Negative Brief: Philippines

By Jonathan T. Helton

**Resolved: The United States Federal Government should considerably decrease its military commitments.**

The AFF case withdraws the U.S. from the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty because Pres. Duterte is unstable and dangerous and because he risks pulling the U.S. into a war with China. However, what the AFF fails to do is curtail Duterte’s dictatorial behavior. Instead, pulling out will only push the Philippines into China’s ever widening sphere of influence. This influence could be disastrous for U.S. interests in the South China Sea, since over 1/3 of global trade passes through that area. The Philippines serve as a critical point of contact in the sea, and the U.S. has no bases close enough to reach the area in a timely manner, in the event of a military crisis. The Philippines also benefit from the U.S. presence when it comes to battling terrorists. The Mutual Defense Treaty was key in ensuring that insurgents were pushed out of a siege a few years ago. Pulling out would further empower them.

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Negative: Philippines

NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Idealism can harm U.S. interests

Dr. Ghaidaa Hetou 2018 (researcher and academic focusing on security, foreign policy and political risk in the Middle East and North Africa; teaches at Rutgers Univ. and founder of iStrategic LLC, a political risk consulting company specializing in advising U.S. businesses in the Middle East & North Africa.) 27 Nov 2018 “Escaping the Idealism Trap” [https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2018/11/27/escaping-the-idealism-trap?rq=philippines](about:blank)

Good intentions among idealists who intend to expand freedoms and introduce democracy in other nations cannot justify the persistence of Idealism in U.S. foreign policy if the outcome is consistently incompatible with and downright harmful to U.S. national interests. While realism is gradually regaining ground among foreign policy strategists, the foreign policy establishment in the United States is unsure how to disassociate from its idealist/liberal orientation without losing its distinct and exceptional foreign policy character as a protector of human freedoms.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. Philippine people don’t see the harm

Citizens of the Philippines support military cooperation with the U.S.

Dr. Steven Rood 2012 (formerly The Asia Foundation’s country representative for the Philippines and Pacific Island Nations. In his concurrent role as regional advisor for Local Governance, he helped to build local government, decentralization, and municipal government programs throughout the region. Was professor of Political Science at the University of the Philippines College Baguio from 1981 - 1999.) 1 February 2012 “U.S. Military and the Philippines: What do Philippine Citizens Really Think?” [https://asiafoundation.org/2012/02/01/u-s-military-and-the-philippines-what-do-philippine-citizens-really-think/](about:blank)

This issue may be seen as controversial among the policy elite heard in the media or the halls of Congress. But for the average citizen of the Philippines, there is no controversy. The American forces are welcome. Consistently, Social Weather Stations data from national probability sample surveys show that the majority feels that the Philippines benefits from military cooperation with the United States. Asked what country is the most reliable ally of the Philippines, some 80 percent name the United States, with no other country even reaching double digits. Fifty-nine percent say that it is important to maintain a close alliance with the United States, while only 15 percent disagree.

SOLVENCY

1. China & Russia

Duterte: I’ll buy weapons elsewhere – China & Russia

Wade Shepard 2016 (journalist; featured in, interviewed by, or appeared on CNBC Squawk Box, CBC The Current, Forbes.com, VICE, NPR Morning Edition, and BBC World.) 11 October 2016 “Is The U.S. Pushing Yet Another Country Into Closer Ties With China?” [https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2016/10/11/is-the-u-s-pushing-the-philippines-into-closer-ties-with-china/#51e9cfe01706](about:blank#51e9cfe01706)

"If you don't want to sell arms, I'll go to Russia. I sent the generals to Russia and Russia said 'do not worry, we have everything you need, we'll give it to you.' And as for China, they said 'just come over and sign and everything will be delivered,'" was one of Duterte's much-quoted statements.

2. Human rights abuse

Ditching Duterte will do nothing to improve human rights

Ely Ratner 2017 (Maurice R. Greenberg senior fellow in China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. From 2015-2017, he served as deputy national security adviser to Vice President Joe Biden.) 3 May 2017 “Why Trump Was Right to Invite Duterte to the White House” <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/05/03/trump-invite-duterte-white-house-philippines-215095>

There’s a tendency to attribute Trump’s cozy conversations with brutish leaders to his own authoritarian instincts. Yet even if not reflected in the controversial public readout, the president’s discussion with Duterte resulted from careful deliberations between the National Security Council and the State Department. The reason is that while Duterte’s bloody campaign is unquestionably deplorable, it’s not at all clear that a U.S. policy predicated only on pressure and punishment will solve the problem. The U.S.-Philippines relationship is currently adrift, caught in a downward spiral: Duterte commits human rights abuses and makes outrageous statements, prompting U.S. disengagement and criticism, which only further strengthens Duterte’s disdain for the United States. If he lacked alternatives, U.S. detachment might compel him back. But my-way-or-the-highway U.S. diplomacy doesn’t work when that highway leads directly to Beijing.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Philippine alignment with China

Link: Cross-apply Solvency-1.

Duterte will turn to China if the US

Link: Growing Chinese security role in the Philippines, including arms transfers

Dr. Prashanth Parameswaran 2017 (Senior Editor at The Diplomat. PhD and MA in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts Univ) 5 October 2017 “What’s in the New China Military Aid to the Philippines?” [Brackets added] [https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/whats-in-the-new-china-military-aid-to-the-philippines/](about:blank)

China’s growing security role in the Philippines is a storyline that we will likely continue to see in the coming months. [Chinese Ambassador] Zhao [Jianhua] was keen to point out that the Chinese government was already preparing to transfer a third batch of military assistance to Manila. And China, Philippine defense officials say, has also been pushing for more robust forms of security cooperation that have yet to be realized.

Example: China gave the Philippines three million rounds of ammo

Dr. Prashanth Parameswaran 2017 (Senior Editor at The Diplomat. PhD and MA in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts Univ) 5 October 2017 “What’s in the New China Military Aid to the Philippines?” [Brackets added] [https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/whats-in-the-new-china-military-aid-to-the-philippines/](about:blank)

On October 5, Beijing delivered a second batch of equipment in a handover ceremony held in Camp Aguinaldo and attended by Zhao as well as Philippine defense officials including Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and AFP Chief of Staff General Eduardo Ano. The assistance included 3,000 units of rifles, 3,000,000 rounds of assorted ammunition, and 30 sniper cones. Most of the rifles will be turned over to the Special Action Force (SAF) of the Philippine National Police (PNP), while the scopes will remain with the AFP.

Brink: US/Philippines alliance is on the brink. They’re losing confidence in the US, see Chinese power as inevitable

Prof. Hal Brands 2019 (*Bloomberg columnist and a professor at Johns Hopkins University*) 23 Sept 2019 “A Filipino battleground in China-U.S. cool war” <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2019/09/23/commentary/world-commentary/filipino-battleground-china-u-s-cool-war/#.XZEDpkZKhPY>

To some extent, then, this rough period may simply reflect bad luck and the vagaries of democratic politics. Yet this is not the whole story; the shakiness of the alliance is not just a matter of personality. It also reflects how greatly the regional balance of power is shifting — and that Duterte knows it. He and others are losing confidence in America’s ability to help the Philippines defend its interests. This crisis of confidence has been building for years, even when bilateral cooperation was still improving. In 2012, the U.S. failed to stop China from wresting control of Scarborough Shoal, a ring of reefs less than 320 kilometers from the main Philippine island of Luzon. From 2013 to 2015, the U.S. did little to prevent China from building and militarizing artificial islands in the South China Sea. Then, after Washington encouraged Manila to take its grievances to The Hague, it imposed no real consequences when China ignored the tribunal’s ruling. President Donald Trump later pulled the U.S. out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, fueling doubts about America’s willingness to compete economically with Beijing. And although the Trump administration has carried out numerous freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, it has offered no solutions to Beijing’s creeping dominance of that waterway. All the while, America’s military advantage has been eroding. Officials in the Philippines can read publicly available reports indicating that the U.S. would be hard-pressed to defend Taiwan right now. They can imagine what this might mean for the Philippines in the future. “America has lost” the struggle for influence in the Asia-Pacific, Duterte said in 2016. If the U.S. can’t check China’s bid for dominance, why should the Philippines take a hard line against Beijing?

Brink: Duterte on the brink of aligning with China or the US. He threatens to cut ties with US and partner with China, but also wants US help pushing back against China

Richard J. Heydarian 2018 (Asia-based academic, currently a Research Fellow at National Chengchi University (Taiwan)) 9 Nov 2018 “MANILA QUIETLY PIVOTS BACK TO THE UNITED STATES” <https://amti.csis.org/manila-quietly-pivots-back-to-the-united-states/>

On the surface, Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte is overseeing a new [“golden age](about:blank)” in bilateral relations with China, often going the extra mile to please his new partner in Beijing. Never shy of expressing [his “love”](about:blank) for the Chinese leadership, Duterte has repeatedly downplayed, and even threatened [to sever](about:blank), the Philippine-U.S. alliance in order to reassure Beijing of the sustainability of the ongoing rapprochement between the two neighbors. Beyond the warming diplomatic exchanges with Beijing, however, Manila is tacitly reviving security cooperation with Washington, its sole treaty ally, through [expanded joint military exercises](about:blank) and overall deepening defense cooperation. The Southeast Asian country’s pivot back to the United States is driven by its lingering concerns over China’s [creeping intrusion](about:blank) into Philippine-claimed waters, deepening frustration [over a lack of](about:blank)follow-through on pledged Chinese investments, and growing confidence in the resolve of the United States and its key allies to draw a firm line in the South China Sea.  
**Concerted Pushback**  
Although there are lingering concerns over the potential fallout from rising Sino-American tensions, smaller Asian countries such as the Philippines have quietly welcomed a more robust pushback against China.

Brink: US on the brink of losing East Asia hegemony to China

Prof. Jennifer Lind 2018 (associate professor of government at Dartmouth Univ.) “Life in China’s Asia What Regional Hegemony Would Look Like” <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-02-13/life-chinas-asia>

For now, the United States remains the dominant power in East Asia, but China is quickly closing the gap. Although an economic crisis or domestic political turmoil could [derail China’s rise](about:blank), if current trends continue, China will before long [supplant the United States](about:blank) as the region’s economic, military, and political hegemon.

Link & Brink: Philippines is critical to determining outcome of US/China competition for hegemony

Richard Heydarian 2018 (Manila-based academic and columnist; has written for the world’s leading publications on Asian geopolitics, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian, and Foreign Affairs) 28 Nov 2018 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/11/28/chinas-premature-bid-for-hegemony-in-southeast-asia/>

Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong underscored the stark implications of rising Sino-American tensions for smaller regional states, which [may eventually](about:blank) be forced to “to take sides,” even if not having to do so is “very desirable.” As a regional swing state and an American treaty ally, the Philippines has emerged as a critical node in the ongoing Sino-American competition for regional primacy.

Link: China wants Asia hegemony, wants to replace U.S. in the region

Prof. Oriana Mastro 2019 (Assistant Professor of Security Studies at Georgetown Univ) “The Stealth Superpower” <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/china-plan-rule-asia> Jan/Feb 2019

China has no interest in establishing a web of global alliances, sustaining a far-flung global military presence, sending troops thousands of miles from its borders, leading international institutions that would constrain its own behavior, or spreading its system of government abroad. But to focus on this reluctance, and the reassuring Chinese statements reflecting it, [is a mistake](about:blank). Although China does not want to usurp the United States’ position as the leader of a global order, its actual aim is nearly as consequential. In the Indo-Pacific region, China wants complete dominance; it wants to force the United States out and become the region’s unchallenged political, economic, and military hegemon. And globally, even though it is happy to leave the United States in the driver’s seat, it wants to be powerful enough to counter Washington when needed.

Link: China gaining Asian regional hegemony leads to gaining global hegemony, replacing USA

Min-Hyung Kim 2019 (Department of Political Science and International Relations, Kyung Hee University, South Korea) 4 Feb 2019 “A real driver of US–China trade conflict: The Sino–US competition for global hegemony and its implications for the future” <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ITPD-02-2019-003/full/html>

Although China repeatedly claims that it does not seek to replace US hegemony in the world, its behavior revealed by the initiatives of the BRI, the AIIB and Made in China 2015 illustrates that its ultimate goal is to be a global hegemon. This is not surprising because all the rising powers in history invariably sought to first dominate the region they are situated ([Mearsheimer, 2011, 2014](about:blank#ref031%20ref032)) and expand their power globally ([Gilpin, 1981](about:blank#ref012)).

Link: The Philippines are the lynchpin for U.S. regional goals

Ely Ratner 2017 (senior fellow in China studies at Council on Foreign Relations;former deputy national security adviser to Vice President Joe Biden.) 3 May 2017 “Why Trump Was Right to Invite Duterte to the White House” <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/05/03/trump-invite-duterte-white-house-philippines-215095>

The Philippines isn’t the first country in Southeast Asia to begin sliding into China’s orbit, but it is by far the most consequential for the United States. Despite Duterte’s transgressions, the Philippines remains a linchpin for U.S. regional strategy as a thriving democracy, the only treaty ally surrounding the South China Sea, and, until recently, a critical voice for international law and in regional institutions. In fact, America’s vision of an open and inclusive regional order will be difficult to realize without the Philippines on board. Put another way, further deterioration of the U.S.-Philippines relationship will not only undermine America’s position in Southeast Asia, it would likely usher in a China-led sub-region void of institutions and incentives to advance U.S. values.

Impact: World peace & prosperity at risk without US influence. US hegemony is key to global peace & prosperity

Capt. M. V. Prato 2009 (United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Marine Corps University) “The Need for American Hegemony” <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a508040.pdf>

The world witnessed a vast shift in the polarity of geopolitics after the Cold War. The United States became the world’s greatest hegemon with an unequalled ability to globally project cultural, political, economic, and military power in a manner not seen since the days of the Roman Empire. Coined the “unipolar moment” by syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, the disparity of power between the U.S. and all other nations allows the U.S. to influence the world for the mutual benefit of all responsible states. Unfortunately, the United States is increasingly forced to act unilaterally as a result of both foreign and domestic resentment to U.S. dominance and the rise of liberal internationalism. The United States must exercise benevolent global hegemony, unilaterally if necessary, to ensure its security and maintain global peace and prosperity.

2. South China Sea Conflict

Link: China is becoming more aggressive

Gregory Poling and Conor Cronin 2018 (Poling is director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative and a fellow with the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. He oversees research on U.S. foreign policy in the Asia Pacific. Cronin is a research associate with the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative and was previously a research associate with the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.) 17 May 2018 “THE DANGERS OF ALLOWING U.S.-PHILIPPINE DEFENSE COOPERATION TO LANGUISH” [https://warontherocks.com/2018/05/the-dangers-of-allowing-u-s-philippine-defense-cooperation-to-languish/](about:blank)

Changes to the regional security environment in the four years since EDCA was signed have made Article 1 of the agreement more prescient than negotiators intended. Without robust implementation, both sides will find it increasingly difficult to “maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack,” at least within the South China Sea. China has constructed three large air and naval bases in the contested Spratly Islands, which are now primed for deployments of combat aircraft and have [reportedly been equipped](about:blank) with surface-to-air and anti-ship cruise missiles. Every ship or plane near the Spratly Islands is now operating inside Chinese missile range, and will soon be within the [combat radius](about:blank) of Chinese fighter jets.

Link: The Mutual Defense Treaty is part of pushback against Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea

Link: Philippines is able to degrade US deterrence of China in South China Sea

Richard Heydarian 2018 (Manila-based academic and columnist; has written for the world’s leading publications on Asian geopolitics, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian, and Foreign Affairs) 28 Nov 2018 “China’s premature bid for hegemony in Southeast Asia” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/11/28/chinas-premature-bid-for-hegemony-in-southeast-asia/>

Under Duterte’s watch, Manila has not only downplayed its bitter territorial disputes with Beijing but has also downgraded security relations with Washington. The Filipino president, who views China as a critical ally, [has rejected](about:blank) American requests to preposition weapons and equipment in critical military bases close to the disputed South China Sea, while [blocking](about:blank) U.S. warships from using Philippine ports en route for Freedom of Navigation Operations in the area. As a result, he has hamstrung Washington’s ability to optimally deter Chinese maritime assertiveness in adjacent waters.

Link: The Scarborough Shoal is owned by the Philippines

Gregory Poling and Eric Sayers 2018 (Poling is director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative and a fellow with the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Eric Sayers is an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. He previously worked as a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee and as a Special Assistant to the Commander at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.) 21 January 2019 “TIME TO MAKE GOOD ON THE U.S.-PHILIPPINE ALLIANCE” [https://warontherocks.com/2019/01/time-to-make-good-on-the-u-s-philippine-alliance/](about:blank)

Scarborough Shoal, which is not part of the Spratlys, is a special case. U.S. officials [concluded](about:blank) during the 1930s that it was legally acquired by the United States from Spain in the 1900 Treaty of Washington. It was then transferred to the newly independent Philippines in 1946, which Washington continued to recognize into the 1980s when it used the area as a bombing range with Manila’s permission. But during the last 30 years, successive U.S. administrations have ignored or forgotten this historical position and instead adopted the same neutrality toward Scarborough as toward the Spratlys, believing it grants U.S. policy more flexibility.

Brink: The South China Sea is the “most dangerous area in the world” – any spark can set off conflagration

Professor Kerry Gershaneck and Captain James Fanell 2019 (Gershaneck is a Visiting Scholar at the Graduate Institute of East Asian Studies, National Chengchi University, Taiwan. A former U.S. Marine Corps officer, he was previously the Distinguished Visiting Professor at Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy in Thailand, as well as a Senior Research Associate with CPG at Thammasat University (Bangkok). Fanell, U.S. Navy (Ret.) is a Government Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Switzerland. He served as a career naval intelligence officer whose positions included the Chief of Intelligence for the U.S. Pacific Fleet) 30 April 2019 “Just How Bad a South China Sea War Could Get” [https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/just-how-bad-south-china-sea-war-could-get-54992](about:blank)

“Today the South China Sea is the most dangerous area in the world,” observed Gregson, a seasoned U.S. Marine Corps combat veteran. “Hostile statements and aggressive actions create dry tinder, awaiting only a spark to burst into conflagration—with unimagined consequences.”

Link & Brink: Strong US/Philippine alliance is critical to deterring aggression in the South China Sea

NEW YORK TIMES 2019 (journalist Jason Gutierrez) 16 July 2019 “As Duterte Courts China, U.S. Says Don’t Forget Your Old Friend” <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/16/world/asia/philippines-united-states-duterte.html>

The South China Sea, a mineral-rich maritime region and a vital waterway for international shipping, is claimed in whole or in part by China, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam and Indonesia. Over the last week, ships from Vietnam and China have been [in a tense standoff](about:blank) over a reef in the Spratly Islands. David Stilwell, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said Washington’s continued partnership with Manila “is critical for realizing our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific with thriving sovereign nations.” “A strong U.S.-Philippines alliance deters aggression and promotes regional stability, and we welcome enhanced defense cooperation with the Philippines,” he said, adding that the United States seeks “partnership, not domination.”

Link & Brink: China / Philippines heading for violent incident in disputed waters

Gregory Poling and Eric Sayers 2018 (Poling is director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative and a fellow with the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. Sayers is Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). He previously worked as a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee and Special Assistant to the Commander at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.) 21 Jan 2019 “TIME TO MAKE GOOD ON THE U.S.-PHILIPPINE ALLIANCE” [Brackets added] [https://warontherocks.com/2019/01/time-to-make-good-on-the-u-s-philippine-alliance/](about:blank)

If Philippine vessels and planes continue to operate and assert their rights in disputed waters, then eventually there will be a violent incident involving Chinese forces, whether intentional or not. Beijing has exponentially increased the number of assets deployed in contested waters and continues to operate them in a dangerous manner against its neighbors, which makes the status quo inherently unstable. [Philippine Secretary of National Defense Delfin] Lorenzana knows this as well as anyone. Before that day comes, he needs to know that the United States will be there to deter China from escalating the situation and, if necessary, to intervene directly to defend Philippine personnel and platforms. Just as importantly, he needs to convince skeptics in the administration, especially President Duterte, of that fact so that they will endorse a policy of continued reliance on the United States and defiance of China’s claims.

Link: Philippines’ navy is falling apart, unlikely they can defend maritime claims

Doug Bandow 2016 (senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties.) 20 October 2016 “America Should Drop Philippines Alliance: Thank Rodrigo Duterte for Encouraging Divorce” [https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/america-should-drop-philippines-alliance-thank-rodrigo-duterte-encouraging](about:blank)

For a country determined to confront Beijing at sea, the Filipino navy is a particular disappointment. Explained journalist Joseph Trevithick: "The archipelago's sailing force is made up of half-century-old-antiques—and is falling apart." In fact, the navy's three finest ships are retired U.S. Coast Guard cutters. The flagship Gregorio del Pilar will be a half century old next year. No wonder IISS warned that "it remains unlikely that the Philippines will be able to provide more than a token national capability to defend its maritime claims."

Link: The Philippines depends on the U.S. for its national defense

Eleanor Albert 2016 (covers Asia policy for CFR.org, the explanatory journalism arm of Council on Foreign Relations think tank.) 21 October 2016 “The U.S.-Philippines Defense Alliance” [https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-philippines-defense-alliance](about:blank)

Still, the [Philippines military](about:blank) has been described by the Jamestown Foundation and other analysts as one of the world’s [weakest](about:blank#.V2BYX7srLRZ), plagued by insufficient [funds](about:blank) and [endemic](about:blank) [corruption](about:blank). According to Heydarian, it has a hard time keeping pace with other defense forces in the region, causing it to rely more heavily than ever on the United States to ensure its national security. The Philippines has also built closer exchanges with regional partners like [Australia](about:blank) and [Japan](about:blank).

Link: U.S. and Philippines must have a good relationship in order for the Philippines to protect their rights

Gregory Poling and Eric Sayers 2018 (Poling is director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative and a fellow with the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. Sayers is an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. He previously worked as a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee and as a Special Assistant to the Commander at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.) 21 January 2019 “TIME TO MAKE GOOD ON THE U.S.-PHILIPPINE ALLIANCE” [https://warontherocks.com/2019/01/time-to-make-good-on-the-u-s-philippine-alliance/](about:blank)

China’s pursuit of its illegal claims and its militarization of disputed features in the South China Sea threatens long-standing [U.S. interests](about:blank) in the freedom of the seas and the stability of the Indo-Pacific. Successfully defending those interests requires that China’s neighbors, especially the Philippines, continue to believe in U.S. staying power and remain willing to contest Beijing’s demand for vast rights in contested waters.

Link: Southeast Asia needs a counterweight to China

Prof. Jay Batongbacal 2020 (Professor and Executive Associate Dean of the Univ. of the Philippines College of Law, and also Director of the Institute for Maritime Affairs & Law of the Sea. He was a legal advisor to the Philippines when it submitted a successful claim to an extended continental shelf in the Benham Rise Region.) 18 February 2020 “Pushing the Philippines-U.S. Alliance Over the Cliff” <https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/02/18/pushing_the_philippines-us_alliance_over_the_cliff_115050.html>

Although most of maritime Southeast Asia is wary of the U.S., it also recognises that it is the only possible counterweight to China’s excessive power and influence. Keeping the two powers in a predictable balance within a norm-based order is the only way for smaller countries to have the room they need for autonomous development in an interconnected and interdependent world. The loss of balance threatens the norm-based order; if it gives way to one that is purely power-based, then Southeast Asia risks regressing into a neo-colonial network of smaller states subordinate to the requirements of the strong.

Link: Trillions of dollars of trade passes through the South China Sea

Everett Rosenfeld 2014 (Staff writer at CNBC) “Chinese naval push could affect global trade.” August 29th, 2014. [http://www.cnbc.com/2014/08/29/china-vietnam-philippines-conflict-in-south-china-sea-could-wreck-the-economy.html](about:blank)

The U.S. Commerce Department estimated that the United States exported $79 billion in goods to the countries around the South China Sea in 2013, and imported $127 billion from them that year. Including goods simply passing through, Navy Adm. Robert Willard estimated in 2011 that the region accounts for $5.3 trillion in bilateral annual trade—of which $1.2 trillion is U.S. trade

Link: South China Sea is a massive trade network

Robert D. Kaplan 2016. (Author on American foreign affairs. His work has appeared in The Atlantic. The Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal amongst other news agencies. He is also a senior fellow at the Center for New American Security). “The South China Sea will be the battleground of the future.” February 2nd, 2016. [http://www.businessinsider.com/why-the-south-china-sea-is-so-crucial-2015-2](about:blank)

The South China Sea functions as the throat of the Western Pacific and Indian oceans — the mass of connective economic tissue where global sea routes coalesce. Here is the heart of Eurasia’s navigable rimland, punctuated by the Malacca, Sunda, Lombok, and Makassar straits. More than half of the world’s annual merchant fleet tonnage passes through these choke points, and a third of all maritime traffic worldwide.

Link: Widespread fear that China will impede shipping trade

Michael Schuman 2016. (Writer about Asia and global economic issues as a correspondent for TIME in Beijing, China) “A South China Sea of Uncertainty.” June 10th, 2016. [http://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2016-06-10/why-you-need-to-care-about-the-south-china-sea](about:blank)

All parties have reason to dig in. The South China Sea is a major thoroughfare of commerce – some [$5.3 trillion in trade](about:blank) passes through each year – and the U.S. and its allies fear China might try to impede this critical shipping. There is also speculation that there are significant resources of natural gas and oil still [untapped in the sea](about:blank), which could be exploited by whichever nation can assert its claims.

Link: Supply line disruption – the U.S. does not have other bases near the South China Sea

Caroline Baxter 2020 (senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, where she focuses on issues related to operational strategy, base resiliency, expeditionary warfare, and military readiness.) 27 February 2020 <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/02/if-u-s-forces-have-to-leave-the-philippines-then-what/>

Without the Philippines, U.S. forces would be faced with a series of math and physics problems from fighting from much further away. The closest military facilities to the South China Sea are in Okinawa (approximately 1,000 miles), South Korea (1,600 miles), mainland Japan (2,000 miles), Guam (2,000 miles), and Darwin, Australia (2,300 miles). Such distances present a number of logistical and operational complications. Because their path would largely take them over open ocean, forces flowing from Japan or South Korea would not travel through foreign airspace, allowing for a much straighter and faster course. However, they would be coming from—and moving through—areas well within the range of a sizeable Chinese missile quiver. To reduce that vulnerability, operational planners might be forced to move the bulk of these units to Guam and Australia.

Link: China can now control the South China Sea

Alin Barbantan 2020 (Foreign Affairs and International Relations analyst with specialisation in History and Politics; international relations PhD student at the UCL Institute of the Americas. MA from UCL, BA from Queen Mary, University of London) 1 May 2020 “Potential end of a Philippines-US Security Treaty” <https://globalriskinsights.com/2020/05/potential-end-of-a-philippines-us-security-treaty/>

A weakening of the US presence in the South China Sea enables China. According to Admiral Phillip Davidson, “China is now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios, short of war with the United States”. China’s strategic positioning in the Spratlys and Paracels allow it to project considerable power, and that combined with the overall increase in its spending on defence only further convince the US that its dominance in the region is challenged.

Impact: Substantial Global Economic Damage

Everett Rosenfeld 2014 (Staff writer at CNBC) “Chinese naval push could affect global trade.” August 29th, 2014. [http://www.cnbc.com/2014/08/29/china-vietnam-philippines-conflict-in-south-china-sea-could-wreck-the-economy.html](about:blank)

One such risk is that if a flare-up were to arise between China and one of its smaller neighbors, those global trade routes could be affected, hurting the world economy, Dutton said. "The impact of a disruption for even a period of three weeks would be substantial," he said, adding that he did not consider any outright conflict in the region to be especially likely, although the possibility remains.

Impact: Global trade costs would go up

Michael Schuman 2016. (Writer about Asia and global economic issues as a correspondent for TIME in Beijing, China) “A South China Sea of Uncertainty.” June 10th, 2016. [http://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2016-06-10/why-you-need-to-care-about-the-south-china-sea](about:blank)

"Our concern becomes that China, because it defines its rights broadly to control areas under its maritime jurisdiction, reserves for itself the right to ban foreign military movement," Dutton said. If this were to occur, other countries may begin to enforce similar principles. The entire system of global trade would consequently become more costly because the presence of strong, oftentimes Western, navies "tends to dampen disruption," and China's navy isn't strong enough to police the region on its own, Dutton said.

Impact: Trade impact makes South China Sea “Vital Interest” to the United States

Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt 2014. (US Navy (Ret.) is a senior fellow with CNA Strategic Studies. Over his 15 years at CNA, as both a vice president and now as a fellow, he has had a number of papers dealing with security issues in Asia published.) “The South China Sea: Assessing U.S. Policy and Options for the Future.” November 2014. [https://www.cna.org/CNA\_files/PDF/IOP-2014-U-009109.pdf](about:blank)

During testimony before the Senate in 2012, then secretary of state Hillary Clinton made the point that the first, of the aforementioned aspects of freedom of navigation in the South China Sea was a “vital interest.” Data tend to support this claim. More than half of the world's annual merchant fleet tonnage passes through the Strait of Malacca, and the Indonesian Straits of Sunda, and Lombok. These straits link the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea, and most of that maritime traffic is either coming from or going onward through the South China Sea. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), almost a third of global crude oil and over half of global LNG trade passes through the South China Sea, making it one of the most important trade routes in the world. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Review of Maritime Transport 2011 estimated that 8.4 billion

Impact: Economic harm. Backing down on Chinese domination of South China Sea reduces investment and harms economy of the region

Prof. Panos Mourdoukoutas 2019 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Economics at LIU Post in New York; teaches at Columbia University) 6 Apr 2019 “Philippines Is Beginning To Pay The Price For Duterte's South China Sea Flip-Flops” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/panosmourdoukoutas/2019/04/06/philippines-is-beginning-to-pay-the-price-for-dutertes-south-china-sea-flip-flops/#695b506728c8>

The Philippines is beginning to pay the price for President Rodrigo Duterte’s South China Sea policy flip-flops in the form of repeated challenges to the country’s sovereignty by Beijing. China considers the South China Sea its own sea, all of it. And it seems to be prepared to do whatever it takes to assert control over every tiny island, natural and artificial, in it -- as evidenced by the [presence](about:blank) of hundreds of Chinese vessels near a Philippines-administered island in the South China Sea in recent weeks. That’s certainly bad news for neighboring countries -- like the Philippines -- which have competing claims in these territories. And bad news for the future of the economic integration of the region, as it raises geopolitical risks that could eventually turn away foreign investments.

Impact: High risk of war. Chinese naval capabilities, if not deterred, will disrupt peace and stability

William Lowther 2015 (journalist) US analyst urges Japan to sell Taiwan submarines, TAIPEI TIMES 7 Feb 2015 [http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/02/07/2003611010](about:blank) (brackets added)

Mazza’s study followed testimony by US Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Frank Kendall before a hearing of the US House Armed Services Committee that China’s military modernization had undermined US superiority. “We’re at risk and the situation is getting worse,” Kendall said. Earlier this week, the former intelligence chief of the US Navy’s Pacific Fleet, Captain James Fanell, said in Honolulu that Beijing was “rejuvenating” and preparing for a military conflict. “China’s rise, if left unchecked or undeterred, will necessarily disrupt the peace and stability of our friends, partners and allies,” Fanell told the Washington Free Beacon Web site.

Impact: Chinese militarization increases risk of nuclear attack on the US homeland

Prof. Shyu-tu Lee 2011. (President of the North American Taiwanese Professors’ Association) “Disengaging from Taiwan” July/Aug 2011 FOREIGN AFFAIRS <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-asia/2011-07-01/disengaging-taiwan>

But by ignoring China's history and economic policy and other relevant factors, Glaser arrives at policy prescriptions that would increase the chance of a Chinese nuclear attack on the U.S. homeland. Glaser misjudges Chinese motives. China's military modernization is not primarily motivated by insecurity, as he asserts. China is not threatened by the United States or any of its neighbors. It is advocating its model of governance -- managed capitalism combined with one-party authoritarianism -- as a more efficient alternative to a free-market economy and democracy. China's mission is to regain its place as the dominant superpower so that the country can cleanse itself of the humiliation it has experienced at the hands of the West.

3. Russia

Link: Philippines is key to US national security and foreign policy in Asia

Prof. Sheena Chestnut Greitens 2017 (nonresident senior fellow with the Center for East Asia Policy Studies; assistant professor of political science at Univ. of Missouri, and associate in research at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard.) 15 August 2017 “Terrorism in the Philippines and U.S.-Philippine security cooperation” [https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/terrorism-in-the-philippines-and-u-s-philippine-security-cooperation/](about:blank)

The Philippines is important to American national security and foreign policy in Asia. The country is a former U.S. colony with deep historical and cultural ties to the United States, the world’s 12th largest country by population, a lively democracy, and the region’s fastest-growing economy with a robust trade and investment relationship with the United States. Since signing the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1951, the Philippines has been one of the United States’ two treaty allies in Southeast Asia. Regionally, it is one of our most important security partners in the Asia-Pacific, as the U.S. has sought to expand cooperation throughout the region, including with Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Duterte: I’ll buy weapons elsewhere, like Russia or China

Wade Shepard 2016 (journalist; featured in, interviewed by, or appeared on CNBC Squawk Box, CBC The Current, Forbes.com, VICE, NPR Morning Edition, and BBC World.) 11 October 2016 “Is The U.S. Pushing Yet Another Country Into Closer Ties With China?” [https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2016/10/11/is-the-u-s-pushing-the-philippines-into-closer-ties-with-china/#51e9cfe01706](about:blank#51e9cfe01706)

"If you don't want to sell arms, I'll go to Russia. I sent the generals to Russia and Russia said 'do not worry, we have everything you need, we'll give it to you.' And as for China, they said 'just come over and sign and everything will be delivered,'" was one of Duterte's much-quoted statements.

Link: Russia is ready to sell the Philippines weapons

Sam LaGrone 2017 (editor of USNI News; has covered legislation, acquisition and operations for the Sea Services since 2009 and spent time underway with the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and the Canadian Navy.) 4 January 2017 “Russia Wants to Sell Arms to the Philippines, Hold Joint Naval Drills” [https://news.usni.org/2017/01/04/russia-wants-sell-arms-philippines-hold-joint-naval-drills](about:blank)

As the U.S. relationship with the Philippines has come under rhetorical assault from President Rodrigo Duterte, Moscow has moved closer to Manila offering to sell arms and to start a bilateral military exercise program.  
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On Wednesday, Russian Ambassador to the Philippines Igor Anatolyevich Khovaev said that Moscow was ready to supply arms to the Philippines as in addition to the burgeoning military-to-military relationship. “We are ready to supply small arms and light weapons, some airplanes, helicopters, submarines and many, many other weapons. Sophisticated weapons. Not the second-hand ones,” he said on Wednesday, reported *Reuters*.

Link: Philippines drawing closer to Russia as relations with US worsen

Michael Peck 2019 (contributing writer for the National Interest.) 14 September 2019 “Is the Philippines Becoming Russia’s Newest Ally?” [https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/philippines-becoming-russia%E2%80%99s-newest-ally-80541](about:blank)

Indeed, Manila seems to be drawing closer to Moscow even as its relations with Washington have worsened. In March 2019, Russian and Philippine officials met to discuss a[potential naval pact](about:blank). In April, two Russian warships docked in Manila. The port visit included “joint drills on navigation and communication as well as special trainings with the quick response forces of the Philippines,” according to the[Philippine government](about:blank). It was the sixth visit of Russian warships, which was reciprocated by the first-ever Philippine Navy ship that sailed to Vladivostok in July for a naval parade marking Russian Navy Day.

Link: Big mistake to neglect or alienate Philippines – drives them to align with China and Russia

Anna Saberon 2018 (teaches Philosophy and International Relations at Ateneo de Naga University in the Philippines) 24 October 2018 “PHILIPPINE DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH RUSSIA: A WAKE-UP CALL FOR THE UNITED STATES?” [https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/philippine-defense-cooperation-russia-wake-call-the-united-states](about:blank)

The new defense cooperation between the Philippines and Russia represents a wake-up call for the United States. No longer the ‘little brother’ of the US, no longer dependent on US foreign policy decisions, no longer pleased with leftovers, spare/used equipment from the United States, and no longer naïve; the Philippines is out to pursue an independent foreign policy. Washington should bear in mind that neglecting the Philippines has repercussions. If indeed it is true that the United States is a strong ally of the Philippines, then it seems that a few mistakes have been made: a) refusing to give priority to the Philippines and b) failure in preparation as they did not anticipate that the Philippines would turn to its neighbors, in particular China and Russia.

Link & Brink: Philippines turning to Russia = collapse of US hegemony

**Gaea Katreena Cabico 2018 (journalist) 6 Dec** 2018 “Philippines’ pivot to Russia may signal decline of US hegemony — political science prof” <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/12/06/1874742/philippines-pivot-russia-may-signal-decline-us-hegemony-political-science-prof#aT8hbKz2tu3eimeY.99>

The pivot of President Rodrigo Duterte to Russia, a non-traditional ally of the Philippines, may show the collapse of a United States-dominated unipolar world, a Polish political science professor said. Krystian Cholaszczynski, a visiting professor from the College of Social and Media Culture in Torun, Poland, called move of the Philippines to deepen its ties with alternative power like Russia a “symbolic situation.”

Impact: Apocalyptic consequences without US hegemony. Loss of peace, prosperity, democracy, world order

Brook Manville 2018 (principal of Brook Manville LLC, consulting on strategy and organization) 14 Oct 2018 “Why A Crumbling World Order Urgently Needs U.S. Leadership” FORBES [https://www.forbes.com/sites/brookmanville/2018/10/14/why-a-crumbling-world-order-urgently-needs-u-s-leadership/#2bb8912f2e61](about:blank) (brackets added)

The botanical metaphor in [Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Robert] Kagan’s book title began our recent conversation. “We’ve been living in a tranquil garden of largely peaceful practices and liberal expectations across much of the world, ignoring the dark forces of jungle multiplying under the rocks. If we don’t defend civilization’s cultivation—especially American’s guarantee of peace and economic integration across the world—the toxic creatures and weeds will roar back.” Thus [China’s determined military rise](about:blank), [Russia’s continuing aggressions](about:blank), [fiery authoritarians on the march in so many once democratic countries](about:blank). As [Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Robert] Kagan continued, “[Trump has been damaging the system](about:blank)—he too seems to have forgotten what good it has delivered—but actually America’s desire for maintaining the global order has been diminishing for years. After [the dissolution of the Soviet empire in the 1990s](about:blank), people talked about [‘the end of history”](about:blank)—that America didn’t have to worry anymore about war or aggression. History doesn’t end, it simply paused. The ugliest aspects of human nature are surging again.”  
**Vanishing Leadership, Vanishing Peace**  
Kagan’s apocalyptic message, repeated [in other recent writings](about:blank), is lucid and terrifying, all the more devastating for its relentless use of history. It’s a footnoted plea that “we’ve seen this movie before.” He reminds us that Americans have frequently turned away from defending world order, with regrettably familiar outcomes: to be dragged in later at greater cost (e.g. [helping to stop Hitler earlier might have prevented World War II](about:blank)); or, simply hoping that “the problem would go away,” to watch it get ten times worse (e.g. [Obama’s policy in Syria](about:blank)). Kagan acknowledges that America has sometimes misstepped (e.g. Viet Nam, Iraq), but he still argues that overall our foreign engagement has produced more peace and prosperity than not. “History shows,” he summarized, “that world order has never been achieved without some constructive force to keep the peace. The relative harmony and fair play we’ve created in the modern world will vanish if the U.S. forsakes international leadership.”

4. Philippine insurgency

History of Islamic terrorism in the Philippines

Dr. Joseph Felter 2017 (He was a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and a senior research scholar at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University. In July 2017, Felter was selected for appointment to the Senior Executive Service, and for assignment as the deputy assistant secretary of defense for South and Southeast Asia.) 27 September 2017 “ISIS In The Philippines: A Threat To US Interests” [https://www.hoover.org/research/isis-philippines-threat-us-interests](about:blank)

Islamic rooted militancy has a long and bloody history in the Philippines. Some argue that it dates as far back as 1521 when Ferdinand Magellan landed on Mactan island near Cebu and was killed, along with a number of his men, by Lapu Lapu, a local chieftain that some allege was a Muslim Datu.The subsequent Spanish colonization of the Philippines and attempts to spread Christianity, while successful throughout much of the archipelago, faced strong resistance in the south. The centuries-long struggle of the Muslim Filipino– or Bangsamoro- for independence from Christian-dominated rule continued under US colonial rule and persists in some form today. Its more recent incarnations include the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which signed a tenuous peace agreement in 1996, establishing the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) after a bloody struggle for independence; its splinter group the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) continued to fight for a separate Islamic state after the 1996 ARMM agreement. The persistent widespread popular grievances and sense of disenfranchisement by Filipino Muslims make parts of the southern Philippines particularly vulnerable to both overt and passive support for a range of Islamic militant groups operating in the few areas of southwestern and central Mindanao island and Sulu province where a sizable Muslim majority population remains.

Link: ISIS is backing the Filipino rebels

Dr. Joseph Felter 2017 (He was a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and a senior research scholar at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University. In July 2017, Felter was selected for appointment to the Senior Executive Service, and for assignment as the deputy assistant secretary of defense for South and Southeast Asia.) 27 September 2017 “ISIS In The Philippines: A Threat To US Interests” [https://www.hoover.org/research/isis-philippines-threat-us-interests](about:blank)

While the flow of foreign fighters and funding from outside the region is of grave concern, the vast majority of militants fighting in Marawi, and the funds and resources supporting them, are local in origin. It is estimated that approximately 90% of the ISIS militants in Marawi are native to the Philippines and while ISIS central is believed to have provided sizable infusions of cash in excess of one million dollars, the overwhelming majority of the funding comes from local sources such as kidnap for ransom operations, criminal extortion, low-level narcotics trafficking, and local donations from those disillusioned by the central government and sympathetic to the militants’ cause. Of particular concern, ISIS provides a narrative and unifying cause that has been able to attract members and support from across other Islamic extremist groups in the Philippines such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), Maute Group (Dawlah Islamiyah), and Ansar al-Khilafah in the Philippines (AKP).

Link: The AFP needs U.S. military assistance

Joshua Kurlantzick 2017 (senior fellow for Southeast Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR); previously a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Previously was a fellow at the Univ of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy and a fellow at the Pacific Council on International Policy) 13 Nov 2017 “Trump's Visit to the Philippines: A Budding Bromance but Few Positive Outcomes” [https://www.cfr.org/blog/trumps-visit-philippines-budding-bromance-few-positive-outcomes-0](about:blank)

Duterte definitely is increasingly realizing that he needs U.S. assistance in counterterrorism, piracy, and other issues related to the Islamic State than he had imagined a year ago. Since the battle in Mindanao this past year, the Philippine armed forces are exhausted, and unprepared for another breakout of major conflict in the south. Duterte has lined up new counterterrorism assistance commitments from Singapore and Australia, but these countries’ counterterrorism assistance cannot match the levels of potential aid from Washington.

Link: Mutual Defense Treaty critical to fighting terrorists

Dr. Malcolm Cook 2019 (Nonresident Fellow at the Lowy Institute. From 2003 to 2010, he was the Institute’s inaugural East Asia Program Director. PhD in International Relations from the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University. Masters degree in International Relations from the International University of Japan. Dean of the School of International Studies at Flinders University of South Australia. Senior Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.) 15 January 2019 “Scrapping the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty?” <https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2019/01/15/scrapping_the_us-philippine_mutual_defense_treaty_114108.html>

The MDT also recently proved its irreplaceable worth during the five-month terrorist siege of Marawi City in 2017. The U.S. involvement has been recognised by the Armed Forces of the Philippines as “shifting the balance” in favour of the government forces.

Advocacy: Build the AFP’s capacity

Gregory Poling and Eric Sayers 2018 (Poling is director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative and a fellow with the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. Sayers is an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. He previously worked as a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee and as a Special Assistant to the Commander at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.) 21 January 2019 “TIME TO MAKE GOOD ON THE U.S.-PHILIPPINE ALLIANCE” [https://warontherocks.com/2019/01/time-to-make-good-on-the-u-s-philippine-alliance/](about:blank)

And third, the U.S. government should take the opportunity to inform Manila of an enhanced security assistance package to help build the capacity of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and propose talks to formulate new guidelines for Philippine-U.S. defense cooperation modeled to better operationalize the alliance, much as the 2015 revised guidelines have done for the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Impact: Terrorist kidnappings and trade losses

Professor Sheena Chestnut Greitens 2017 (nonresident senior fellow with the Center for East Asia Policy Studies; assistant professor of political science at the University of Missouri, and an associate in research at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University.) 15 August 2017 “Terrorism in the Philippines and U.S.-Philippine security cooperation” [https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/terrorism-in-the-philippines-and-u-s-philippine-security-cooperation/](about:blank)

At the same time, concerns about kidnapping-for-ransom operations by the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf in the waters around the southern Philippines have also heightened. Western hostages have been executed when ransom demands were not met, while payments made for other hostages raise concern that these operations help bankroll ISIS-linked militants. The Philippine press reported last fall that Abu Sayyaf, which has pledged allegiance to ISIS, had raised at least $7 million in 2016 from its kidnapping operations. As a result of concerns about security in these waters and the safety of trade between the two countries, Indonesia temporarily suspended shipping and banned coal exports to the Philippines (70 percent of the country’s supply). These kidnapping-for-ransom operations, therefore, are not only a maritime security and law enforcement issue, but a matter for counterterrorism and trade throughout the region.

Impact: Militants harm the Philippines’ economy

Dr. Joseph Felter 2017 (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for South and Southeast Asia; former research fellow at the Hoover Institution and a senior research scholar at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University.) 27 September 2017 “ISIS In The Philippines: A Threat To US Interests” [https://www.hoover.org/research/isis-philippines-threat-us-interests](about:blank)

But the threat to US interests posed by these militant groups extends well beyond terrorism. The Philippines is an important treaty ally, and the US partners with her to pursue a range of mutual strategic interests in the region. Militant groups like ISIS are exacting a huge toll on the Philippines’ military capabilities and costs to its economy – capabilities and resources that could be directed towards providing external security and protecting its sovereignty.

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