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A Heavy Lift: Making Collective Deterrence and Defense Work in the Indo-Pacific

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About this report

Pacific Forum, with support from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) organized the inaugural Track 2 Defense and Deterrence Dialogue on February 2-3, 2023. Strategic thinkers from the United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, including scholars, policy experts, and retired military and government officials, participated in the dialogue. This report contains the general summary of the discussions.

The recommendations contained in this report, unless otherwise specifically noted, were generated by the discussions as interpreted by the Principal Investigators. This is not a consensus document. All participants attended in their private capacity.

The statements made and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Pacific Forum, the project sponsors, or the dialogue participants' respective organizations and affiliations. For questions, please email david@pacforum.org and brad@pacforum.org.

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Introduction

The Indo-Pacific security architecture is undergoing fundamental transformation to address rising challenges, most notably those posed by an increasingly confident, assertive, and capable China.

Pacific Forum has started a multi-year unofficial dialogue with experts and officials from the United States and key allies and partners to share views of this evolving regional security environment and identify common interests and concerns as well as areas of divergence. The inaugural Pacific Forum Defense and Deterrence Dialogue, which included participants from the United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, took place in Tokyo on February 2-3, 2023. It was run at the Track 2 level, although diplomatic officials and military officers from each country also attended as observers.

Pacific Forum's goal is to identify ways to shape this evolution to ensure that it meets U.S. national security needs, particularly integrated deterrence of, and defense against, regional adversaries—with China as the foremost concern. Responses to these changes have taken several forms. Bilateral alliances are being modernized. Other security relationships are being strengthened, such as those between Japan and Australia and Japan and the United Kingdom. There is also talk of new coordination among Five Eyes and other partners. In other cases, new initiatives have been launched, such as the Australia-United Kingdom-United States "enhanced trilateral security partnership" (AUKUS) or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. Recent developments, such as the election of conservative Yoon Suk-yeol as president in South Korea, are hopeful signs of the revitalization of currently moribund defense and security arrangements, notably U.S.-Japan-South Korea cooperation. There is also reportedly talk of renewed interest in the Trilateral Security Dialogue that includes the United States, Australia, and Japan.

All these initiatives are designed to better compete with, deter, and, if necessary, defend against adversaries determined to rewrite the regional order in ways that align with their interests.

While the notion of an Asian equivalent to NATO is out of sync with regional needs (and there is broad recognition of that fact among key allies), current

momentum could herald the emergence of an Indo-Pacific defense community reminiscent of the one created by trans-Atlantic nations after the Second World War. That community was forged to defend against the Soviet Union. Today, the nascent group in the Indo-Pacific is focused on China, although it is not the only threat. Understanding how regional governments see and rank those diverse threats is a critical step in ensuring that the new arrangements are most effective. One thing is certain: the current situation—in which there is no coordination mechanism among the existing and emerging arrangements—is not tenable in view of the mounting China challenge.

To succeed, this process must be nurtured. The United States must better understand the forces at play and the views driving national action, and it must work to ensure that those changes are effective to counter China and other challenges. Work is needed to understand how all these pieces fit together in a coherent regional deterrence and defense architecture, particularly to deal with strategic conflict. This is not easy. The above-mentioned initiatives and relationships are new and evolving. It is difficult to appreciate each on its own, much less the overlap between them, and their convergences and divergences. Plus, in some cases, governments are also focused on other ways to deter. DTRA's chief concern is the warfighter, who must be prepared to address a range of threats that extends from "strategic" military problems (including those related to nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, and other domains) to gray zone issues, but some regional initiatives also address other issues, notably climate change, vaccine diplomacy, and emerging technologies. It is critical that the United States understand how allies and partners see this menu of items and their goals and priorities, even as the focus of our proposed effort is strengthening regional deterrence and defense. Plainly, a cumulative, comparative assessment is critical because effective deterrence and defense demand a comprehensive analysis and there needs to be shared understanding of how these mechanisms can be coordinated to ensure that needs are met and that participating governments maximize and make the most efficient contributions.

From a U.S. perspective, building a collective deterrence and defense architecture in the Indo-Pacific is urgent and the only realistic way to compete

effectively against China. As a landmark report from the U.S. Studies Centre at the University of Sydney has found, “a strategy of collective defense is fast becoming necessary as a way of offsetting shortfalls in America’s regional military power and holding the line against rising Chinese strength.”¹

Failure to build an effective Indo-Pacific deterrence and defense architecture would shift the regional balance of forces to the detriment of the United States as it addresses the China challenge.

Findings Summary

The United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom are in general agreement on the threats they are facing in the Indo-Pacific—they agree that China is the pacing challenge and trying to rewrite the regional order in its image—and on the need to build collective deterrence and defense to address these threats. They do not see these threats the same way, however. Building collective deterrence and defense, therefore, will be a heavy lift because the five countries are not in alignment about how it should be done.

Most of those differences reflect basic and, in most cases, immutable factors. Geography renders some countries more susceptible to particular threats. For example, North Korea is a more immediate threat to South Korea than it is to Australia. The potential spillover of a Taiwan crisis into Japan’s territory is far more likely than into the United Kingdom’s. Japan’s historically limited military capabilities have encouraged alternative methods of crisis prevention and resolution, and Tokyo’s laws and constitution have made it difficult for Japanese to act decisively. For all the attention to recent changes in laws and budgets, there remains a reluctance to use military instruments of power that is poorly understood. Even countries without those legal and constitutional restraints still cannot muster the military forces to address some contingencies. Simply put, priorities and capabilities differ and, in a crisis, it will be difficult to ensure that all needs are met.

While it is essential that the United States and its allies reconcile those divergences and ensure that these countries are working together most efficiently to respond to crises and avoid excessive redundancy,

there is no mechanism to do so. Creating such a mechanism would allow participating governments to better understand various perspectives and priorities and identify the capabilities that each country and each structure - alliances, partnerships, or other multilateral devices - can contribute to deterrence and defense. This is important given the diversity of tools that are available and critical given the probability that any crisis will be complex, demanding simultaneous responses from the various governments to various situations.

New divisions of labor are required as governments develop new capabilities, and new communications mechanisms are needed to guarantee and efficient responses to crises and to deconflict those responses. Efforts to address these problems face two important dilemmas. First, there is the issue of U.S. leadership. The United States must move forcefully enough to ensure effective collective action without impeding allies’ initiative. At the same time, the United States cannot be so laissez-faire as to nurture doubts about its commitment. Finding the right balance is difficult yet critical. Second, there is a tension between the size and effectiveness of any coalition responding to a crisis. In theory, the United States should seek to forge the largest possible coalition of forces. In practice, however, it should also be aware of reductions in effectiveness resulting from a group that is too large and incoherent. In other words, bigger is not necessarily better.

Methodology

The dialogue included representatives from the United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom because they are the United States’ most militarily capable (and most enthusiastic) allies and partners and because Washington is most active, aligned, and integrated with them. These five countries, as mentioned, have significant deterrence and defense capabilities and are leading security cooperation within the Indo-Pacific. In some cases, they are even working together on initiatives that do not include the United States. In other cases, their cooperation does not align with traditional notions of deterrence, even though their intent is to deter.

The intent of the inaugural dialogue was threefold: 1) bring together scholars and experts from like-minded

¹ Ashley Townshend and Brendan Thomas-Noone with Matilda Steward, “Averting Crisis: American Strategy, Military Spending and Collective

Defence in the Indo-Pacific,” United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, August 2019, p. 61.

countries to focus on key, cutting-edge deterrence and defense topics relevant to the Indo-Pacific; 2) explore ways to strengthen cooperation among these countries on these topics to build the regional security architecture and, in particular, to deter strategic conflict with China; and 3) create a “core group” of thinkers to influence and rally scholars and experts from other countries that may be less militarily capable, less active, less aligned, and less integrated. In that spirit, the representatives from the five participating countries included primarily national security and deterrence scholars as well as former government officials, notably from defense or the military. The dialogue also included some “China hands” to help inform the group about Chinese strategic behavior and what to expect in certain situations.

The methodological approach is thus one of concentric circles. The inaugural dialogue focused on the “inner circle” composed of these particularly capable and engaged U.S. partners who share an interest in improving Indo-Pacific security and enhancing deterrence of, and defense against, China. That inner circle, in turn, will work to help bring together and influence less militarily capable, less engaged countries from the “outer circles.” Further deepening the ties between inner-circle countries is essential; significantly, it emerged as a key theme of the dialogue. However, expanding the pool of participating countries emerged as an even greater priority.

To provide analysis on a topic as broad as building an Indo-Pacific security architecture to strengthen deterrence of, and defense against, China, it was critical to ensure that the dialogue focused on a specific set of issues. To that end, the dialogue team opted to focus the inaugural round on discussing how each of the five participating country views the ends, ways, and means of deterrence and defense. Plainly, the dialogue looked at what each of the five participating countries wants to achieve in the deterrence and defense space vis-à-vis China and others, and what its priorities are; in that session, participants thus discussed “the ends” of deterrence and defense. The dialogue also explored how each of the five participating country is “practicing” deterrence vis-à-vis China and others, both individually and collectively, through bilateral alliances, trilateral mechanisms, or other mechanisms; here, participants discussed “the ways” of deterrence and defense). Finally, the dialogue

examined the various tools, capabilities, or resources required to “do” deterrence and defense vis-à-vis China and others; during that session, participants discussed “the means” of deterrence and defense). This approach reflects decades of work by the principle investigators with the security establishments of those countries, and intense study of and familiarity with their national defense bureaucracies. We drew on that history and relationships with key individuals in each country to devise an agenda that illuminated the issues, concerns and approaches in each country and identify participants that would provide insight into how those governments address those problems.

The dialogue comprised of plenary meeting sessions and a scenario-based exercise. The meeting sessions asked participants to make a comparative assessment of the “problem” to deter and defend against; an

analysis of deterrence and defense needs (the “response”); and an examination of the gaps that need to be closed between the requirements for deterrence and defense and the current situation. The scenario-based exercise included a multidimensional contingency, one with simultaneous crises across the Indo-Pacific that have different impacts on the five participating countries. Two keynote speakers, a senior U.S. official and a senior Japanese official, launched the dialogue by providing an overview of U.S. and Japanese policy and strategy in the Indo-Pacific and the role and place of deterrence and defense questions in this context.

Analysis

Discussing Collective Deterrence and Defense

Meeting sessions revealed that the United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom largely agree on the nature of the threat—that China is committed to rewriting the regional security order in a way that benefits its interests. They also agree that the regional balance of power, both at the conventional and nuclear levels, is trending in the wrong direction.

In U.S. strategic documents, China is identified as “the pacing challenge.” This terminology signals that the “China challenge” will guide many U.S. foreign policy decisions. Yet it also implies that China is not as immediate or near-term for the United States as

other challenges, one in particular: dealing with Russian aggression in Europe is a more immediate problem. The China challenge is seen as more immediate for some (e.g., Japan, Australia, or the United States) than for others (South Korea or the United Kingdom; while the former's focus is North Korea, the latter's is Russia). Still, there is general agreement among the United States and the four allies that China is "a problem," and it is thus not surprising that these five countries are all developing and honing national and multilateral capabilities to respond to that problem.

In addition to expanding the number of regional countries that appreciate the magnitude of the China challenge, work should focus on integrated deterrence and defense among the regional countries that do see eye-to-eye on this challenge, as is the case of the five participating countries of this dialogue. Significantly, integrated deterrence and defense among them is inhibited by divergent national priorities. Those differences should not be a surprise: geography renders some dangers closer and thus more immediate than others. The "intimacy" of relationships also differs, which has an impact on national strategic calculations. Also problematic is that there is no mechanism, at present, to coordinate national, bilateral, and multilateral positions and responses to crises in the Indo-Pacific; occasional talks about establishing an Asian equivalent to NATO, which suggest applying European solutions to Asian problems, are unlikely to be successful. The distinct status of Taiwan poses a final problem. The island is China's top concern, the one that Beijing will prioritize over any other contingency in the Indo-Pacific and it is thus the one challenge that most threatens to destabilize the regional status quo and could prompt a kinetic confrontation with the United States and its allies. Yet, none of the five countries represented here afford it diplomatic recognition (only 12 countries do), which makes diplomatic engagement and coordination with its military difficult and burdensome. In other words, when the United States has to address one of its and the region's primary security concerns, it does so with constraints that narrow the bandwidth for communication and reduce opportunities for effective military cooperation and capacity building; the United States and its allies must prepare for crisis through a filter.

In thinking more deeply about the necessary responses—deterrence and defense needs—as well as

ways to "close the gaps" between these needs and the current situation, a recurring theme was that the United States should place the Indo-Pacific at the center of its foreign policy and rebuild its military forces to make them fit for purpose, especially to deal with contingencies at the higher end of the conflict spectrum. In addition to stressing that U.S. primacy is now contested, the four allies questioned whether the United

States has—or, given current trends, will continue to have—a military capable of addressing the China challenge. A related problem is that U.S. allies inevitably view the United States as an "outside power" in the Indo-Pacific. From their perspective the United States is in the theater by choice, not by geography, which weighs on allies' policy and responses. As a result, they are bound to worry constantly about the possibility of the United States "leaving" the region.

The four allies, meanwhile, recognized that they should do more on their own while simultaneously moving toward a regional system of cooperative, if not collective, defense; there was also recognition that the focus should be strategic deterrence, which of late has been neglected. A key theme was that working together could - would - help shift the balance of power in a favorable direction. But such cooperation, much less integration, is challenging given the diversity of interests, capabilities, and mechanisms that exist to address these problems, as well as the restrictions or limits that each government has when dealing with them.

These challenges are compounded by the differences in priorities that exist between the United States and its four allies, as well as among the four allies; for example, there are differences in the readiness to disengage from China, which is a product of business relationships; there are also different approaches to problem solving that reflect the balance of military and diplomatic capabilities and preferences. Reducing, if not eliminating, those differences is a prerequisite to success, as is increasing capabilities among allies and modernizing those of the United States. An associated problem is that China constantly seeks to identify seams in the thinking and responses of the United States and its allies and exploit them to its advantage, especially in a crisis. China also exploits gaps between law enforcement and military responsibilities and mandates: it does not hesitate to use its Coast Guards to achieve

military objectives, for instance, complicating how the United States and its allies can respond.

Also critical is a sound division of labor and proper coordination and cooperation, including in sensitive areas that have so far been out of reach, even in an alliance context. For example, the United States has been reluctant to share its most advanced technologies even with allies because of fears that secrets will not be protected. (This issue continues to bedevil the technology transfer that is at the core of the AUKUS enhanced security partnership.) Japan's failure to adopt information security legislation has inhibited information sharing with the United States; while there has been movement in this area in recent years, much more needs to be done to instill sufficient confidence to overcome this hurdle. In the case of Japan-South Korea cooperation, a vital leg of U.S.-Japan-South Korea cooperation, the historical legacies of imperial Japan's brutal occupation of the Korean Peninsula have effectively thwarted meaningful trilateral defense cooperation among those allies. Another problem is that neither the United States nor Australia, Japan, South Korea, or the United Kingdom know precisely what they want, can, or even should achieve by enhancing deterrence of, and defense against, China.

Practicing Collective Deterrence and Defense

During the scenario exploring national responses to a multi-dimensional crisis in the Indo-Pacific, participants were divided into national groups and asked to consider a series of simultaneous but geographically dispersed incidents:

- The discovery of Chinese fishing boats in Philippine territorial waters near Whitsun Reef;
- The landing of Chinese forces on Second Thomas Shoal and the seizure of Philippine marines stationed there;
- The planting of the Chinese flag by Chinese citizens on the Senkaku Islands;
- The seizure of Itu Aka by China's People's Liberation Army forces;
- The collision of U.S. Air Force surveillance aircraft with a PLA fighter as it observed a Chinese military exercise and the loss of the crew; and
- The seizure by North Korean forces of a South Korea-held island south of the

Northern Limit Line that demarcates the waters between the two countries.

Participants were asked to prioritize the incidents (based on which mattered most to them and thus what drove them to respond), identify their military responses to each, and identify what they would do in the absence of a military response.

The assessments and responses of the United States and its allies largely converged. All governments understood that the situation demanded shows of readiness and resolve by all concerned. Allies did, however, appear to expect U.S. leadership in each case and expressed some disquiet about their perception that the United States was slow to assume that role. The reality was that the United States was offering operational support for allies to lead and denied any hesitation about involvement. There was little concern for overstretch of U.S. and allied capabilities, although we did not dig deeply into the responses required.

That might emerge as a problem and should be a focus of future discussions. Clearly, however, a complex crisis of this nature would be difficult and challenging to manage and would require mechanisms for communication and coordination that do not currently exist.

Our discussions indicated a need to begin such communications now. It is imperative that the governments involved better understand the views of their counterparts, their ambitions, and restraints, especially when each national security bureaucracy is in the midst of great change. Old assumptions are being discarded.

Arguably, both Australia and Japan are transforming their security strategies while the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Korea are updating and modernizing their capabilities. Problems remain, however. For instance, Japanese decision-making continues to be hampered by profound legal issues: Tokyo will spend a considerable amount of time arguing over whether its laws allow Japanese forces to act in any given situation, which creates delays and coordination issues, and is incredibly problematic, especially when actions are needed urgently. While there is a need to dig deeper into the military responses of these governments in a crisis, there is also a need to bring other parties (notably the Philippines, Vietnam, or Thailand) into these discussions as they will play important roles too.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Finding: There is general agreement among the United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom regarding Chinese intentions, i.e., that Beijing seeks to rewrite the regional security order in its image. However, there are differences in assessing how far China will go to advance its interests and the priority partners assign to various interests—and thus how they will respond to contingencies, including red lines.

Recommendation: Work to understand each partner's positions and policies vis-à-vis China is in its infancy and should receive considerably more attention and focus. Of particular value would be to identify each partner's red lines when it comes to China, in both peacetime and during a crisis or an armed conflict.

Finding: The four U.S. allies participating in this dialogue are modernizing their security establishments, acquiring new military capabilities, and demonstrating a readiness to do more for national and collective defense. There is nonetheless a need to expand and deepen defense cooperation, notably in Southeast Asia and Europe, given the magnitude of the China challenge. At the same time, larger coalitions are not necessarily better.

Recommendation: The United States should seek to enlarge collective deterrence and defense in the Indo-Pacific as much as possible, but it should not do so at the expense of efficacy. At the most basic level, participating countries must be willing to bring concrete capabilities to the table or plug gaps in a U.S.-led coalition in other ways. Future research should delve into the specific capabilities that each ally could or should bring to bear in a given situation. The United States should resist enlisting countries that are unable to make material contributions; the latter should be the price of entry. Moreover, to maintain flexibility and coherence, especially in a crisis, it might be best to focus on countries most aligned with the United States. In other words, the United States should eschew cooperation for cooperation's sake and focus on efficacy.

Finding: There are no mechanisms to coordinate defense cooperation across alliances, the new partnerships among U.S. allies, or other security initiatives. Yet such mechanisms are important given

the growing capabilities in the region, and the defense establishments must anticipate simultaneous, multidimensional, and complex crises.

Recommendation: Neither the current situation—one with no mechanism—nor an Asian equivalent to NATO are good and viable solutions for the Indo-Pacific right now; dialogue participants concurred that problems in Asia will not be solved with solutions from Europe. Identifying collective solutions that would work should be a priority. The goal should be to link existing mechanisms in a way that maximizes coordination and cooperation efficiency.

Finding: Critical to effective deterrence and defense is a new division of labor among the United States and its allies. Neither knows what that new apportionment should be, nor how it should be decided. Yet failure to get clarity on this matter risks overstressing the United States and its partners. Given that China's primary focus in virtually any contingency in Asia would be Taiwan, it is vital that all participants understand the expectations placed upon them in a Taiwan contingency, i.e., the specific roles they would play, the responsibilities they would embrace, and the capabilities they would deploy and employ, individually or together. This is an area for future research.

Recommendation: The United States should find the right balance between continuing to lead while trusting and respecting allied choices and, provided there are guardrails, not fearing entrapment. Generally, that entails giving more freedom of action to allies, something that the United States has advocated in words but resisted in deeds. Empowering allies requires a cultural change in U.S. foreign policy because it entails, in effect, a loss of control. To help manage that change, there should be a study on the benefits, costs, and risks involved in the United States having "empowered allies."

Finding: There is a tension between efficiency—encouraging allies to do more "in their backyard"—and insisting on the "indivisibility of security," i.e., that a contingency somewhere has consequences everywhere and should therefore trigger some allied action.

Recommendation: The United States should encourage its allies to do more in geographic areas close to home (because they know them best and

have vested interests there) but make sure that they also retain a sense of global responsibility to avoid forcing Washington to act like the world's policeman. The more capable the allies, the broader role they should have in maintaining regional and global security orders. In that spirit, Australia and Japan stand out, and the United States should actively promote their actions.

Finding: Effective deterrence and defense is best done if the United States and its allies focus first on strategic integration and then follow with institutional and tactical integration. Moreover, while gray zone contingencies are a concern, the focus should be strategic deterrence, which has been neglected. Finally, effective deterrence and defense demands attention to—and similar coordination of—other forms of state behavior, particularly economic policy.

Recommendation: Adapting deterrence and defense to current and looming realities requires the pursuit of two goals: one that prioritizes the most serious dangers (a contingency at the strategic—even nuclear—level) and one that seeks to bring to bear all the instruments of national (and regional) power to address problems. Designing strategies to pursue these two goals most effectively and in a coordinated and integrated fashion should be a priority. A significant problem that merits more attention is the traditional and, arguably, artificial separation between military power and other forms of power.

Finding: Coast Guards play increasingly central roles in Indo-Pacific deterrence and defense, even though their primary focus is law enforcement. China, in particular, has exploited the legal gap between law enforcement and military responsibilities and mandates.

Recommendation: The United States and its allies should close that window of opportunity, build national capabilities, and improve coordination and cooperation among their coast guards.

Finding: In a crisis, China will do its best to identify seams in the thinking and responses of the United States and its allies and exploit them. China also benefits from advantages vis-à-vis the United States: there is an asymmetry of stakes and of geography in its favor.

Recommendation: To put China on the back foot, the United States and its allies should consider going beyond deterrence and defense (which is, by nature, reactive) and proactively exploit Chinese vulnerabilities. In a crisis, they should consider opening second fronts. Planning for such developments should happen now.

Finding: U.S. allies inevitably view the United States as an “outside power” in the Indo-Pacific. It is in the theater by choice, not by geography, which weighs on allies’ policy and responses. As a result, they are bound to worry constantly about the possibility of the United States “leaving” the region.

Recommendation: Washington should make every effort to weave its presence into the fabric of Indo-Pacific security to reassure allies of its commitment to the region and to acting decisively in the event of a contingency. The forward deployment of military hardware is a critical yet insufficient step in that direction. Non-military involvement would go a long way to reassure allies, notably in trade policy.

Finding: Australia has of late adapted its military posture to enhance national defense and advance collective deterrence and defense in the Indo-Pacific.

Recommendation: The United States should continue to encourage these developments and pursue defense industrial integration with Australia, which has been too limited and is frustrating Canberra. The United States should use AUKUS as a stepping stone to these efforts.

Finding: Japan is ready to play a bigger role in the provision of regional security and is improving its ability to do so. This evolution encounters no pushback in the region (except China). In a crisis, however, there is still profound—if not excessive—emphasis on legal issues.

Recommendation: The United States should continue to encourage Japan to play a more active role in security matters. Doing so involves less discussion of defense budgets and capability acquisition and more discussion of operationalizing deterrence and defense and response in a contingency.

Finding: Contrary to many reports, South Korea shares with the United States (and other allies)

concern about Chinese intentions. Its primary focus remains a Korean Peninsula contingency, however. Seoul is concerned about U.S. commitment to its defense in the case of a crisis, especially one in which U.S. forces address multiple contingencies.

Recommendation: While the United States should encourage South Korea to broaden its strategic outlook beyond the Korean Peninsula, it should stress that Seoul's focus in a Taiwan contingency should be to "hold the line" with North Korea, i.e., prevent Pyongyang from taking advantage of the situation by launching an attack; Seoul should be prepared to strengthen deterrence and defense in words and deeds as well as to fight if necessary.

Finding: The United Kingdom currently and for the foreseeable future has a limited role to play in an Indo-Pacific crisis, and such a role would focus on backfilling equipment and roles in other regions. Moreover, while the trajectory of U.K. policy indicates deeper involvement in the region's defense, it is not clear that its public has any appetite for active engagement.

Recommendation: The United States should explore ways the United Kingdom (or any other European country or countries) could best contribute to a contingency in the Indo-Pacific, either militarily or in other capacities, notably economically.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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