hostile to U.S. aims and seek means to counter the accomplishment of U.S. goals; and *non-state actors* – comprised of terrorists, insurgents and criminals who undermine governments and challenge the United States.

In facing these threats, the NDS identifies four *strategic objectives*. Primary among these is the imperative to *protect the homeland* from attack, a mission made more imminent by the events of 9-11. Other strategic objectives include: *securing strategic access* and retaining global freedom of action; *strengthening alliances* and partnerships; and *establishing favorable security conditions*.

To accomplish its strategic objectives, DoD has a four-part strategy of “*Assure, Dissuade, Deter, and Defeat*.” The United States seeks to: assure friends and allies by demonstrating its ongoing commitment to its alliances; dissuade potential adversaries, especially by emphasizing those capabilities which enhance U.S. comparative advantages; deter aggression and counter coercion by maintaining a rapid capability to deploy forces; and defeat adversaries in ways that enhance U.S. future security.

To carry out the strategy, DoD has adopted four implementation guidelines. These include: “*active defense*” in which the U.S. will seize the initiative to prevent attacks or conflict; *continuous transformation* of technology, thinking and practices to adapt to new realities; a *capabilities-based planning* approach that emphasizes the importance of achieving effects on a desired target or adversary in contrast to threat based planning which would drive structures and systems.; and *managing risks* across the challenges that could be posed to the United States.

The capabilities DoD will seek to develop include: *strengthened intelligence*; *security of U.S. forces’ operational bases*; *an ability to operate from the global commons* – space, cyberspace, international waters and airspace; *access to and operating in anti-access environments*; *denial of sanctuary to the enemy*; *network-centric operations* – technological solutions for linking together dispersed joint and combined forces; *enhanced operations against “irregular” forces*

– the insurgents and terrorists of the world; and finally, *building the capacity of international partners* to operate more seamlessly with U.S. forces while transforming themselves and creating better capacity, especially to assist in the Global War on Terror.

The NDS is not as declarative on the size and shape of U.S. forces – leaving that to the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review- but does emphasize that a more agile force will need to *operate well from four forward regions*: Northeast Asia; East Asian Littoral; Middle East/Southwest Asia; and Europe. The NDS notes that five new characteristics will mark the new global defense posture: relationships based on a “harmony of views on the challenges that face us,” activities which comprise the full range of training, exercises and operations; facilities where forces will be located or operate from; flexible legal arrangements that support operations and don’t hinder them; and global sourcing and surge in which capabilities are brought to bear in a crisis from outside theater.

The process of determining where those forces will operate from overseas has been termed the Global Posture Realignment, and it is to a discussion of this aspect that we now turn.

Global Posture Realignment

In the new Global Posture, U.S. forces will be stationed at joint locations around the world from which they can provide the quickest response to emerging threats or crises. Global posture realignment is a process that began at the beginning of the Bush Administration in 2001, was accelerated after 9-11, and has been refined through further discussions with allies and in deliberations within the U.S. government. Consultations included discussions with friends and allies around the world and particularly in Asia, beginning in early 2004.⁵

In testimony to the U.S. Congress in September 2004, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld delineated the key elements of the Global Posture Realignment.

He asserted that U.S. forces should be “located in places where they are wanted, welcomed, and needed. And, in some cases, the presence and activities of our forces grate on local populations...”⁶ A desire to base forces where they are welcomed reflects a deep-seated concern that U.S. forces that overstay their welcome risk damaging prospects for continued long-term support by the host nation of U.S. defense policy. The desire also indicates a more practical concern on the part of DoD that it wants to avoid being constrained in how and to where it might deploy its forces in response to a crisis.

The Secretary also argued that because “*uncertainty*” frames all potential future crises and conflicts, U.S. forces must demonstrate *agility and flexibility* in responding. As U.S. forces have usually been “deployed” to a crisis, and because future crisis points are not known, it makes more sense to: reduce overseas presence and redeploy those forces back to the United States that are not currently needed to remain in place overseas; establish larger joint forward

⁵ Senior State Department official, “Defense Department Background Briefing on Global Posture Review”, August 16, 2004, at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20040816-1153.html>.

⁶ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, “Global Posture” Testimony as Prepared for Delivery by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC, September 23, 2004.

operating locations from which to respond to regional crises; and then acquire access for more, but lesser-maintained sites from which the U.S. military could launch operations.

Secretary Rumsfeld made clear that increased capability comes from organizational restructuring – e.g. re-organizing the basic deployable U.S. Army unit to an agile, flexible and more lethal brigade structure, redistributing skill positions between the active and reserve and guard components, and relocating strategic lift with Stryker brigades for increased responsiveness; as well as technological solutions, including an increased application of the use of space, such as the Space Based Radar and Transformational Communications Satellite, as well as an enhanced use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.⁷

In making up for this reduced overseas presence, the United States will use enhanced capabilities to accomplish more than what the previously larger force structure could do. To that end, the Washington is investing \$11 billion in enhancing more than 100 specific military capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region.⁸

President Bush gave further insights into next generation technological capabilities in his address to the graduating class of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis on May 27, 2005. The President said that the United States has already spent \$16 billion to build transformational military capabilities and earmarked \$240 billion for research and development. He added that these technologies include: unmanned underwater vehicles, destroyers that can shoot down ballistic missiles, former nuclear attack subs that can deliver special operations forces, floating sea bases, and enhanced technologies like enhanced underwater surveillance systems.⁹

Where U.S. forces will be located has taken on entirely new terminology as well. U.S. forces will now be based in three types of forward locations: *Main Operating Bases*, *Forward Operating Sites*, and *Cooperative Security Locations*. *Main operating bases* are those locations where permanently assigned U.S. forces and their families reside. These reflect many of the “legacy” locations of large currently occupied locations in both Europe and Asia. The difference is that these locations will be increasingly “joint” and units of two or more services will be located together. *Forward Operating Sites* are “warm sites” where propositioned materiel and supplies might be located and a small cadre of staff would be on-hand to assist in the resupply of active forces that might transit through. Finally, *Cooperative Security Locations* are the most austere; a facility might exist which would be used for exercises or training, but no U.S. forces would be stationed on-site. The U.S. global mobility force management system then governs how often U.S. forces rotate through these facilities for training and exercises.¹⁰ The creative use of a mix of foreign locations for training, exercises and operations has led to the description of the effort as a “places, not bases” program.

⁷ Ibid. UAV’s range from the Strategic surveillance capability of Global Hawk, to the missile platform of Predator, to the tactical squad and company-level Dragon Eye and Raven systems.

⁸ Kathleen T. Rhem, “Fewer Troops Won’t Reduce Deterrence in South Korea, Rumsfeld Says” *American Forces Information Service*, September 8, 2004, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2004/n09082004_2004090802.html.

⁹ George W. Bush, “President Discusses War on Terror at Naval Academy Commencement” Annapolis, Maryland, May 27, 2005 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/05/20050527.html>.

¹⁰ *National Defense Strategy*, 19-20.

Ultimately, Secretary Rumsfeld said that it is U.S. intent to bring home approximately 70,000 troops over the next several years.¹¹

Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC)

While primarily an exercise mandated by Congress to improve DoD efficiency and reduce operating costs by closing or consolidating redundant or unnecessary bases, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission process also has implications for the U.S. presence in Asia. In his testimony to Congress, Secretary Rumsfeld stated that the global posture decisions and BRAC are “tightly linked, indeed they depend on each other.”¹² To better inform the process, DoD timed its global posture decisions to pre-date the beginning of the BRAC process. The recommendations, which were announced on May 9, 2005, factored in the forces returning from overseas bases into a determination of where they might be located stateside and then a discussion of what domestic facilities could be closed or realigned as a result.

The BRAC Commission began its work on May 3, 2005 and was charged to review all of DoD’s 520,000 installations worldwide and assess how each fits into the new force-structure plan as measured against four military criteria: current and future capabilities needed, impact on operational readiness of a post, impact an installation has on joint training and operations, availability and condition of land and resources, surge capability as well as cost implications.¹³

When briefing the BRAC Commissioners on May 5, 2005 Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Mr. Ryan Henry, described how the National Defense Strategy, Global Defense Posture, and Quadrennial Defense Review and BRAC are linked together. The documents and processes collectively address how the U.S. is developing capabilities-based planning in the face of uncertain threats, he explained, while still seeking to assure friends and allies, dissuade security competition, deter aggression and counter coercion, and defeat any adversary that threatens the United States. Henry closed by saying that where the 70,000 relocated U.S. personnel from overseas return to is essentially a BRAC decision.¹⁴

The process that brings all these efforts into a coherent whole is the Quadrennial Defense Review.

Quadrennial Defense Review

The 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) will be sent to Congress in February 2006, nearly five months later than its original September 2005 delivery date, but timed to coincide with the delivery of the Administration’s proposed defense budget. In this way, the strategy

¹¹ Secretary Rumsfeld, “Global Posture” Testimony. Of perhaps more significance to domestic economies overseas more than 100,000 U.S. DoD family members are slated to return as well.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jim Garamone, “BRAC 2005: Force Structure, Military Value at Heart of BRAC,” *American Forces Information Service*, May 5, 2005 http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2005/20050505_901.html

¹⁴ Jim Garamone, “BRAC 2005: DoD Briefs Commissioners on Strategy Concerns” in *American Forces Information Service* May 5, 2005 at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May_2005/20050505_909.html.

and policy processes of the QDR can better inform the resource requirements of the defense budget.

Key points related to the QDR include:

- An emphasis on capabilities planning, in contrast to the threat based planning of the past. The new approach will focus on how to achieve precise military effects under specified conditions and to certain standards. In determining force structure and doctrinal constructs, the new QDR will apportion risk across DoD's challenges.
- Because of the absence of a "peer competitor" of the United States, the document will focus on the lower end of the spectrum of violence – irregular challenges and asymmetric warfare.
- The QDR will push for greater understanding of, and preparation for, uncertainty, both the so-called known and unknown "unknowns." Moreover, because the United States does not know the challenges it will face, DoD must create more flexible and adaptable unit structures and strategies to address a range of threats.
- An assessment that the process of the QDR in the post 9/11 environment, which for the first time will also include inputs by allies and partners, provides a ripe opportunity for new and creative strategic thinking, akin to other "strategic pauses" in history (e.g. inter-war period, 1980's, etc).
- Finally, the QDR will apply lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq, yet not be bound by them, so as to avoid "preparing to fight again the last war fought.") At a minimum, greater emphasis on increased jointness as well as the imperative to conduct linked and integrated network-centric warfare are likely to be lessons that will endure.¹⁵

According to Secretary Rumsfeld, the QDR will address in detail, the roles, missions, and organizations needed for the future; address the necessary changes in the law; describe the pursuit of key enablers like space, information operations, surveillance systems, and special programs; make recommended changes to strategic nuclear forces; develop new approaches for the civilian workforce; and discuss improved business practices for DoD.¹⁶

U.S. Defense Posture and Presence in the Asia-Pacific

The foregoing discussion of U.S. defense policy and posture developments will manifest itself in Asia in a number of different ways. This section now considers how key elements of the national defense strategy, posture realignment, BRAC, and QDR will take shape in Asia. It also discusses PACOM priorities in Asia and the current status of training and exercises in the Asia-Pacific.

National Defense Strategy

¹⁵Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), briefing on the QDR to Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC February 3, 2005.

¹⁶ "Facing Future: Meeting the Threats and Challenges of the 21st Century, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, February 2005, at http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/facing_the_future.

Several elements of the National Defense Strategy have ready application in the Asia-Pacific region. First, the region is rife with uncertainty about the future. This uncertainty is a by-product of several factors. First, a primary concern relates to China's rise, and secondarily to how the ongoing counter-terrorism efforts will play out in the immediate future. Second, the requirement for agile and flexible U.S. force packages is critical to operating in the massive Asia-Pacific. Although the QDR is the process that will ultimately describe how the force structure will look, it would seem highly unlikely for the U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force to have lesser roles than they have now. What is very interesting, however, is the degree to which different Services will co-locate in joint bases, both for purposes of efficiency as well as to further joint application of military power. Third, Asia presents new and unique opportunities for seeking bases and access for U.S. forces that could be used in time of crisis. In many cases these are locations that have long been used for lower-level bilateral training, exercises and operations and with a bit of infrastructure work can be made into functioning launching points for coordinated military operations. Fourth, the frequency in Asia of massive natural disasters, combined with concentration of military power near potential hotspots, increases the likelihood that a significant U.S. response to crises will be required. These may seem intuitively obvious, but the point belies a deeper reality: the United States will rely more on *response*, with all the technical and organization capabilities that might be required, because it will have a somewhat *diminished permanent presence* in the region.

Posture

Secretary Rumsfeld did observe that the "tyranny of distance" in DoD's largest geographical command – PACOM – means that the United States will still require large numbers and formations of U.S. forces permanently stationed in Asia. There will nonetheless be noteworthy modifications in the U.S. presence. In South Korea, for instance, the bulk of U.S. forces (ultimately reduced in total number by 12,500 troops) will be moved to two Main Operating Bases south of the Han River where they will be located at new joint facilities.

In Japan, deliberations on the future posture are still ongoing. It is not expected that dramatic change will occur, but DoD still will look to find ways that lessen host nation concerns about the U.S. presence. Moreover, the United States will look to create a "transformational" Army headquarters that will enhance command and control in the region without further exacerbating host nation sensitivities. In late May 2005 senior Japanese and U.S. officials continued discussions on how to maintain a U.S. deterrent posture while easing the burden on localities.¹⁷ A week later it was released that Tokyo and the Washington basically agreed on a "joint response plan" to address crises in Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and Taiwan Strait and how U.S. forces could operate from select bases;¹⁸ elements of the joint response plan are sure to affect the adjustment in basing posture.

At a broader level, former Pacific Command commander Admiral Tom Fargo gave additional insight into how forces will be positioned within the Asia-Pacific when he said during

¹⁷ "Japan, U.S. Begin Talks on Military Realignment" Kyodo, May 26, 2005 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pi5?nn20050526b2.htm>.

¹⁸ "Japan, U.S. Forces To Craft Joint Crisis Response Plan" *Japan Times*, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pi5?nn20050519b4.htm>

September 2004 testimony to the U.S. Congress: “We’re co-locating Stryker brigades with high-speed vessels and C-17 airlift in Hawaii and Alaska. We’re deploying rotational bomber elements to Guam. We’re stationing, once again, submarines in Guam. And we’ve proposed home-porting an additional carrier strike group forward in the Pacific.”¹⁹ Admiral Fallon’s posture testimony in March 2005 largely reiterated these points.

In practical terms, after realignment is complete in two years, the nature and number of U.S. permanently stationed troops in Asia will be reduced. If one considers that the worldwide return of forces is expected to be around 70,000 personnel, Asia will have a healthy share of that total. The facilities that remain will be in increasingly joint locations, as indicated by Admiral Fargo’s statement that Army and Air Force and Navy elements will be co-located. To be sure, the strong naval component of U.S. presence in Asia complicates joint basing options, but there is certainly room for greater consolidation into joint locations particularly among the Service aviation arms. Finally, Guam will occupy an increasingly important role both in hosting permanently stationed U.S. forces, as well as providing a location for the forward deployment of rotational U.S. forces in times of crisis.

The most significant changes are likely to be an increase in locations designated as Forward Operating Sites (FOS) or Cooperative Security Locations (CSL.) In his posture testimony, Admiral Fallon observed that the assessment of these sites was ongoing as of March 2005. Many of the facilities likely under consideration are already in existence, such as Mongolia’s Five Hills Peacekeeping Operations Center, Special Forces training bases in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and counter-terrorism training locations in the Philippines. In many cases, the locations have been upgraded during exercises by participating U.S. engineer units, but with the added benefit that the improved infrastructure is left behind for future use.

In other cases, new locations will be developed over time. Australia is a likely candidate, most probably at the Joint and Combined Training Center. Malaysia might be as well, given the discussion Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick had in Kuala Lumpur in early May 2005 when he offered again for U.S. help to ensure security in Malacca Strait against pirates and others.²⁰

BRAC

On its surface, the BRAC deliberations would appear to be of no great consequence to Asia-Pacific nations. However, the unique nature of U.S. geography in the Asia-Pacific, in which Hawaii and U.S. territories such as Guam, Wake Island and American Samoa provide basing options far from mainland U.S., means that domestic U.S. political decisions related to BRAC will have real posture consequences in the region. The best example would be the final home-port basing decision for the carrier strike group likely to go to Pacific Command. Politicians are pushing for a Hawaii home-port, while strategists look at the reduction in steaming time to potential Asian hotspots that would be gained from basing in Guam.

¹⁹ Jim Garamone, “Fargo Details Pacific Command Posture Plan,” *American Forces Information Service*, September 24, 2004, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2004/n09242004_2004092409.html.

²⁰ “Malaysia, U.S. Renew Defense Pact, Discuss Security” Agence France-press, May 10, 2005 at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?F=837204&C=asiapac>.

QDR

Although the QDR is a globally focused effort, undoubtedly key aspects of the Asia-Pacific region will factor into the analytical process. Foremost among these would appear to be deliberations about the rise of China. In his address to the Council on Foreign Relations of February 2005 in which he talked in some detail about DoD's QDR process, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Doug Feith asserted that China will have the greatest effect on international relations of all rising powers. Yet, Feith argued, China faces a strategic crossroads as it decides whether to fundamentally join the international system governed by the existing "rules of the road" or to make choices contrary to enhanced peace and stability in the region and which emphasize the use of coercive military power.²¹ The QDR will also make more concrete the deliberations about U.S. force structure and organization, posture, and defense strategy, all of which will have great impact on Asia.

PACOM Priorities

In his March 2005 Posture statement, Admiral Fallon outlined Pacific Command Priorities which in many ways are drawn from the DoD policies described earlier. First in importance is "Winning the War on Terrorism" and I will turn to that discussion shortly. The other priorities for Pacific Command include: "Maturing Joint and Combined Warfighting Capabilities and Readiness," "Logistics and Mobility" – including importantly an ongoing assessment of potential cooperative site locations, "Ensuring Operations Plans are Credible" and "Advancing Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation."

Admiral Fallon included tsunami relief as an important example of "Maturing Joint and Combined Warfighting Capabilities and Readiness. He went on to note that after the December 26, 2004 disaster, Pacific Command established a U.S.-led multinational task force to aid in the coordination of a multilateral response, putting to good use years of experience gained during PACOM multilateral exercises that emphasized development of common staffing procedures. In the event, more than 100 nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) were coordinated with those of military personnel from 20 nations. More than 15,000 U.S. personnel took part and more than 25 million pounds of relief goods were delivered. Admiral Fallon noted that the speed with which the U.S. responded reflected by the positive security cooperation relationships with countries in the region as well the forward posture that allowed for a quick response.²² The example is instructive because it helps the observer understand that the organization of U.S. forces to respond to events like the tsunami can also improve U.S. forces operational capabilities writ large.

²¹ Douglas Feith Speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, February 17, 2005 at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050217-2127.html>.

²² Admiral Fallon testimony, March 8, 2005.

Other than crises that require a military response, in many respects the means by which Pacific Command achieves its priorities is through its training and exercise program, and I now briefly consider important aspects of that effort.

Training and Exercises

PACOM plans its usual robust schedule of U.S.-only, bilateral and multilateral exercises in 2005, including at new or nontraditional locations. Importantly, because it serves to reiterate the National Defense Strategy's emphasis on alliance building, the predominance of major PACOM exercises scheduled for 2005 are with U.S. allies in the region. For example, the *Balikatan* series with the Philippines is designed to increase counter-terrorism capability. *Cobra Gold* in Thailand is designed to improve joint and multilateral capabilities, primarily with allies and coalition partners. *Talisman Saber* is a bilateral U.S.-Australia Exercise. *Ulchi Focus Lens* brings together the U.S. and ROK militaries and *Keen Sword* is a U.S.-Japan bilateral exercise.²³ Additionally, there are many smaller scale training events held throughout the region, all of which are projected to go forward this year. Thailand alone will participate in more than forty exercises with PACOM this year.²⁴ The smaller scale exercises become even more important after posture realignment when U.S. forces will be located in different places throughout the region, and the smaller exercises are the means to conduct training at new cooperative security locations.

However, the training and exercise plan faces two important challenges. First, multilateral exercises are the real core of PACOM security cooperation programs in the region. Yet, these exercises are most at risk not to be conducted when unforecast events, such as a tsunami, create resource drains that force the cancellation of these long-scheduled events. The best example (but not the only one) is the downsizing of the May 2005 *Cobra Gold* exercise to a quarter of its 2004 scope – at least in numbers of participants.²⁵ Theater-level premier exercises can still become bill payers for unanticipated “response” missions, even when, as in this case, the exercises are focused on applying lessons learned from recent real-world situations to future crises.

The second major challenge relates to China. The Second Bush Administration will likely continue its close scrutiny of Department of Defense interaction with China's People's Liberation Army. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2000 requires the Secretary of Defense to avoid contact with China's military in 12 areas in which inappropriate exposure of U.S. forces could lead to an enhancement in China's military capabilities.²⁶ For the most part, the United States has not sought to impose American constraints regarding military-to-military relations with China onto other countries. However, it has been difficult on those occasions when another country, usually an exercise co-host with PACOM, has sought to invite Chinese observers in the interest of increased regional transparency, and the United States has denied

²³ U.S. Pacific Command Exercise Schedule for 2005, at <http://131.84.1.28/ops/exerlist.shtml>

²⁴ See U.S. Department of State background note on Thailand. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2814.htm>

²⁵ “War Games focus on Tsunami Relief” *The Courier-Mail*, May 2, 2005 at <http://www.pacom.mil/articles/articles2005/050502story4.shtml>.

²⁶ Section 1201, “Limitations on Military-to-Military Exchanges and Contacts with Chinese Liberation Army” Public Law 106-65 (National Defense Authorization Act of 2000), at <http://www.fas.org/asmp/resources/govern/s1059-106-pl.htm>

Chinese permission to participate. Regional partners, not constrained by the same types of domestic legislation as the United States, often have different views on how one should manage the rise of the next superpower, and this has created some tension.

China

Indeed, a consideration of China in the formulation of U.S. defense policy in Asia is both unavoidable and of much greater import than merely how the two conduct military-to-military relations. At its core, the U.S. position seeks to “manage China’s rise” in ways that preserve U.S. preeminence in Asia without fundamental great power confrontation. Yet Beijing’s goals, including becoming at least a “regional hegemon,” are not always congruent with U.S. aims.

As a result, the Washington has adopted a hedging strategy regarding China. Reflecting the approach of the September 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy (the United States welcomes a strong and prosperous China, but China has important decisions to make regarding which path it will take in integrating into the world scene) the National Defense Strategy is likewise ambiguous when discussing China’s future, in several ways. First, the NDS avoids taking a stand on whether China is an adversary or a partner by simply characterizing the PRC as a “Key State.” In so doing, the NDS preserves the possibility of a hopeful outcome, but also indicates the strong possibility that key states, like China, could become rivals, even enemies, should they choose to engage in military competition with the United States. Second, the NDS notes that while the United States. “will have no global peer, we will have competitors and enemies,” at once refuting the assertion that China will become a near-term strategic competitor while at the same time retaining an understanding that Beijing may develop capacities that put at risk U.S. goals and capabilities. Finally, the NDS makes note of divided international perspectives with regard to certain threats when it says that “(i)nternationally—even among our closest partners—threats will be perceived differently, and consensus may be difficult to achieve.”²⁷ Indeed, how to manage China’s rise is viewed quite differently, even among allies from the capitals of Europe to Canberra.

Trends and Implications

Response

DoD has placed tremendous emphasis on its ability to *respond* to crises and this trend is likely to continue to grow in importance, as a result of several factors. First, the United States has proven it has the will to commit resources against this role. The successful demonstration of U.S. response to the tsunami – and the goodwill that response generated – increases the likelihood of similar interventions in the future (although we should note the risk in responding to a tsunami is vastly different from a response to a military crisis.) Secondly, the United States is focused on increasing its response capacity, on both a capabilities and posture basis. It is doing so by garnering increasing speed and agility of its forces; increasing the concentration of forces in key locations throughout the region and on its borders in both home-based and rotational capacity – particularly true in Guam which will have three attack subs, rotational SSGN presence, a bomber and stealth fighter-bomber capabilities and rotational fighters – and

²⁷ *National Defense Strategy*, pp 4-5.

improving access across the region to enable quicker reaction times. Moreover, aspects of the enhanced U.S. global reach capability have application for crisis response that is non-military. These include: increased numbers of strategic lift (co-located with Stryker units to enhance deployability of those multifaceted systems to include non-war use of force), advanced Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities to bring to bear on any regional crisis. Finally, the U.S. has a near-unilateral ability to decide to act, and this is not only limited to the use of force.

While the speed of response can be enormously useful in a fast developing scenario as in an anti-access effort in the Taiwan Strait, an excessive focus on response can have negative implications as well. Response and subsequent withdrawal can create impressions that the U.S. is less than fully committed to the region all of the time. Response and withdrawal also can create vacuums for others, such as China, to fill.

Alliance Development

The United States is committed to strengthening the viability of its five key Asian alliances at the same time as it desires to develop new relationships and locations. A key indicator in how that proceeds will be the ease with which U.S. defense posture decisions are implemented within the alliance states. Foremost among these alliance relationships is the U.S.-Japan alliance. As mentioned earlier, reducing the burden on Japanese society of U.S. forces stationed in the country is important. However, of even greater importance is how the alliance evolves to become a force for regional peace and stability. In this respect, the Joint Statement of February 19, 2005 goes a long way in asserting an appropriate regional role for Japan, operating in tandem with the United States.

Alliance maintenance in NE Asia also might be a key factor in determining the configuration of U.S. forces in SE Asia in the future. Were relations with key Northeast Asia partners to deteriorate significantly, this could in turn place pressure on SE Asia to accommodate troops that were previously based in the North.

New types of presence.

DoD has placed great emphasis on the adjustment of forces around the region, and has argued that any diminution of end strength will be compensated by increased capabilities.

Unfortunately, the usual examples of increased capability cited by DoD are kinetic warfighting capabilities that either deter or defeat potential enemies. Little mention is made of the capability to shape local situations before crises occur that can only come from an enduring on-the-ground U.S. presence and mutual commitment to resolving issues of concern within the region.

Moreover, the increased use of rotational forces to send U.S. policy messages to entities within the region risks being misunderstood in very fundamental ways. Two examples help make this point. First, in late February 2004, the rotational deployment of bombers to Guam was

interpreted variously as messages: 1) to North Korea to avoid provocative action; 2) to China to avoid meddling in the March 20, 2004 Taiwan Presidential election; and 3) to Taiwan that the U.S. was on its side. Second, the Summer Pulse 04 demonstration of the new U.S. Navy ability to surge carriers throughout the world as part of the Fleet Response Plan was dramatically misunderstood by China to be a containment measure of Beijing.

Message

DoD has undertaken extraordinary efforts to convey its message and intent in Asia, both to inform and reassure regional entities. To the degree the message has not been accepted ought not only be traced to an ineffective public relations effort on the part of the United States. In some cases, the message itself has not been well-received, perhaps because the topics of such efforts appear skewed to U.S. priorities (such as potentially excessive emphasis on the War on Terror, briefings on proposed realigned posture and unfortunately perhaps far too little on the priorities of Asian partners.)

Where the non-acceptance of the U.S. message is a result of U.S. inattention to the critical regional dynamics – one thinks particularly of Southeast Asia here – the Washington must do better or risk fundamental strategic and structural change that begins to exclude the United States. In many respects this trend reflects the urgency with which Washington is addressing the tasks at hand, particularly WOT. However, over time U.S. single-minded focus on WOT risks regional partners turning a deaf ear to U.S. concerns, thereby increasing opportunities for China to make substantive in-roads.

War on Terror

Although Admiral Fallon stated that the War on Terror is PACOM's first priority, he went on to judge that the effort in Pacific Command is primarily one in which police and intelligence entities lead the effort. Additionally, PACOM is quite involved in counter-terror training, especially with the Philippines, but elsewhere as well. Moreover, PACOM's Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) has important multi-lateral aspects of counter-terror operations. These efforts are all likely to continue in the immediate future.

Notwithstanding that WOT is PACOM's "first priority," this would appear to be as much a function of PACOM supporting the national effort – indeed, Admiral Fallon noted that PACOM has sent more than 50,000 troops to support Central Command operations in Afghanistan and Iraq – as it would reflect a response to fundamental structural change within the Asia-Pacific. Islamic terrorism in Asia, four years into the WOT, would appear to be of much less consequence to DoD than North Korean nukes, crisis in the Taiwan Strait, and the overall rise of China.

Conclusion

Evolving U.S. defense policy, posture and presence will have important ramifications for the United States in the Asia-Pacific. While the United States will have a much more capable and agile force to commit to military contingencies, the reduced and potentially more distant U.S.

forces in the region may lead to a reduction in U.S. forces' ability to help shape situations before they become full-blown crises. China's emerging role will bear close attention, even as Washington hedges its strategy about how to shape China's rise.