



**IMSISS**  
International Master  
Security, Intelligence  
& Strategic Studies



**Erasmus  
Mundus**

**Why Smaller States Recalibrate Military Alliances? A  
Comparative Study of RP-US and ROK-US Alliances  
(2011-2019)**

July/2019

2338522F

17116481

71403040

**Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of  
International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic  
Studies**

**Word Count: 21104**

**Supervisor: Dr Jan Ludvik**

**Date of Submission: 25/07/2019**



**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

## **Acknowledgement**

At times when my country – Yemen – and my people experience tough and horrifying challenges compared to the rest of the world and when our globe faces wide-ranging threats, from the Arabian Peninsula to the Indo-Pacific and East Africa to North America, I pray for peace and stabilisation back home.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to whom without this project would have not been possible, the Almighty for granting me the will, strength and health to cope with all challenges and utilise all opportunities.

Second, as an Erasmus Scholar, I take this chance to acknowledge the European Union's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) for their empowering support. During IMSISS, I had the chance to develop greater flexibility by living in 5 countries, expand my network by meeting world-class practitioners and strangers in 15+ others, pursue International Security at Cambridge University and Peace Research at Oslo University, but also expand cross-cultural understanding and evolving personal worldview. These reiterated that bewitching Yemen is more than conflict, more than what we see in today's media. IMSISS has been broadly an eminent experience and therefore I am all hopes more from conflict-affected citizens have more opportunities in Europe.

Then, a special appreciation to my fantastic supervisor in Prague, Dr Jan Ludvik, and shrewd advisor in Sydney, Associate Professor Andrew Tan, for their inconceivable dedication, thorough feedback and significant support since I was in charming Scotland. No less, I appreciate the multifaceted support provided by Dr Eamonn Butler, Lauren Hoare, Emma Smith and Dr Julian Droogan throughout the IMSISS programme and all lecturers, name by name, for their reflexive teaching and wonderful memories.

To my IMSISS colleagues, I am pleased to have been in the 2017-2019 cohort with you; all memories, including the journey of co-founding the Security Distillery, will last forever. IMSISS was the beginning of our friendship. Stay connected as I envision many of you as leaders and/or influencers in your respective countries/industries.

To the two I cannot miss, my besties in life, HE Dr Galal Fakirah and HE Hana'a Taher, also my gone uncle Dr Mokhtar and PM Hassan Makki, I am grateful for infinite, multifaceted support. To Professor Cheng Chwee-Kuik, Professor Syafi'i Anwar, Dr Knocks Zengeni and Dr Mohd Zaki bin Ahmad, I cannot thank you enough for your unthinkable, unhesitant support.

Finally, to everyone and anyone who has prayed for Yemen's recovery & success of my pursuits, including friends, but also shares a noble vision for the world, thank you! I await that moment to make a comeback! Be well!

### **List of Acronyms**

AFC	Asian Financial Crisis
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CMIM	Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation
DoC	Declaration on the Conduct
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DSC	Deterrence Strategy Committee
EDSCG	Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EDCA	Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
ICMB	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
KAMD	Korea Air and Missile Defense
KIDD	Korea-US Integrated Defense Dialogue
KMPR	Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation
MBA	Military Bases Agreement
MDT	Mutual Defence Agreement
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MLSA	Mutual Logistics Support Agreement
NAPCR	Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative

PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
PRC	People's Republic of China
PHP	Philippine Pesos
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROK-US	Republic of Korea-United States
RP	Republic of the Philippines
RP-US	RP-United States
RSOI	Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration
SCM	Security Consultative Meeting
SCS	South China Sea
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SMA	Special Measures Agreement
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defence
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TS	Team Spirit
VFA	Visiting Forces Agreement
WTC	World Trade Centre
UFG	Ulchi Freedom Guardian
UFL	Ulchi Focus Lens
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNSC	UN Security Council
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USFK	United States Forces Korea

## **Abstract**

This article comparatively examines the South Korean-US and Filipino-US alliances amid the rise of China. It pays attention to analysing how and why Washington's smaller allies distinctly recalibrate the breadth and depth of defence relations without abrogation since the 'Asia Pivot' policy. Adopting the qualitative method and process tracing technique, the author utilizes neoclassical realism in a comparative case-study to unpack the nuances of domestic pushes and systemic pulls driving weaker allies' recalibration behaviour. Contrary to classical realist approaches that assume smaller actors have limited choices and/or bigger powers dictate alliance relations, this study shows that such assumptions are oversimplified and often misleading. The perceived calculations of the subsequent ruling elite in Seoul and Manila have distinctly contributed to weakening and/or upgrading the alliances. Recently cautious between Washington and Beijing, albeit exhibited to different degrees, Korean and Filipino leaderships factor three reoccurring themes in their alliance relations with the US: 1) the degree of perceived threat(s); 2) the (un)predictability/(un)reliability of US security commitment to honour alliance obligations, from cost-sharing to physical defence; and 3) China's hybrid strategy, including Chinese economic carrots.

**Key Words:** Military alliances, China rise, security strategy, small states, defence treaty.

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter I: Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1.0 Problem Statement</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 Research Questions</b> .....	3
<b>1.2 Research Objectives</b> .....	3
<b>1.3 Research Significance</b> .....	4
<b>1.4 Literature Review</b> .....	4
<b>1.4.1 States and Alliances: Why states align?</b> .....	5
<b>1.4.2 Power Politics and Smaller States: Why align?</b> .....	6
<b>1.4.3 RP-US &amp; ROK-US Alliances: The missing dimension?</b> .....	8
<b>1.5 Theoretical Framework</b> .....	12
<b>1.5.1 Neo-classical Realism: A tool of analysis</b> .....	12
<b>1.5.2 Military Alliances</b> .....	14
<b>1.5.3 Reliability of Commitment</b> .....	15
<b>1.5.4 The degree of Threat Proximity</b> .....	17
<b>1.5.5 Hybrid Strategy</b> .....	18
<b>1.5.6 Small States</b> .....	19
<b>1.5.7 Alliance Recalibration</b> .....	20
<b>1.6 Research Design and Case Rationale</b> .....	21
<b>1.6.1 Research Methodology</b> .....	21
<b>1.6.2 Data Collection</b> .....	21
<b>1.6.3 Data Analysis</b> .....	22
<b>1.6.4 Case Rationale</b> .....	22
<b>1.7 Hypotheses</b> .....	23
<b>1.8 Research Scope</b> .....	24
<b>1.9 Chapterisation</b> .....	24
<b>Chapter II: RP-US and ROK-US Alliances Post-Cold War (1990-2010)</b> .....	25
<b>2.0 Introduction</b> .....	25
<b>2.1 RP-US and ROK-US post-Cold War (1990-2000): Tied to American dominance?</b> .....	25
<b>2.1.1 Threat Assessment: A Clash of Interests</b> .....	26
<b>2.1.2 US Commitment: How authoritative?</b> .....	28
<b>2.1.3 Domestic Pulls</b> .....	30
<b>2.2 Alliances post-9/11: China’s re-emergence misinterpreted (2001-2010)?</b> ....	32

2.2.1	Threat Perception: Intense? .....	33
2.2.2	The Reliability of US Commitment.....	34
2.2.3	China’s Hybrid Engagement: A strategy of conflation? .....	36
2.2.4	Domestic Pulls .....	38
2.3	Conclusion .....	40
<b>Chapter III: RP and ROK’s Evolving Recalibration Strategies (2011-2019)</b>		<b>42</b>
3.0	Introduction .....	42
3.1	The US Commitment: Credible?.....	43
3.1.1	The Philippines .....	44
3.1.2	South Korea .....	46
3.2	Threat Perception: Reshaping Asian Rules? .....	48
3.2.1	The Philippines .....	49
3.2.2	South Korea .....	52
3.3	Domestic Politics: Favouring who and for what?.....	53
3.3.1	The Philippines .....	54
3.3.2	South Korea .....	57
3.4	Beijing’s Hybrid Strategy: Deepening Realities? .....	59
3.4.1	South Korea .....	60
3.4.2	The Philippines .....	62
3.5	Conclusion .....	64
<b>Chapter VI: Data Analysis and Discussion</b>		<b>66</b>
4.0	Introduction .....	66
4.1	Results.....	66
	Variable 1: Reliability of US Commitment .....	66
	Variable 2: Intensity of Threat Perception .....	67
	Variable 3: China’s Hybrid Strategy.....	68
	Variable 4: Domestic Pulls.....	68
4.2	Discussion of Findings .....	69
4.2.1	Why Smaller States Recalibrate Alliances? .....	70
4.2.2	Under What Conditions do smaller states recalibrate alliances?....	71
4.2.3	Why smaller powers pursue varying degrees of recalibration? .....	72
4.2.4	To what extent and in what ways do recalibration occur? .....	73
4.2.5	What are the limits and constraints of recalibrating alliances in the Asia-Pacific?.....	73

<b>4.3</b>	<b>Research Limitations.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Implications and Future Research.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>76</b>





## Chapter I: Introduction

### 1.0 Problem Statement

Nearly two decades after the Cold-War (1945-1989) ended, the United States (US) launched Pivot to Asia – a re-balancing strategy in the Asia-Pacific – under President Barak Obama in 2011. Obama’s foreign policy aimed at revitalising the long-standing alliances and developing partnerships to underpin the US influence in the east and preserve the rules-based international system, while containing a rising China (Lieberthal, 2011). The latter has increasingly militarised, contested islands (i.e. Spratly) in South China Sea (SCS), launched a multi-trillion economic projects – ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative (BRI) for instance – and challenged the freedom of navigation regime thereof, including against the US, aspirant of a “*multipolar world with a unipolar Asia*” (Ahlawat & Smith, 2016, pp. 39-42).

Engaging with these developments, unlike what normative International Relations (IR) approaches suggest – bandwagon with a dominant power or purely balance against a rising actor, smaller Southeast and East Asian countries manifested varying responses to the American engagement in the Pacific. Since then several states developed different security postures (i.e. hedging, bandwagoning, soft-balancing) towards the US ‘Hub-and-Spokes’ alliance system, despite a set of commonly perceived threats (i.e. China and North Korea factors) to regional peace and security (Roy, 2005; Liu & Sun, 2015; Kuik, 2016). Consistent with such characterisation, this research endeavours to explain ‘why smaller states recalibrate the depth and breadth of military alliances with the US in the Asia-Pacific region.’ It does so by comparatively examining the evolving strategies of two alliances, the Republic of Philippines-US (RP-US) and Republic of Korea-US (ROK-US), since Obama’s pivot policy.

The primary rationale for selecting the two alliances is three-fold. First, Seoul and Manila have long-established security ties with Washington and

continued to cultivate their depth and breadth in a rapidly changing geostrategic environment. In fact, the Philippines and South Korea signed the Mutual Defence Treaty (MDT) in 1951 and 1953 respectively as relations with their security provider, the US, have fluctuated in an ‘adaptive and agile’ manner (Avila & Goldman, 2015, p. 1; Kim & Heo, 2016, p. 35; Misalucha & Amador-III, 2016, p. 52). Second, the small countries share analogous geopolitical concerns and inherited vulnerabilities stemming from their *status quo* amid the hybrid rise of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Considering the re-emergence of an assertive Beijing as a regional hegemon, they manifested a range of security orientations to enhance their autonomy, development and security (Bae, 2010; Castro, 2017). Third, both have maritime disputes with China, albeit at a different pace and intensity. While Manila has a set of contested islands (i.e. Mischief Reef) in the SCS, Seoul only contests Socotra Rock (Castro, 2005). Their claims are based on the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), unlike Beijing’s exclusive 9-dash-line doctrine (Misalucha & Amador-III, 2016).

Despite these commonalities, both have exhibited distinct signs of ‘alliance recalibration’ with Washington. Manila shifted from a pro-US balancing strategy vis-à-vis China under President Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016) to a hedging strategy straining the RP-US alliance since President Rodrigo Duterte assumed office in 2016. While Aquino deepened the alliance via signing ‘Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement’ (EDCA) in 2014, Duterte downgraded hard-core commitments and appeased Beijing’s concerns over the American military involvement in the region (Castro, 2016, p. 306; Castro, 2017, pp. 171-174). For example, the Philippines terminated the joint RP–US naval patrols in SCS and reoriented the focus of Balikatan 2017 joint exercise to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). Close to a zero-sum game?

On the contrary, Seoul has departed from a decade of enhanced ROK-US cooperation to relatively weaker security commitments amid the unprecedented inter-Korean rapprochement efforts in 2018, while has continued to deepen its ‘matured strategic cooperative partnership’ with Beijing (Kim & Heo, 2016, p. 57). Although ROK-US ties included an annual ‘Max Thunder’ joint exercises since 2009 and American deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in the Korean Peninsula to deter the North Korean threat in 2016, Seoul cancelled ‘Operation Ulchi Freedom Guardian’ exercise in June 2018 ahead of the 9/19 Military Agreement between the two Koreas (McGuire, 2018; Yoon, 2018). Yet, whether the THAAD will be removed remains ambiguous.

As such, it is clearly established that South Korea and the Philippines recalibrated their alliances in different ways and extents under comparable conditions. This variation raises a puzzling question: Why do Washington’ allies recalibrate alliances?

### **1.1 Research Questions**

To unpack the central question (why smaller states recalibrate alliances), this research project will aim at answering the following subsidiary questions:

- 1.1.1** Under what conditions do smaller states recalibrate alliances?
- 1.1.2** To what extent and in what ways do recalibration occur?
- 1.1.3** What are the limits and constraints of recalibrating alliances in the Asia-Pacific?
- 1.1.4** Why do small powers pursue varying degrees of recalibration despite shared features?

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

The proposed project will investigate the security behaviours of Manila and Seoul since Obama’s 2<sup>nd</sup> term, by deconstructing policies and postures towards

Washington primarily, to explain why smaller powers recalibrate alignment positions in varying ways and levels. The subsidiary objectives are four-fold:

- 1.2.1 To investigate the conditions under which smaller states recalibrate alliances.
- 1.2.2 To explore the depth and means of alliance's recalibration.
- 1.2.3 To specify the limits and constraints of recalibrating alliances in the Asia-Pacific.
- 1.2.4 To grasp the legitimate factor(s) behind varying degrees and forms of recalibration under comparable circumstances.

### **1.3 Research Significance**

Designed around two pillars, the significance of this project stems from potential practical and theoretical contributions. First, the contemporarily evolving security strategies in a fluid security environment, especially under the US President Donald Trump, offer practical (policy) inputs on how Seoul and Manila could leverage their alignment positions with the US and minimise associated risks across political, security and economic domains. Second, the theoretical contribution lies in expanding the body of scholarship available on the subject matter to embolden the attempt of rethinking the IR power-dominated discourse, which better explains and characterises real-world security and defence strategies of smaller states.

### **1.4 Literature Review**

The advent of theorising alliances in IR has constructed two primary lenses: the traditional power-centred discourse and smaller states' evolving logic. Much research has scrutinised why states align (Waltz, 1979; Snyder, 1984; Walt, 1987; Smith, 1995; Tertrais, 2004; Nexon, 2009; Walt, 2009; Johnson, 2015), alliances and security dilemma (Mearsheimer, 2007; Glaser, 2011), why smaller, including Asian, states align (Vital, 1967; Rothstein, 1968; Keohane, 1969; Vital, 1971; Reeves, 2014; Lobell, et al., 2014; Gunasekara, 2015) and

the role of domestic politics in security strategies (Brawley, 2004; Roy, 2005; Kuik, 2016). However, ‘alliance recalibration’ vis-à-vis bigger powers received little attention and therefore remains a pathway for academic inquiry. This section proceeds in three-fold: why states align, why smaller states align and the missing dimension of RP-US and ROK-US alliances.

#### **1.4.1 States and Alliances: Why states align?**

First, why align? Conventional IR theories proposed a power-based recipe to protect the *status quo* conscious of the distribution of power in the international system. Waltz (1979) famously argued that states form alliances to balance against rising powers, unlike Walt’s balance of threat. The latter contended that states balance against extrinsic threats, intentions not capabilities *per se* (Walt, 1987). Around this sketch, Snyder (1984, p. 462) further clarified that entering alliance could also be motivated by risks of abandonment and isolation. Not only has their debate limited state-centric policies to reactionary balancing and/or bandwagoning but also characterised the security dilemma and the tensions of assessing the interplay between capabilities and intentions, the politics of assessing threat(s) (Mearsheimer, 2007, p. 75; Glaser, 2011). Although these classic realist arguments have been dominant, they are in dire need of a critical rethink.

In a partial departure from the threat-centred argumentation, millennial scholars developed a nexus between policy concessions, capabilities and alliance formation. Tertrais (2004, pp. 136-140) clarified that states align, whether formally or informally, to “*fight alongside*” for ideational (i.e. values) and material (i.e. resources) motives, despite an increasing discontent with the US’ too many expectations from smaller counterparts. From a big-power perspective, alliances are primarily geostrategic platforms to underpin influence, shape world order and advance strategic interests in geographically distant territories.

Alliances entail costs like they provide benefits. The opportunity cost of partaking in an alliance range from financial and security costs to autonomy and subordination of decision-making. In the words of Johnson (2015, pp. 674-677), “*allies charge a fee for protection,*” for which heavily relies on the propensity of the weaker party to relatively make policy concessions and/or appease security conditions and non-security cooperation with the bigger power. The quest to maximise security via an appeasement policy erodes states autonomy, the independence of decision-making as a trade-off for protection. This action occurs under two conditions: low portability to defeat the opponent alone and a high degree of an ally’s contribution to the security of a smaller state in peace and war times.

The works of the four influential realist scholars – Walt, Waltz, Glaser and Mearsheimer – presented a power-centric characterisation of alliance formation, a mere simplification that debunks structural claims to why smaller states align with bigger powers. Their arguments heavily project smaller powers as victims of international politics, assuming the pursuit of two security strategies – bandwagoning and balancing – due to the lack of choice under conditions of uncertainty and anarchy (Waltz, 1979, p. 114; Nexon, 2009, p. 352). Unlike their traditional abandonment of power asymmetry in alliance formation, Tertrais and Johnson implicitly discussed the costs of entering an alliance from a smaller state’s perspective, a useful juncture to delve into alliances and smaller states in the next section.

#### **1.4.2 Power Politics and Smaller States: Why align?**

Considering such a theoretical flaw, second, ‘alliances and smaller states’ widened the array of alliance explanations. Rothstein (1968) contended that smaller powers align with bigger actors for strategic utilities (i.e. protection, access to resources) attained in the context of cost-benefit analysis, meanwhile, Keohane (1969) paid attention to offsetting vulnerabilities through reliance on foreign resources. Among chief factors to entering alliances are four-fold: 1)

weakness to independently maintain the *status quo*, 2) scarcity of economic, technological and military resources, 3) absence of credible security providers/strategic allies, and 4) intense geopolitical threat(s) (Reeves, 2014, p. 256; Gunasekara, 2015, p. 212; Lobell, et al., 2014, p. 149). Therefore, smaller states enter alliances to protect the *status quo* and offset *de facto* vulnerabilities in the pursuit of national interests domestically and overseas.

These reasons debilitate the premise of the realist black-and-white security explanations to alliance formation. Yet they equally fail to dissect the actual behaviour of smaller states in detail, most peculiarly their ambivalent strategies. In the Asia-Pacific for instance, Malaysia has cautiously pursued contradictory defence policies with the US and economic with China despite being a claimant state over the SCS dispute, while upholding a rejectionist stance of western intervention in the region (Kuik, 2016, p. 158). Qatar, a Lilliputian in the Arabian Peninsula, has upgraded low-key relations with Iran amid the Gulf crisis in 2017 despite its membership in the anti-Iran Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in quest of enhancing its security (Vakil, 2018, pp. 11-12). The Malaysian and Qatari orientations typify the essence of the hedging strategy, an increasingly evident approach circumspect of risk-contingency and benefit-maximisation objectives.

The political economy of alliances thus widens the old-fashioned military focus to a set of intertwined economic, autonomy and security cornerstones consistent with Tertrais (2004) and Johnson's (2015) discussion on policy concessions and costs of alliances (Brawley, 2004, p. 85; Roy, 2005). Strategy-wise, Kuik (2016, p. 500) argued that several Southeast Asian countries (i.e. Malaysia, Indonesia) have hedged (pursued contradictory policies with two actors in tandem) between Beijing and Washington by making trade-offs under conditions of high-stakes and increasing uncertainties. Such rational cost-benefit approach accounts for systemic and domestic factors, not a mere reflection of either favouring the adopted neo-classical realism as a



lens. As such, available scholarship explains that smaller powers align to attain a strategic security assurance against internal/external threats for several factors; however, it does not answer why smaller powers recalibrate alliances.

### **1.4.3 RP-US & ROK-US Alliances: The missing dimension?**

Despite the fluctuating degrees of alignment postures with Washington, there remains no replicable characterisation to why RP-US and ROK-US alliances have unevenly recalibrated over half a decade. An obviously orthodox set of answers is national security drivers and maintenance of regional order. Valid superficially, Manila and Seoul forged security relations with Washington to develop a ‘credible defence posture’ vis-à-vis external threats amid the Korean War (1950-1953) (Avila & Goldman, 2015, p. 15; Kristensen & Norris, 2017, p. 349). But the factors to why the two states deepen or loosen their alliance commitment with the US are far more complex than straightforward answers and need to be unpacked in comparison.

In the case of South Korea, the strategic security dilemma is more than a contested territory in Asian waters. Kim (2016, pp. 58-60) argued that Seoul resorted to an open-door policy, a pragmatic strategic adjustment, in the 1970s for two reasons. First, the declining credibility of the US commitment to honour the ROK-US alliance and second, the increasing risks of entrapment in a big-power – China-US – dynamic. Kwon (2017, pp. 207-208) further elaborated that the Korean President Park Chung Hee (1961-1979) pursued a policy of national defence modernisation to curtail the patronage-client relationship with the US. For instance, Hee’s regime forced President Jimmy Carter to cancel the American troops’ withdrawal plan years after Sino-US rapprochement in 1972, a policy concession made for South Korea signalling a departure from absolute power-based patronage towards a more balanced relationship.

ROK-US alliance is also not free from the implications of domestic changes in the Korean Peninsula. As soon as regional uncertainties sparked with an increasing domestic disorder post-Hee’s assassination, the Asian tiger

under President Chun Doo-hwan (1980-1988) sought to deepen again the alliance with the US in quest of enhancing domestic public support and regime's internal legitimacy (Kim & Heo, 2016). During the 1990's, domestic political changes and voting patterns of youth – Generation 386 and the Internet Generation – reaping the fruits of democratisation and economic development but also detached from colonial and war experiences their fathers – the Korean War Generation – experienced changed state-centric to nation-centric security orientation (Lee, 2012, pp. 441-445). When progressive governments won 1997 and 2002 elections, for example, Progressive Presidents Kim Young-sam (1993-1998) and Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003) loosened the ROK-US alliance to appease domestic anti-American sentiment, perceived then as a supporter for dictatorships.

Structural changes, including threat perception, have largely affected the Korean foreign policy. In fact, the activeness of North Korean threat (i.e. Nuclear test in 2006 and 2017), rise of China and fear of American abandonment have rationalised enhancing bilateral relationship with Beijing to 'tame' the former's anticipated hostility and increase interdependence given Beijing's proximity and its strategic leverage over Pyongyang (Yoo, 2013, p. 86). In this sense, regional (in)stability affects Seoul's ambitions across economic, political and security domains, and therefore a Korean entrapment in a US-China militarised conflict is completely undesirable (Kim & Kim, 2018, pp. 273-274). Around this complexity, the Presence of US Forces Korea (USFK) also questions the role they would play should a conflict occur and fear of being dragged into a subversive conflict.

To reduce risks of entrapment, it is reasonable for South Korea to improve bilateral ties with the regional hegemon and the world's greatest power. Choi (2017, p. 245) contended that Seoul's double economic hedging strategy in the form of advancing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and activism in regional integration initiatives with the two bigger powers in 2013 (the US)

and 2015 (China) aims at enhancing the regional position and bargaining chips. To leverage autonomy and minimise subordination to either, especially its security ally, Seoul, for instance, has concluded FTAs with both parties and partook in discussions on geostrategic regional initiatives, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

On the other hand, the Philippines has a comparable fusion of domestic and structural factors shaping the interactions with the US primarily. Castro (2005, pp. 407-408) shed light on the importance of the alliance's domestic political economy after the decline of American dominance, from 1972 onwards at least (Misalucha, 2014, p. 125). Manila allocated \$25 million for the Armed Force of the Philippines (AFP) to modernise military capabilities and later downgraded the RP-US alliance because of its low-security value given the absence of threats. In the wake of such changes, Washington handed Clark Air Base back to Manila and withdrew from Subic Bay Naval Base in 1991 following a reduction of US aid by \$60 a year later.

Although the Philippines Congress passed Act no. 7898 in February 1995 to modernise AFP within 15 years, limited congressional consensus on financial deficit grounds made the act unfeasible. The Congress granted a preliminary 50 billion Philippine Pesos (PHP) – approximately \$2 billion – for the first five years followed by a 22-month deadlock, clear signals that military modernisation cannot be realised based on Manila's resources (Castro, 2005, pp. 409-410). Therefore, the smaller country sought a utility in revitalising the RP-US alliance in post-9/11 security environment to acquire resources, modernise internal military capabilities and counter local insurgencies (i.e. Moro) (Castro, 2006, p. 102).

With the Chinese proximate threat in an increase (i.e. occupation of Mischief Reef in 1995) and Manila failing to realise military modernisation, the latter deepened RP-US alliance with Washington in quest of attracting more aid

and developing a deterrent to balance the Chinese encroachments in the SCS (Castro, 2016, pp. 306-308). "*States form and maintain alliances if they do not possess sufficient resources and military capability to provide for their own national security needs,*" Castro correctly noted (2005, p. 404). Interestingly, an increase in bilateral trade from \$9.4 billion in 2003 to \$32.3 billion in 2011 decreased the intensity of perceived Chinese threat making Beijing the Philippines' third largest trading partner, an element of China's good neighbour policy that did not last (Zhao, 2014, p. 72).

Yet Zhao, like many observers, is "*uncertain about China's long-term intentions*" in the Asia-Pacific and therefore prudence in "dual dependency" or "hedging" between the US military capabilities and Chinese wealth is required. A serious intensification in the Chinese threat multiplied by actual internal vulnerabilities has pushed the Philippines to tighten security relations with the US and its regional allies (i.e. Japan and South Korea), an evident pattern during President Benigno Aquino III that President Duterte departed from upon assuming office in 2016 (Avila & Goldman, 2015, pp. 13-15). To that, Manila's manifestations and degree of recalibrating RP-US alliance are quite interesting and comparable within the subject matter.

Overall, the two countries have distinctly recalibrated their alliances with the US and given that this phenomenon has been overlooked, it remains a path of academic inquiry. Available scholarship explains why the two countries adopted certain policies between 1951 and 2011; however, recent security orientations do not necessarily represent a continuity, especially noting the rise of President Xi Jinping, inter-Korean reconciliation and Washington under Trump. It rather fails to rigorously answer why South Korea and the Philippines recalibrated alliances with Washington in different forms and degrees as highlighted in section 3. Considering the theoretical gap, the primary function of this research is answering why smaller power recalibrate alliances in varying manifestations? And under what conditions they?

## 1.5 Theoretical Framework

After delving into the literature review, it is crucial to unpack the analytical framework and concepts utilised in this study. This section does two things. First, it sketches the theoretical model adopted and variables (i.e. independent) at play to trace positive and negative changes of RP-US and ROK alliances. Second, it defines and operationalises prominent terms: small(er) states, military alliances, the credibility of commitment, threat proximity, hybrid strategy, alliance recalibration and intensity of US-China relations. This section aims at setting well-defined measurement parameters to avert abuse/misuse of terminologies.

### 1.5.1 Neo-classical Realism: A tool of analysis

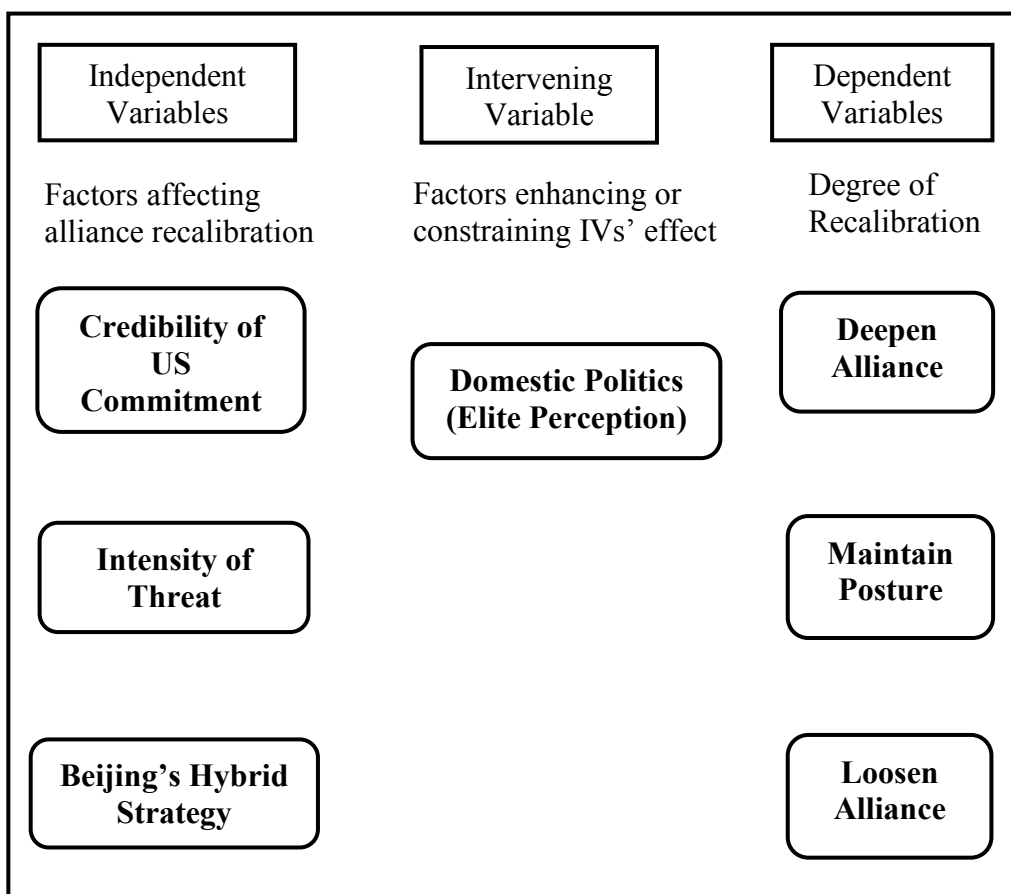
The ground-breaking monograph – Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy – of Gideon Rose introduced an insightful approach to analysing foreign policy decisions. Neo-classical realism is an IR approach whose philosophical foundations are derived from the realist school of thought (realism), ranging from hard power and influence to capacity, prestige and incentives, and attempts to systematise the analysis of internal and external factors (Beach, 2012; Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014). As Rose (1998, p. 146) has written:

*“Its adherents argue that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities. This is why they are realist. They argue further, however, that the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. This is why they are neoclassical.”*

In principle, the approach is a “*transmission belt*” between a state’s preferred policies and structural constraints imposed that the politics of

strategic adjustment become inevitable and largely susceptible to a wide range of factors at play (Taliaferro, et al., 2009, p. 31). In other words, it comprises not only Waltz’s third image (structural explanation) but also domestic politics (second and first images), including elite perception and public opinion, to dissect the outward outputs of a country. This means domestic factors are intervening variables moderating the effects of structural reasons (independent variables), depicted by classical realism, in the process of selecting a specific orientation (dependent variable).

*Figure 1.5.1 Theoretical Framework*



As can be seen in *Figure 1.5.1* above, factors (independent variables) influencing a state’s alignment recalibration (dependent variables) are three-fold: 1) the reliability of US commitment, 2) intensity of perceived threats, 3)

China's hybrid strategy. An intervening variable moderating the effect, however, is domestic politics; elite perception of local necessities and structural pressures on top. To that, neo-classical realism is largely useful in explaining the foreign policy choices of small(er) states, but also bigger ones, both democratic and authoritarian.

### **1.5.2 Military Alliances**

Defining a military alliance (alliance) is less problematic than many terms (i.e. small states) and yet remains contested. Smith (1995, p. 410), for instance, described an alliance as a voluntary agreement whose commitment is non-binding in scenarios of armed conflicts, meanwhile, Snyder (2007, p. 4) as a formal agreement whose binding commitment for the (non)use of force applies under specific conditions. While the variation of commitment unfolds a debate on whether alliances are contracts (formally binding under specific provisions), some scholars regard informal (i.e. secretive) security cooperation (i.e. US-Israel, German-UK against the Soviet threat) demanding an analytical delimitation (Walt, 2009, p. 86; Griffiths & O'Callaghan, 2002, p. 1). For the primacy of the concept in this study, the author defines an alliance as a mutually formal security commitment (i.e. MDT) between two or more actors (i.e. US-ROK) to attain and/or advance security, preserve sovereignty, gain a credible deterrent and accomplish a set of publicly stated and classified objectives (Waltz, 1979, p. 166; Walt, 2009, p. 86).

With the emerging confusion on alliances in the 21 Century, there is a useful way to even typify them. Ghez (2011, pp. 5-9) resourcefully made a grounded distinction between tactical (i.e. Sunni-Israeli), historical (i.e. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, US-Saudi) and natural alliances (i.e. US-UK) based on the role of immediate short-termed danger, strategically long-standing relationships and internally shared political cultures accordingly. The most potent of all is natural alliances for homogeneity of values and relatively predictable coordinating measures in the context of bigger powers. The present

paper specially discusses less potent – historical – alliances, RP-US and ROK-US, both founded post-World War environment and has endured hitherto despite notable ruptures.

There are manifold means to understand the strength of an alliance and ways to deepen cooperation from within. Benson and Clinton (2014, pp. 4-5) contended that there are three angles to trace variation in alliances: first, a breath of obligations in peace and wartime; second, depth of commitment, including associated costs; and third, (potential) military capacity. By breaking down the three pillars to a set of common practices, parameters primarily include 1) regular high-level meetings, 2) frequent security-oriented joint military exercises (i.e. naval), 3) establishment of military bases on the territory of the weaker party, 4) supply of complementary and commercial arms, 5) substantial capacity-building of troops and financial aid, 6) cordial diplomatic statements and 7) high economic relations and 8) increase in military deployment (Castro, 2005; Walt, 2009; Benson & Clinton, 2014). To that, these denominators will likely guide the analysis of alliance recalibration.

### **1.5.3 Reliability of Commitment**

A sensible point to assess the reliability of an alliance is the commitment of parties to the treaty in conditions of peace and war. In fact, the pattern of honouring alliances has been in a drastic decline. Fulfilling promises made for wartime, whether by fighting alongside an ally or remaining neutral, averaged 50% between 1816 and 2003, a pattern that dramatically decreased in post-1945 world order to 22% (Berkemeier & Fuhrmann, 2018, pp. 2-3). Yet major powers are more probable to violate treaties than smaller allies for power asymmetry and costs of retribution (Leeds, 2003, p. 822). Leeds (2003, pp. 429-430) further argues that the likelihood of a challenger's attack on an allied country depends on the alliance's commitment. Of the five typical commitments – defence, offence, non-alignment, non-aggression against one



another and consultation, the defence is the most credible and would likely deter an offensive (if the commitment is respected).

The costs of abandoning alliances are quite high and often spurred by developments in domestic and international arenas. Failure to comply by defence treaties threatens the national security of the attacked, increases mistrust between allies and therefore undervalues the utility of an alliance (Simmons, 2010, p. 281). Accepting this decline as a reality, Simmons (2010) and Berkemeier & Fuhrmann (2018) justify it with a change in 1) international circumstances (i.e. distribution of power), 2) domestic institutions (i.e. democratisation), and 3) strategic landscape (i.e. new alignments, change in interests and assessment).

The present case study examines two MDTs in which parties have a binding commitment to defend each other under conditions of war as outlined in US-RP and US-ROK MDTs of 1951 (Article IV) and 1953 (Article III) respectively. The two agreements states that “*each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either ... would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes*” (Noble & Parks, 1957, pp. 873-875; 897-898). The below *Table 1.5.3* captures the essence of the two treaties and will guide the evaluation of commitments, considering developments in the analysis section.

Table 1.5.3 Details of US-RP and US-ROK's Mutual Defence Treaties

<b>Subject Matter</b>	<b>US-RP</b>	<b>US-ROK</b>
<b>Commitments</b>	Mutual Defence, Aid and Consultations	Mutual Defence, Aid, Deployment of US Forces and Consultations
<b>Conditions to Defend</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An attack on either party</li> <li>2) Conditionally dissolves when the Security Council's takes necessary measures</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An attack on either party</li> </ol>
<b>Conditions to Consult</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Regular</li> <li>2) Whenever an external armed threat endangers autonomy, sovereignty and security</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Regular</li> <li>2) Whenever an external armed threat endangers autonomy, sovereignty and security</li> </ol>
<b>Scope</b>	Pacific area (duration unspecified)	Pacific area indefinitely
<b>Termination Conditions</b>	Unspecified	A one-year notice in advance

(Source: Data MDTs published in American Foreign Policy 1950-1955, 1957, pp. 873-875; 897-898)

#### 1.5.4 The degree of Threat Proximity

In Walt's (1987) balance of threat theory, threat perception has three cornerstones. First, aggregated (offensive) military capabilities, second, the intention of the other state, and third, the geographical proximity of threat to one's interests. The interest-threat nexus is even more insightful, as astutely reflected in the pioneering work of Donald Nuechterlein, whose intensity of interests' classification deems *status quo* as a vital, often non-negotiable, interest in the state's security apparatus (1976, pp. 249-259). In deciding what he accounts for a vital interest, the latter developed an eight-variable calculation based on cost-benefit analysis as demonstrated in Table 1.5.4 below, which compliments the neo-classical framework adopted.

Table 1.5.4 Nuechterlein's Measurement of Vital Threats

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Relevant Costs</b>
Proximity of danger	Economic costs of conflict
Nature of threat	Number of troops required
Economic stake	Probable duration of conflict
Sentimental attachment	Risks of an enlarged conflict
Type of government	Likelihood of success
Effect on balance of power	Reaction of domestic opinion
National prestige	World reaction
Attitude of allies and friends	Impact of domestic politics

(Source: Nuechterlein, 1976, pp. 253-259)

For the purpose of this research, the author co-opts seven indicators as follows: 1) aggregated military capabilities (i.e. offensive, defensive), 2) intention(s) of states (i.e. hostile, cordial), 3) economic stake (i.e. trade, investments), including potential costs, 4) effect on world order (i.e. distribution of power), 5) attitude of allies and friends (i.e. supportive, abandoning), 6) domestic politics (i.e. public pressure) and 7) geographical proximity (i.e. proximate). This is because “*neither foreign aid nor political penetration is by itself a powerful cause of alignment,*” Walt says (1987, p. 5).

### 1.5.5 Hybrid Strategy

‘The Rise of China and the Future of the West,’ an article that appeared on Foreign Affairs nearly a decade ago, questioned whether the Asian hegemon, as a rising power, could alter the rules of the game at the system level (Ikenberry, 2008). The term ‘hybrid’ describes a multi-variant means, including non-military measures (i.e. cyber, economic, propaganda), that conflates the intensity of traditional security issues with non-traditional and reduces reliance on conventional means in the pursuit of certain objectives minimising the possibility of direct engagement (Hoffman, 2009, p. 35; Chivvis, 2017, p. 1). This study refers the Chinese hybrid strategy to Beijing’s multi-faceted economic (i.e. aid, inducements, loans), political, security and technological instruments aiming at advancing national interests in the Asia-Pacific, minimising the intensity of security issues and increasing interdependence

between the regional hegemon and smaller states, if not dependence on China. Given maritime security disputes and regional stability concerns, one would, therefore, place Chinese economic inducements and regional integration endeavours in the broader realm of hybrid strategy.

### **1.5.6 Small States**

The advent of the term ‘small states,’ known also as ‘small or weak powers,’ as an academic tool surged after World War II. Despite growing attention in the new millennium, qualitative (i.e. soft power, influence) and quantitative (i.e. hard power, size, population, Gross National Income (GNI)) definitions offer incompatible recipes to deem what a small state is, an enduring problematic in IR broadly (Vital, 1971; Maass, 2019). Vital (1967, p. 8), for instance, defined these units in tangible socio-economic terms by relating a country’s population to its economic power, meanwhile, Rothstein (1968, p. 237) in a power-based viewpoint referencing the ability to influencing the system – almost non-existent if small states are partner-less.

In Keohane’s proposition, Lilliputians (small powers) are neither ‘system-determining’ nor ‘system-dominant’ but likely either ‘system-affecting’ or ‘system-ineffectual’ actors – depending on their influence and strategy adopted (i.e. ganging with like-minded nations, activism in international organisations) – for their flexible adjustment to structural and domestic actualities (1969, pp. 295-296). Even more abstract in the words of Neumann & Gstohl (2004, p. 4), “*small states are defined by what they are not.*” As such, one could draw generic conclusions that they are neither middle (i.e. Canada, Turkey, Australia, Japan), big (i.e. China, Russia, the United Kingdom) and/or superpowers (i.e. barely the United States *per se*) nor possess adequate capabilities to secure their countries; that they are equally weak as a result of internal vulnerabilities and systemic constraints given power distribution.

For analytical usefulness, it remains crucial to conceptualise the term by what it is. In our context, small states are actors that possess elements of soft and hard power, whose *status quo* cannot be preserved by relying on internal resources, some interests be advanced by means available at their disposal and interaction – if any – marginally affects the international and regional systems (Vital, 1967; Vital, 1971; Neumann & Gstöhl, 2004; Maass, 2019). In this sense, states would likely rely on bigger power’s resources to offset *de facto* weakness, but also attempt to balance a trade-off between three core values: security, prosperity and autonomy (Kuik, 2016, p. 171). Adopted from unpacked literature, the following attributes characterise small states in this study: 1) limited resources, most notably military power, 2) relies on external actors for security and/or development, 3) utilises multilateral organisations to leverage influence, and 4) seeks to adopt a pragmatic foreign policy.

#### **1.5.7 Alliance Recalibration**

Following the definition of alliances, dividing the phrase – alliance recalibration – is necessary. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2019), the word recalibrate refers to a qualitative and/or quantitative change in the way an actor behaves or thinks. In our context, recalibration conveys a positive (i.e. deepening the scope and extent of obligations and commitments) or negative (i.e. downgrading interdependence) difference in the relationship, if placed in ‘alliance recalibration,’ between allies of a military alliance. To evaluate alliance recalibration, an extension of discussion sparked by Castro, Benson and Clinton, Kuik and Walt, there are nine explicit measures: 1) high-level meetings (i.e. talks, visits, consultations), 2) frequency (i.e. annual) and type of joint military exercises (i.e. security, humanitarian), 3) armament (i.e. deployment of defensive offensive capabilities, arm deals, donations), 4) establishment of military bases, 5) value and type aid (i.e. military, technological, counterterrorism), 6) diplomatic rhetoric in peace and wartimes (i.e. cordial, neutral, hostile), 7) deepening bilateral security agreements, 8)

status of economic relations (i.e. interdependence, trade volume, foreign aid), and 9) size of troops deployments.

## **1.6 Research Design and Case Rationale**

This section proceeds in four-fold: methodology, data collection, data analysis and case rationale. The first part draws on adopted research methodology in conducting this academic investigation and the second explains data collection technique(s). The third component specifies data analysis's tools and the fourth dissects the legitimate rationale for case selection, including why alternative countries were eschewed.

### **1.6.1 Research Methodology**

The present research adopts a qualitative method for suitability and feasibility purposes, especially considering the highlighted gap and resources available (i.e. time, funding, travelling concerns). The utility of such an inductive orientation is exploring behaviours, assumptions and patterns of a phenomenon (Maxwell, 2012, p. 112). In this endeavour, the researcher employs a multiple (n) 'case-study' approach in a comparative design for two reasons. First, the in-depth theory-building approach investigates similarities and differences of certain behaviours (i.e. weakening/strengthening alignment postures) under specific criterion to identify legitimate explanations (Burnham, et al., 2008, p. 66; Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 306). Second, the findings of the 'comparative case-study' tradition are often replicable/generalisable favouring theoretical development of 'recalibrating alliances' in international security studies (Rosenau, 1966).

### **1.6.2 Data Collection**

The data will be collected from primary (i.e. WikiLeaks's) and secondary sources (i.e. academic journals, databases, reports, books). In order to engage up-to-date literature, the author will utilise country's official statements (i.e. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the White House) and use WikiLeaks' diplomatic cables on South Korea, North Korea, the Philippines, China and the US.

Additionally, relevant books, journals and archives of three universities will be accessed, namely the University of Glasgow, Macquarie University and Charles University.

### **1.6.3 Data Analysis**

Collected data will be analysed via ‘process tracing’ technique in a neo-classical framework of domestic and systemic variables (see 1.5.1). The technique traces causal relevance to outcomes over time as explaining real-world behaviours sits at the heart of its merits, which largely coincides with the research objectives and methodology (Beach, 2018, p. 2). Analysis on the depth and extent of ‘alliance recalibration’ will be evaluated based on indicators dubbed earlier (i.e. frequency and nature of joint-military exercises, high-level security consultations, technological, military and economic aids, military bases). To that, the data will be collected, organised and analysed in ‘words’ format.

### **1.6.4 Case Rationale**

There are several reasons to have deemed the RP-US and ROK-US alliances suitable. First, the US has three bilateral collective defence agreements in Southeast and East Asia – those to name, with Japan (1960), South Korea and the Philippines (U.S. Department of State, 2019). This means that the three countries together with Thailand, a signatory to the 1954 Southeast Asia Treaty, qualify for the formal alliance criterion. In this sense, ruling out countries with strategic partnerships (i.e. Singapore) or political entities with security assurance (i.e. Taiwan) from potential case studies is possible because the US commitment is not as binding as MDTs and they are strategic partners than allies (Parameswaran, 2016; Bush, 2018). Second, Seoul and Manila, unlike Tokyo, lack imperial history, for which physiological inferiority has been manifested in their security orientation since their foundation. The absence of a big-power dynamic in their histories analytically makes the two countries more relevant than Japan in the context of small states, among other factors.

Third, both are a reasonable fit for the thematic focus examined in this project. Their historical pattern of alliance recalibration (see 1.4.3) evident in their security approaches since the 1950s is interesting and the shared attributes with notable variations make the two relatively comparable and significant. Fourth, the intensity of disputes in SCS concerns both parties and several other claimant states (i.e. Malaysia, Vietnam) where the possibility of any US-China conflict would have regionally grave security, political and economic implications. In other words, there has been a shared set of external threats and interests, including the Chinese threat and maintenance of regional stability, influencing the degrees and manifestations of alliance recalibration. Yet the two countries have behaved distinctly across different timelines, for which deserves closer scrutiny to characterise the phenomenon and elucidate legitimate explanations. The described variation (see 1.0) multiplied by suitability and contemporary significance of the two alliances under President Trump increase the value of cases chosen.

## **1.7 Hypotheses**

Drawing on the theoretical framework (see 1.5.1), this study proposes four tentative answers – Hypotheses (H) – as follows:

**H1:** The less reliable the US commitment is, the more likely smaller allies will loosen security cooperation with the US and deepen relations with other actors (i.e. China).

**H2:** The lower threat perception is, the more likely smaller actors will loosen alliance with the US.

**H3:** The less Beijing depends on a hybrid strategy to materialise its foreign policy objectives than rely on military instruments *per se*, the more likely US allies will deepen alliances.

**H4:** The changing perception of interests on structural factors and domestic priorities at elite level substantially effect the degree of alliance recalibration.



## **1.8 Research Scope**

The temporal scope of this project begins with Obama's 2011 Pivot Policy and ends by April 2019 to allow enough time for analysis and draft(s) writing, meanwhile, the spatial scope is limited to analysing the recalibration behaviours of Seoul and Manila with/vis-à-vis Washington. Given scopes, the limitation is two-fold. First, time constraints and limited fellowship possibilities in the two countries, to conduct fieldwork, hinder(s) the use of triangulation methodology to deepen understanding and enhance data reliability. Another limitation is the effect of evolving inter-Korean relations on the ROK-US alliance, noting cloudy pathways ahead. However, specified temporal scope limits the effects of recent developments on overall findings of this research project.

## **1.9 Chapterisation**

This paper is structured in four-fold as follows:

**Chapter I** Introduction

**Chapter II** RP-US and ROK-US Relations Post-Cold War (1990-2010)

**Chapter III** RP and ROK's Evolving Recalibration Strategies (2011-2019)

**Chapter IV** Conclusion (Discussion and Analysis of Findings)

## **Chapter II: RP-US and ROK-US Alliances Post-Cold War (1990-2010)**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This section comparatively deconstructs the Philippines and South Korea's alignment postures in two distinguished geostrategic environments: post-Cold War order and post-war-on-terror politics. The first duration, marked with substantial changes from the fall of communism, split of the Soviet Union, the unification of Germany and American hegemony in unipolar world order to the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC), discounts parochial structural explanations in explaining the security behaviours of the two capitals (Kissinger, 2015).

The second era, characterised by new trends in globalisation, technological advancements and cross-sector innovations, threats posed by non-state actors and the rise of China, signified a significant decline in the American power despite a global military outreach (Nye, 2019, pp. 68-69). Drawing on an array of economic, political, security and military factors at domestic and systemic structures, the two durations show that the calculations of ruling elite of domestic necessities and structural pressure drive alliance recalibration for different reasons, likely enmeshed in what the former Korean President Park Geun-hye dub "*Asia's paradox*" (Casarini, 2014).

### **2.1 RP-US and ROK-US post-Cold War (1990-2000): Tied to American dominance?**

Despite experiencing analogous structural changes crucial for security, autonomy and prosperity values, the two alliances underwent considerable recalibration that the commitment of Washington was fickle for varying reasons. While Manila's fluid threat assessment and (in)ability to autonomously modernise defence capabilities influenced its loosening (1991-1995) and deepening (1996-2001) behaviours of the RP-US alliance, the US declining commitment and rise of progressive ruling elite conscious of Korean milestones strained the US-ROK alliance. First, the degree to which the

intensity of threats premised and/or restrained cooperation within the two alliances strikingly vary. Second, although the commitments of the two alliances loosened, the US' commitment to its Asian allies declined consistent with regional and internal developments in the two countries. Third, Seoul, more than Manila, mirrored public demands in its foreign policy orientation and deepened the progressive's legitimacy until 2008.

### **2.1.1 Threat Assessment: A Clash of Interests**

The Filipino and Korean ruling elite differently perceived threats throughout the post-Cold War environment, like their American counterpart, and therefore had distinct patterns and degrees of alliance recalibration. First, the Philippines' short-termed low perception of threat underappreciated the long-term value of US-RP alliance and therefore, President Corazon Aquino's regime (1986-1992) downgraded the scope of security and military cooperation with the US. For example, the Philippines' Senate rejected to renew the 1947 Military Bases Agreement (MBA), forcing an American withdrawal from Subic Naval Base and hand Clark Air Base over to the Philippines, 1990-1992, meanwhile, counterterrorism and maritime security joint exercises endured steady (Lum, 2012, p. 1).

Interestingly, second, Manila sought to strengthen RP-US alliance past vital sovereignty threats. Following the Chinese occupation of Mischief Reef in 1995, for instance, Manila signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in 1996 and the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in 1998 to sanction American military deployment, ship visits and expand large-scale cooperation (Sen, 2005, pp. 89-90; Castro, 2006, p. 415). It is worth noting that the pattern of deepening obligations and commitments of the RP-US alliance primarily relied on security concerns, whether defending the *status quo* or enhancing means in that endeavour.

By comparison, the Korean leadership attentively perceived volatile political and security landscapes at regional and global structures. With dubbed

global shifts at play and the North Korean intimidation active and immediate, Seoul's threat assessment prioritised rapprochement with the vicinity and loose relations with the US. For instance, the regime of President Roh Tae-woo (1988-1993) introduced 'Nordpolitik' – a Northern policy of normalisation with socialist regimes, leading to the normalisation of relations with Russia in 1991 and China in 1992 (Kim & Heo, 2016, p. 51). Because of this strategic shift, the Asian tiger restricted the sources of vital threat(s) to North Korea, expanded economic cooperation with erstwhile perceived enemies and relatively gained a tamer to the latter's hostilities (whenever permissible) considering the Sino patronage over Pyongyang (Yoo, 2013). Worth noting, ROK-Sino bilateral trade quintupled within a decade, from approximately \$6 billion in 1991 to \$30 billion in 2001 (Snyder, 2002, p. 1). Despite the normalisation, it would be naïve to presume that Seoul's threat perception would be low in the Korean Peninsula with the reunification of the two Koreas unrealised.

For long, Seoul has had an existential threat perception of a potential North Korean invasion given bordering proximity. To South Korea, the question of security pays attention to what on a stake is and how to peacefully avert that. During the 1994 Nuclear Crisis, the country rejected President Bill Clinton's proposal to pre-emptively strike Pyongyang in quest of coercing a surrender of the North Korean nuclear programme (Lee, 2012, p. 452). This is because Seoul perceptively evades wars that could jeopardise regional stability underpinning its economic prosperity, for it would have costed an estimate of \$745 billion and \$3.9 Trillion in 1994, when its budget averaged \$260 billion (Bae, 2010, pp. 345-346). While Seoul continued to cautiously monitor the security environment, it has equally adjusted relations with non-democratic countries based on principles of economic interdependence, mutual respect and rule of law in quest of boosting national development and regional stability. Threat perception minimally affected the strength of the US-ROK alliance during this duration.

### **2.1.2 US Commitment: How authoritative?**

The degree of US commitment to smaller allies is a distinct factor in elucidating alliance recalibration due to its reversal implications on their behaviours. The notion that a high commitment strengthens alliances is unestablished, the Philippines and Korea serve as good examples. While Manila has downgraded RP-US alliance despite the US' high commitment across military, political and security domains, Seoul lessened ROK-US commitments in light of a declining American commitment and changing strategic landscape.

From Washington's viewpoint, the Philippines disparaged the strategic prominence of the alliance. Since the Cold War, Manila hosted the most geo-strategic hub for time-sensitive American military response in the Asia-Pacific and descent in its threat perception deteriorated the US commitment. First, President George Bush decreased the American military and security assistance by 60%, averaging \$220 million of in 1992 of a previously requested \$550 in 1991 (Kraft, 1993, p. 47). Consequently, the American reactionary punishment further weakened the Philippines' aspiration to independently modernise AFP's capabilities, noting the latter's loss as once was among top recipients of US aid in the Pacific (Castro, 2005, pp. 407-408). Manila's GDP, which surged from \$6.7 billion to \$44.3 billion from 1970-1990, was not so exceptional that it could rely on its means restraining defence modernisation (World Bank, 2018).

Second, the frequency of US-RP joint exercises decreased, and scope of cooperation continued to focus on counterterrorism, humanitarian response and maritime security with some exercises cancelled. For example, the two countries cancelled 'Balikatan' joint exercise between 1995 and 1999 (Lum, 2012, p. 15), with annually uninterrupted exercises averaging 6-8 ensuing the downgrade (Castro, 2005, p. 417). Third, the US punitively abandoned upholding its defensive obligation of protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Philippines upon Beijing's occupation of the Mischief Reef in 1995 (Sen, 2005). This failure to honour the obligations stipulated in Article

VI of the 1951 MDT equally discredits the American credibility and further denotes the prominence of reciprocal commitments in alliances. Fourth, the American deployments experienced two critical junctures, withdrawal and redeployment, following the 1991 base closure and 1996 SOFA's approval. A fifth component that further helped the two countries overcome ruptures in the relationship was continuous consultations, military-military and high-level talks for instance, leading to a rebound in RP-US relations by ratifying the VFA in 1999.

On the other hand, the American commitment to Seoul declined and further increased mistrust for its perceived utility as an enabler in the (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) DPRK-US talks. First, the Bush administration withdrew outstanding nuclear weapons stored in Korea by December 1991, including short-range and ground-launched capabilities, a gradual elimination that started with reductionist defence postures nearly two decades and a half earlier (Kristensen & Norris, 2017, pp. 350-352). Not only did Washington withdraw its reassuring tactical nuclear capabilities, second, but also sporadically terminated joint military exercise, Team Spirit (TS) in 1992 and was unexecuted between 1993-1995 for example (Collins, 2014). Following TS' discontinuity, the US substituted the former with 'Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration' (RSOI), a tactical spring exercise held incessantly between 1994 and 2007.

Third, the US intended a decrease of military presence in Korea to layout an engagement policy with Pyongyang following the adoption of East Asian Strategic Initiative, also known as the Strategic Framework for the Asian Pacific Rim. Between 1990 and 1992, it pulled back 7000 troops of the USFK deployed on Korean territories and shifted its leading security engagement into a supportive role (Snyder, 2009, p. 4). Although USFK and US-ROK forces' interoperability remained active, fourth, both Bush and Clinton administrations considered the withdrawal of nuclear capability and termination of joint

exercises with Seoul as substantial concessions to induce a North Korean warrant of an international inspection on its nuclear programme and thus fruitful talks (Wertz & Gannon, 2015, p. 2). In their context, Seoul was perceived as a tactical means than a strategic partner in the denuclearisation efforts increasing the fears of entrapment and abandonment. But Seoul likewise downplayed US-ROK manoeuvring exercises in 2000 to ease tensions with Pyongyang, a sign of rapprochement to incentives concessions and increase trust then ahead of the inter-Korean summit (Key-young, 2004, p. 330). Fifth, it is crucial to underscore that South Korea has been no recipient of US aids since realising a developed economy status. Seoul's GDP surged from \$3.12 billion in 1965 to \$279.3 billion in 1990 as the line graph above shows, becoming a major donor to developing countries (i.e. the Philippines) (World Bank, 2018).

### **2.1.3 Domestic Pulls**

A crucial factor in alliance recalibration during this duration was domestic politics, and by extension the perception of ruling elite, in Manila and Seoul. While Korean progressive regimes loosened ROK-US alliance with the emergence of 'Internet Generation,' economic development and rise of a well-educated middle class, Manila's Congress rectified the US' presence for pragmatically calculated objectives and internal/external security considerations with the Catholic Church's opposition disregarded.

Based on the political economy of alliances, the Filipino Senate negatively and positively influenced the relationship with the US for its authoritative role. For one, it exercised a constitutional power to ratify, by means of approval or disapproval, treaties for evanescent reasons. For example, the Congress denied MBA renewal in 1991 on security disutility and sovereignty grounds, despite President Aquino's intent to maintain American long-term presence in the Philippines, meanwhile, ratified VFA 1999 following intensive discussions on SOFA in 1996 for three reasons (Park, 2011, p. 280).

First, Beijing's credible encroachment of Philippines' territorial integrity elicited vital insecurity, a departure from low to high threat assessment and geopolitical vulnerability in Manila's security apparatus uncovered (Felix, 2005, p. 6).

Second, it was imperative for the Philippines to offset the dearth of financial means to develop national defence capabilities, including human capital, given low congressional budget allocations and contention between senators. Third, the rise of local insurgencies, like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao, Southern Philippines, multiplied by military and multi-layered vulnerabilities threatened the legitimacy of Filipino ruling elite in Manila (Castro, 2006, pp. 109-110). The latter, therefore, conceived high economic, political and security utilities, recognised by the Senate, in reinvigorating RP-US relations to deter the Chinese aggression, enhance interoperability of armed forces and counterinsurgency efforts.

On the contrary, Seoul's propensity to loosen ROK-US relations stemmed from two primary issues at the domestic level. First, the victory of the leftist progressive party in 1992 elections prioritised an "*equitable, autonomous*" alliance with Washington based on shared values, protection of sovereignty and national milestones realised since the formation of the alliance 4 decades ago (Kim & Heo, 2018, p. 119). Not only did progressives enhance economic and security relations with China and assuage the DPRK-US confrontation, believing that the only plausible means to the Korean peninsula's reunification is a consensual contract different from the American plan, but also upgraded 'Nordpolitik' to 'Segyehwa' (globalisation) to undermine zero-sum politics and hedge against structural uncertainties (Kim, 2016, pp. 60-61). For example, Seoul engaged with Beijing in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) with the Dae-jung's government endorsing 'One China' policy and pursuing the 'Sunshine Policy' to peacefully reunify the Koreas.



Second, the generational change in South Korea, the ‘386 generation’ and ‘Internet generation’ whose lives were disentangled from the horrors of Korean War generation and based on the fruits of a renounced Korean transformation for instance, compounded anti-American sentiment and discerned the US as a threat to national democracy (Lee, 2012, pp. 456-460). This is because the superpower backed preceding dictatorships deriving legitimacy through *coup d'etats* before the 1992 elections folded nearly a 4-decade chapter of undemocratic governance. A good illustration for such evident change of national perceptions is the voting behaviour in the 1997 (and 2002) elections, where more young voters casted confidence for the progressive candidate Kim Dae-jung than the conservative Lee Hoi-chang. Therefore, the South Korean elite and voters made clear bottom lines to increase autonomy and replace patronage relationship with equal partnership.

## **2.2 Alliances post-9/11: China’s re-emergence misinterpreted (2001-2010)?**

Although the terrorist attack on World Trade Centre (WTC) on September 11 accounted for dramatic political and security trends in world politics, regional developments in the Asia-Pacific continued to calibrate RP-US and ROK-US alliances in a quick-witted manner. First, the two countries deepened economic relations with Beijing in quest of realising economic prosperity objectives, with US-RP alliance stronger than ROK-US for internal threats encountered. While Manila has continued deepening the alliance since 1996 with short-run estrangement with Washington to offset countervail domestic vulnerabilities, Seoul maintained its loose ROK-US posture to appease public opinion and North Korean rapprochement. Second, low threat perception in the two capitals multiplied by the Chinese hybrid strategy constrained China-targeted maritime cooperation within the two alliances. Third, despite an increase in American commitment to the two alliances and projected credibility in relation to the 1990s, these patterns nominally motivated the two countries to upgrade alliance

relations under the progressive regime in Korea and Philippines' President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001-2010).

### **2.2.1 Threat Perception: Intense?**

Inspired by a common fight against terror in the wake of 9/11 despite signing Tripoli agreement with MILF in 2001, Manila's leadership strengthened US-RP alliance to offset budgetary limitations in quest of countering internal threats than external. In Southern Philippines, the activities of several non-state actors (i.e. MILF, Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Sayyaf), whose radicalism and demands vary, constituted a critical threat to the legitimacy of the state. It is no wonder that the US-RP Joint Defense Assessment concluded that the Philippines' counterterrorism means were poor necessitating stronger cooperation with the US, from joint training to intelligence gathering and capacity-building of AFP to consultations (Castro, 2006, pp. 110-111).

That said, the Philippines delimited the scope of cooperation to its national concerns and regionally common insensitive issues. For example, the RP-US alliance cancelled maritime security cooperation that formerly aimed at deterring the Chinese threat in the Pacific following a reduction in threat assessment and reprioritisation of internal threats. During this duration, Manila mainly deepened the alliance to legitimise governance and ensure elite survival by increasing its capability in countering terrorist and insurgents' menaces at the domestic level. In this sense, US-RP political friction (see 2.2.4) during the Iraq war demonstrates the extent to which the Filipino ruling elite sought to hedge against the US dictation and be accountable to local voters in quest of increasing public confidence and popularity.

On the other hand, a fluctuation in Seoul's threat perception, which was primarily based on the North Korean behaviour following Dae-jung's Sunshine policy, barely influenced the US-ROK. Between 2001 and 2005, its threat assessment decreased compared to that of the 1990's straining the alliance for two reasons. First, Seoul and Pyongyang engaged in five direct rounds of the

China-chaired negotiations between 2001 and 2005, namely the ‘Six-party talks’ in Beijing involving Russia, the US and Japan, unlike the 1994 DPRK-US direct talks that excluded Seoul (Liang, 2018). Second, the six parties concluded a joint statement in September 2005 affirming North Korea’s willingness to abandon its nuclear programme in a verifiable and peaceful manner consistent with the objectives of the 1992 Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (U.S. Department of State, 2015). This inter-Korean progress, though symbolic, reinforced major collision between the hardliner Bush administration and progressive Korean counterparts.

After the Sixth six-party talks in November 2005, Pyongyang’s reversal on the joint statement elevated Korean threat assessment and US-ROK ties. In July 2006, President Kim Jong-il (1994-2011) ostentatiously tested ballistic missiles, including long-range Taepodong-2 missile, followed by the first nuclear test three months later (Wertz & Gannon, 2015, p. 5). Because of the intensifying North Korean menace, the conservative President Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) departed from progressive’s rapprochement policy towards Pyongyang to a more rigid policy by reinvigorating US-ROK alliance into a more comprehensive strategic defence arrangement (John, 2014, p. 21). Therefore, it is evident that Korean behaviour was more driven by regional rapprochement than threat perception under progressive’s tenure.

### **2.2.2 The Reliability of US Commitment**

Although geopolitical changes in South Korea’s vicinity shaped the breath of US-ROK cooperation, RP-US relations substantially enhanced by focusing on counterterrorism efforts since the war on terror throughout the decade. This pattern is evident in five-fold. First, the two countries continued the Balikatan joint exercise with attention to countering internal and regional terrorist threats, weakening Abu Sayyaf in Basilan and Jolo islands for instance. Second, President Arroyo deepened the alliance by signing the Mutual Logistics

Support Agreement (MLSA) in 2002, which turned the Philippines's facilities as regional counterterrorism hub in Southeast Asia (Lum & Dolven, 2014, p. 12).

Third, the American content with Manila's increasing security cooperation under the Arroyo administration nearly doubled the former's aid to the latter, from nearly \$48.7 million in 2001 to \$110 million in 2006 (Lum & Niksch, 2006, p. 18). Fourth, the scope of cooperation shattered attention from the formerly perceived Chinese threat to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), counterinsurgency and maritime anti-pollution. Fifth, Manila signed SOFA with Australia – another US ally that shares regional concerns – in 2007 in an endeavour to include the former in a trilateral joint exercise in the future (Misalucha & Amador-III, 2016).

On the contrary, Seoul's progressive regimes relatively prioritised loose US-ROK relations to harmonise ROK-DPRK relations and increase autonomy despite a rebound in the American commitment for several reasons. First, the assertively uncompromising approach of President George W. Bush clashed with Dae-jung's principled Sunshine policy, a major departure from the Clinton administration. On 29 January 2002, Bush named North Korea, Iran and Iraq as the "*axis of evil*," whose hostile intentions and offensive capabilities construct a "*grave and growing danger*" to the world (Social Security Online, 2002). Second, the two countries finally engaged in direct talks with North Korea via the six-party talks a year later, a changing pattern from Clinton's exclusion of Seoul in the 1990s, as a result of high-level consultations. Third, Seoul refrained from joining the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) until 2009, which aims at halting the illicit transfer of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), to avert jeopardising rapprochement efforts sought with North Korea (Hong, 2005). In this sense, the US partially accommodated the Korean way of handling North Korea in the first three years of President Roh Moo-hyun's tenure (2003-2008).

Fourth, the unstable patterns of engagement across multiple security-sensitive issues made allies' commitment to the ROK-US joint military exercises steadily throughout the decade in comparison to the 1990's qualms. For instance, RSOI, the replacement of TS, took place uninterruptedly from 1997 until its rebranding with Key Resolve and Ulchi Focus Lens (UFL) with Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG) in 2007/2008 (Collins, 2014). Fifth, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted resolution 1718 (2006), which imposed international sanctions on North Korea, ranging from targeted sanctions (i.e. assets freeze) and arm embargo to trade ban (i.e. fuel import, textile and seafood export) in rejection of its nuclear test in 2006 (Wertz & Gannon, 2015, p. 5). Sixth, the Bush administration demanded a decrease of USFK from approximately 37,500 troops in 2003 to 25,000 by 2008 with Seoul's military contribution to the invasion of Iraq (Park, 2010). As such, the increasing pattern of American commitment has all but failed to significantly deepen ROK-US relations under progressives.

### **2.2.3 China's Hybrid Engagement: A strategy of conflation?**

The Chinese hybrid engagement has shrewdly conflated security sticks with economic carrots. Not only has China's 1978 economic reformation resulted in a robust economic growth at about 9% for three consecutive decades but also qualified Beijing to layout deep-rooted economic foundations with regional actors crucial for its rise as a regional hegemon (Liu, et al., 2018), which sporadically strained the US' 'hub and spokes' system in the Pacific. The Philippines turned a blind eye to maritime territorial claims between 2001 and 2010 for three reasons. First, following a clash with the US after a unilateral withdrawal of troops from Iraq, President Arroyo equibalanced the US threat to review aids by meeting the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to discuss potential areas of cooperation (Zhao, 2014, p. 79). In this direction, Beijing sought to pull the Philippines to its sphere of influence by fostering economic and security relations while aiming to gradually distance Manila away from the US.

Second, the perceived utility of Beijing as a source of economic opportunity to Manila has understated the intensity of maritime security issues as an opportunity cost. In fact, Beijing conveniently became among top three trading partners to the Philippines after bilateral trade climbed from \$5.26 billion in 2001 to \$32.3 billion in 2011 (Castro, 2016, p. 310). To showcase good neighbour policy, President Hu Jintao (2003-2013), for example, granted a diversified \$1.7 billion aid useful to advance Manila's development goals during a visit to the Philippines in 2005 and funded the North Luzon Railway. Drawing on American failure to honour the commitments of the 1951 MDT in the wake of Beijing's occupation of Mischief in 1995, third, it was reasonable for the Arroyo administration and Chinese counterpart to consensually distance away bilateral discussions on Spratly islands, and by extension, the wider maritime concern.

By comparison, China's hybrid engagement has had a force multiplier effect on the progressive's regional policy and broadly the Korean strategic thought. First, President Moo-yun deepened relations with China by upgrading his predecessor's 'Collaborative Partnership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century' into a 'Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership' in 2003 (Hwang, 2014, p. 2). This has further stimulated economic interdependence between Seoul and Beijing with an increase in bilateral trade from \$44 billion in 2002 to \$186 billion in 2008, replacing Washington as the largest trading partner in 2004 (Zhimin, 2012, p. 201). Additionally, China has become increasingly attractive for Korean investors and as a result the largest hub for their Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Second, the PRC has availed itself in hosting the inter-Korean affair – Six-party talks for example – to develop its credibility as a responsible rising power and leverage relations with regional powers while underpinning *status quo* vis-à-vis the US in the Pacific. Third, China also sought to deepen regional integration with US' allies – Japan and South Korea – to increase

interdependency and potentially dependency. For instance, Beijing joined the annual China-Japan-Korea trilateral partnership in 2008 and they launched Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) together with the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2010 (Zhimin, 2012, p. 203). Out of a \$140-billion aid, Seoul granted \$19.2 billion with Japan and China aiding nearly \$38.4 billion each. Therefore, the hybrid ‘rise of China’ as a responsible power, whose diversified instruments have made significant breakthroughs at multilateral and bilateral levels, signifies a more tangled Asian security conundrum than was during the past decade.

#### **2.2.4 Domestic Pulls**

Although structural factors partly elucidate why Seoul and Manila have tightened cooperation with the US in some domains and loosened others, the two countries, spurred by domestic pulls, exhibited varying policies towards great powers competition. Manila, for example, tightened RP-US counterterrorism cooperation and concurrently downplayed maritime-focused exercises until Arroyo’s replacement in 2010 for three factors. First, the Arroyo administration upgraded security cooperation post-9/11 in quest of offsetting limitations imposed by an embryonic economy and therefore enhancing national defence capabilities to deter internal threats. In 2002-2003, the US provided two diversified military packages with a total value of \$49.5 million, which included a Cyclone-class patrol boat, night-capable UH-1 helicopters, M35 trucks, M-16A1 rifles and C-130s (Castro, 2005, p. 419). As a result, this sanctioned greater counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaigns as explained earlier (see 2.3.1).

Second, despite the absence of a legitimate justification to support the US invasion of Iraq in existing defence agreements, including the 1953 MDT, the Philippines withdrew limited policing commitment from Iraq to reassure growing nationalistic sentiments home. Following the abduction of the Filipino Angelo De La Cruz, Manila unilaterally withdraw their military contingents

from Iraq, to free a national and turn associated public anger into support, without Washington's approval in 2004 (Williams, 2009, p. 132). This sparked American criticism and caused a short-lived tension in their relations, for which the Arroyo administration focused on legitimising domestic governance through hedging between the US and China to attain security and economic interests accordingly.

By comparison, domestic political pressures facing Seoul's ruling elite exceeded those in the Philippines, straining the ROK-US relations under progressive leaders. First, the Korean public decried the alliance 'partnership of unequals,' a pattern that has continued since the emergence of Generation Internet and victory of liberal candidates (Graham, 2012). In 2002, for instance, Washington rejected Seoul's request to prosecute the American driver responsible for the killing of two school girls on Korean soils and further led to nation-wide protests (Snyder, 2009, p. 5). Consequently, the US considered relocation of Yongsan base to Osan-Pyeongtaek by 2006, which failed to materialise in time.

Second, the formerly perceived anti-American sentiment in Korea substantially surged, anchoring the progressive's position towards Washington. In a 2003 CSIS-Joongang Ilbo-RAND's public survey, 58% of respondents justified anti-Americanism by US' unilateralism while underappreciating the so-called 'American exceptionalism,' meanwhile, 93% confirmed the importance of ROK-US alliance (Jung-hoon, 2004, p. 60). This negative pattern heightened to the extent that some college students thought "*Bush was more threatening than Kim Jong-il.*" (Seung-hwan, 2014, p. 30). This US' notorious record in Korea caused popular grievances that legitimised the continuity of Sunshine policy and defeat of the US' preferred conservative candidate, President Moo-hyun. It also compelled the US to partly play by the Korean rules on North Korea until the imposition of sanctions on Pyongyang in 2006.



Third, a return to conservative lead in 2008 reinvigorated the ROK-US alliance, while further deepening China-ROK relations. Since assuming the office, President Lee Myung-bak closely coordinated with the US a joint policy towards North Korea, ranging from upholding the six-party talks to reactionary measures. A notable defence cooperation, for example, was the ‘Joint Vision for the Alliance’ during the Obama-Lee summit in 2009 (Manyin, et al., 2015, p. 17). To that, domestic pulls and pushes influenced the breath of cooperation in US-ROK relations with a notable evolution in Korean strategic thought.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

In a nutshell, this chapter has reviewed the factors affecting RP-US and ROK-US alliances in the post-Cold-War environment. Analysis of two durations (1990-2001 and 2001-2011) offers four useful remarks worth remembering before delving into the next section (2011-2019). The first observation, the commitment of smaller states to alliances is as important as the commitment of bigger power allies. With Manila’s unilateral downgrading of the RP-US alliance in the early 1990s, the US easily abandoned the Chinese occupation of Philippine’s Mischief reef uncontested, which was largely incentivised by negative signals and loose alliance. Second, both Washington and Seoul minimised their commitment to the alliance to induce North Korean behaviour, while noting US unilateralism during the 1990s across diplomatic, security and military domains.

Third, while internal threats in Manila guided the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency cooperation with the US and greater RP-PRC economic cooperation strained ROK-US maritime security exercises, South Korea’s fluctuating threat perception hardly affected the alliance with the US since the 1990s. Fourth, internal political changes and perception of the US loosened the two alliances; however, the rise of progressive elite and educated generation in Manila maintained loose US-ROK alliance, unlike RP-US. The final remark, Beijing’s hybrid engagement has proven to be both a source of threat and

opportunity while noting that its hostility in the SCS towards the Philippines rebounded RP-US alliance with maritime security as a priority.

### Chapter III: RP and ROK's Evolving Recalibration Strategies (2011-2019)

#### 3.0 Introduction

This section comparatively unpacks the evolving recalibration strategies of the RP-US and the ROK-US alliances since Obama's Asia Pivot strategy. The 2011-2019 duration, marked with a decline in American influence in the Middle East and search for 'Balance of Power' in the Pacific, the rise of Beijing's President Xi Jinping, Brexit referendum and the killing of US most wanted man, analyses Manila and Seoul's security behaviours. Interestingly, this timeframe is also pronounced for global scepticism primarily stemming from the victory of Trump, Brexit delay and upsurge of populism in Europe to China's increasing economic role and the US-led inter-Korean rapprochement. There is a relative increase in the military spending of US allies – South Korea, the Philippines and Japan – as well as china, with a substantial decrease in US spending between 2011 and 2018 as table 3.0 shows below (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019).

**Table 3.0: Trends of Military Expenditure in Billion (2011-2018)**

Year	Philippines	South Korea	China	Japan	US
2011	\$2.7	\$32.9	\$149	\$45.1	\$775.2
2012	\$2.7	\$33.7	\$161.4	\$44.5	\$731.1
2013	\$3.2	\$34.5	\$176.5	\$44.4	\$673.1
2014	\$3.1	\$36.1	\$191.6	\$44.8	\$631.5
2015	\$2.8	\$37.5	\$204.2	\$45.6	\$616.5
2016	\$4.2	\$38.5	\$216	\$45.35	\$612.9
2017	\$3.75	\$41.1	\$227.8	\$45.4	\$605.8
2018	\$3.75	\$43	\$239.2	\$46.6	\$633.6
Pattern	Increase	Increase	Upsurge	Steady	Decline

(Source: Data compiled from SIPRI database, 2019)

The change of leadership in the three countries has a significant influence on the interactions between long-standing military alliances. While the rise of somewhat populist presidents – Trump and Duterte – has seemingly

laid out the grounds for drastic changes in the RP-US relations with a positively reverse effect on the RP-China relations, the victory of President Moon Jae-in in 2017 has rebranded the liberal agenda straining the ROK-US alliance with complex ROK-China dynamics. Such political events, however, are not detached from the history of ‘alliance recalibration’ and rather represent a continuity to a very happening phenomenon: managing alliances in a changing geo-strategic environment. The following subsections aim at explaining whether the US commitment, the intensity of threat perception, China’s hybrid strategy and/or domestic politics explain why the two smaller countries have recalibrated alliances since 2011.

### **3.1 The US Commitment: Credible?**

Following the return of the conservative regime in Korea and the replacement of President Arroyo in the Philippines, the two countries distinctly strengthened the alliances with the US. More specifically, the degrees of deepening relations with the US varied to some extent with the management of the Chinese threat substantially disparate. While Washington and Manila profoundly strengthened the RP-US alliance in a zero-sum approach to balance against China despite US abandonment, Seoul strengthened ROK-US alliance with a reoccurring pattern of deepening relations with Beijing in tandem for the considerably demonstrated level of US commitment. Before delving into the US commitment towards allies, it is of relevance to indicate that arms race increased in the Asia-Pacific as *Table 3.1* shows below, from regional dominant (China) to US smaller allies, intensifying the security dilemma.

These patterns, however, changed following a considerable change in the US commitment towards allies, suggesting that the confidence of US allies on American security provision has distinctly varied long before 2016. Such perceived sentiments of shaky US commitment in Seoul and Manila further intensified structural uncertainties upon Trump’s assumption of the US highest political office, projecting Washington unpredictable worldwide for two

reasons. Coming from a business background with an established bureaucratic inexperience, first, President Trump has pursued Americanism – “*America first*,” replacing globalism that the American forefathers once considered desirable and necessary, but also demonstrated “*little respect for long-standing alliances*” in quest of leveraging economic trade-offs (Wickett, et al., 2017, p. 56). Second, Trump’s “*unpredictable, [confrontational] and thin-skinned*” persona placed cost-benefit calculations and policy directions unexpected to allies and enemies alike (Wickett, et al., 2017, p. 6). Therefore, the interplay of the two aspects – priorities and personality – profoundly portray Washington as unpredictable and unreliable, despite the role American institutions (i.e. Congress) exercise in constraining the President.

### **3.1.1 The Philippines**

Despite a reoccurring pattern in dishonouring collective defence obligations in cases of “*armed attack*” inconsistent with the 1951 MDT, the commitment of Washington substantially increased to Manila in other domains between 2011 and 2016. First, the number of combined forces partaking in Balikatan joint exercise nearly doubled, reportedly from 5000 in 2011 to 11000 in 2016 (Romero, 2011; China Military Online, 2017; Petty, 2017). The second signal is reprioritising maritime security alongside HADR and counterterrorism exercises, contrary to President Arroyo’s security orientation, which further enhanced security cooperation between US allies in the region. For example, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged to finance 10 coast guard ships in 2013 to enhance Manila’s contribution to regional peace and security (Lum & Dolven, 2014, p. 10). Third, multi-sector assistance disbursed to the Filipino authority approximately increased by 220% within the same duration, from \$205 million to \$450 million (USAID, 2018).

Fourth, the two countries deepened the alliance by signing supplementary defence arrangement, the Manila Declaration in 2011 and EDCA in 2014 for instance (Castro, 2016, p. 325). The EDCA sanctions

strategic rotational presence and access of military facilities to the American forces on Filipino territory but also recognises Tokyo's reinterpretation of 1947 constitution extending the scope of strategic security cooperation to counter China in cases of conflict. With reorienting maritime security at the core interests of the RP-US alliance, the Philippines boosted military spending roughly by 32%, from \$2.81 billion to \$3.72 billion (2011-2016) in the quest of attaining a 15-year military modernisation objective announced in 2013 (Tian, et al., 2018).

However, the implications of ever-increasing American unpredictability under Trump, which have exploited long-standing incredible record, are unclouded in the Philippines. First, Manila downgraded security cooperation by delimiting the scope of exercises, Balikatan and KAMANDAG for instance, to counterterrorism and HADR efforts (Vicedo, 2017). This change shows a Filipino interest in changing national posture towards Beijing and Washington in tandem. Second, Duterte's administration dropped the maritime judicial victory vis-à-vis China and reconsidered bilateral and multilateral – ASEAN-led for example – mechanisms in tackling maritime security, downplaying the intensity of high stakes and enhancing relations with China. This policy departure is integral to the hedging orientation, more precisely economic pragmatism and insurance-policy against the US fall-back, coupled with an attempt to tame Beijing's hostility over territorial disputes in the short-term.

Third, for the lack of strategic outlook in alliance relations the Philippines has attempted to leverage tactics utilised – i.e. downgrading joint-exercises – to renegotiate and recalibrate the pillars of the RP-US alliance. Drawing on Washington's unreliability to protect the sovereignty of the Philippines (and ambivalence) in the SCS, Manila's Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana proclaimed a review interest of the MDT in late 2018 (Amador, 2019). Following these events, the US State Secretary Michael Pompeo

intelligibly clarified the vagueness of the ‘Pacific’ and renewed the US commitment during a visit to Manila in March 2019. Pompeo stated: “*As the South China Sea is part of the Pacific, any armed attack on Philippine forces, aircraft, or public vessels in the South China Sea will trigger mutual defense obligations under Article 4 of our Mutual Defense Treaty*” contrary to former US diplomacy (U.S. Department of State, 2019).

Fourth, both American reassurance and mounting Chinese encroachments in the SCS made maritime security and amphibious operations timely priorities in the 2019 Balikatan, a partial departure and considerably an upscale in relations under President Duterte. To showcase enhanced commitment, the US swaggered with the Lockheed Martin F-35B aircraft and multipurpose ship USS Wasp (LHD-1) in the Pacific, noting Beijing’s dispatch of around 200 vessels to Thitu Island (Pag-asa), Palawan (Welch, 2019). Recent Chinese hostility aroused decay – the Filipino Foreign Ministry described it as “*illegal*” and called for the execution “*of the DOC,*” declaring Pag-asa as a marine-protected island (RP Department of Foreign Affairs, 2019).

### **3.1.2 South Korea**

By comparison, the credibility of US commitment to the ROK-US alliance sharply ascended during this duration. First, joint military exercises – domestically and globally – continued uninterrupted between 2011 and 2016, from Key Resolve and Foal Eagle to UFG. For instance, the figures of combined exercises, including those of Marine Corps, Army, Air Force and Navy, averaged a minimum of 56 in 2016 (Ministry of National Defense, 2016, pp. 90-94). Second, not only have the security-oriented consultations endured but also expanded in structure and scope. Following the conclusion of a modified defence strategy during the 45<sup>th</sup> Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) in 2013, the two countries adopted a deputy minister-level Deterrence Strategy Committee (DSC) in 2015 to compliment the Korea-US Integrated Defense Dialogue (KIDD) (p. 68). These committees became integral to the

Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group (EDSCG) in 2016 focusing on traditional and non-traditional threats (i.e. cyber security).

Third, the US aid is no big deal to the Korean modern and diversified economy, unlike the Philippines. Although the USAID disbursed aid to a high-income country did not exceed a million between 2011 and 2016, it is worth noting that top beneficiary sectors included emergency response, energy, basic health and disaster prevention (USAID, 2018). Fourth, Washington politically reaffirmed its defence commitment to honour the 1953 MDT, a sign of reassurance to Seoul and equally a perceived provocation to China and North Korea (Sankaran & Fearey, 2017, p. 322). During the 4<sup>th</sup> US-ROK 2+2 talks in 2016, US Secretary of State John Kerry reiterated that "*any attack on the United States or its allies will be defeated, and any use of nuclear weapons will be met with an effective and overwhelming response*" (U.S. Department of State, 2016). Fifth, the US deployed THAAD to enhance Korean effective deterrence in the face of North Korean threat and approved \$7.9 billion military sales to Seoul within 2013-2017 (U.S. Department of State, 2018). Acquired military capabilities included Global Hawk UAV, Aegis Combat Systems, KF-16 upgrades, harpoon missiles and F-35 fighters (Ministry of National Defense, 2016).

To Korean counterparts, Trump's orientation has advanced a zero-sum dilemma to the American viewpoint of military alliances, its position in the world and relevant desirable order: money for security. Commercialising American security provision in a corporate norm doubts the US commitment in many ways, most notably to Seoul. Since candidacy, first, Trump bluntly reiterated in March 2016 that Seoul has either "*to protect*" itself or "*pay us*" (Mumford, 2017, p. 52), succeeded by expedient and repetitive rhetoric during the first Presidential debate to increase cost-sharing by paying a "*fair [defence] share,*" including for stationing US troops (Bump, 2017). Following tense negotiations to what several Korean officials described "*unacceptable*"



demands (i.e. full cost + 50%), Washington partially leveraged an increment in Korean share by %8.2, averaging \$915 million (1.04 trillion won) in 2019 from 960 billion won (approximately \$850 million) in 2018 (Humphrey, 2019; Hepinstall, 2019). There is a set of uncalculated Korean commitments, including 91% of Camp Humphreys' cost (\$10.7 billion), and tax-free unpaid lands for American bases (Klingner, 2019, p. 1).

Second, the newly ratified one-year Special Measures Agreement (SMA) has replaced the 5-year cost-sharing deal, making annual negotiations possible with greater uncertainty. In other words, Trump has substituted long-term strategic viewpoint with short-term tactical gains, undermining the overarching utility of ROK-US in the Pacific and US' perceived (un)reliability. While the Trump administration aimed at leveraging national economic advantages by exploiting security provision, third, it only did by 2% above the Korean 2015 commitment (Ferrier, 2019). Fourth, the US cancelled joint exercises (i.e. Foal Eagle) ahead of the 2018 US-DPRK Summit in Singapore and Trump rather described them as “*very expensive*” and “*very provocative*” to North Korea (Copp, 2018). Although high-level consultations continue bilaterally and the destiny of THAAD remains ambiguous, fifth, several analysts have deemed Trump's cost-based relationship with Seoul as “*a false economy*” (Spoehr, 2019). Comparing these developments to the recent history of ROK-US, the latter has become more unpredictable under Trump than preceding American presidents, making the US a source of caution than reassurance.

### **3.2 Threat Perception: Reshaping Asian Rules?**

While the threat perception heightened under the Aquino administration and has become later fluid under President Duterte in the Philippines, the South Korean assessment of threat has substantially heightened and remains high in the absence of Korean reunification. This section examines whether threat

perception in Seoul and Manila has affected the recalibration of the two alliances and the extent to which it also influenced their security strategies.

### **3.2.1 The Philippines**

Following the replacement of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001-2010), the Filipino foreign policy experienced major transitions and fracture, especially in managing alliance dynamics with Washington. While President Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016) significantly deepened RP-US alliance to balance vis-à-vis China, President Rodrigo Duterte (2016-present) downgraded the alliance and enhanced RP-PRC ties in nearly a zero-sum orientation. This section analyses why the Philippines recalibrated RP-US alliance in contradicting directions under two administrations despite enduring maritime claims in the SCS.

Reminiscent of the Chinese occupation of Mischief Reef in 1995, President Aquino departed from Arroyo's equibalancing to a strong-willed balancing strategy after exhausting political and diplomatic avenues, deepening RP-US alliance for several reasons. First, the enduring Chinese encroachments on legitimate maritime rights, harassing a Filipino vessel assigned with oil exploration in Reed Bank within RP's continental shelf for instance, compounded with the decrepit state of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), increased Filipino vulnerability (Hiebert, et al., 2015, p. 11). Second, Aquino looked to Washington in the quest to offset insecurity by developing a credible defense posture and minimizing structural uncertainties. In November 2011, Manila and Washington signed the 'Manila Declaration' on USS Fitzgerald, unfolding a new era of enhanced defense relations vis-à-vis a rising China consistent with Obama's pivot policy (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

Despite the invigorated RP-US relations, third, China extended *de facto* claim over the Scarborough Shoal in 2012, increasing anti-Chinese sentiment in the Philippines. While the Shoal falls within the Filipino 200 Nautical Miles of UNCLOS, Beijing argued the Shoal falls within its so-called 9-dashline,

pushing the Philippines to submit a compliant to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (ACP) in 2013, which subsequently ruled in favor of the Philippines (Storey, 2016, p. 2). With repetitive Chinese hostilities echoing maritime developments during Aquino's tenure, Manila concluded Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in 2014, sanctioning American strategic rotational presence and access to military facilities (Castro, 2016, p. 325). Therefore, the extent to which the intensity of menaces influenced deepening RP-US alliance is high under Aquino.

The US failure, fourth, to uphold moral and 'security provision' obligations by protecting the Philippines from the Chinese occupation of Scarborough Shoal has maintained the Filipino doubt on US credibility and increased structural uncertainties. In 2011, Washington violated the mutual defence duty by brokering negotiations with China and subsequent Filipino withdrawal from the occupied territories than defending its ally (Greitens, 2016, p. 5). This neutral behaviour circumvented US defence promise to Manila despite the latter's high level of cooperation, unlike the early 1990s, across domains alluding to a circumspect eschewal of a big-power armed conflict.

In this regard, the US scrapped Manila the strategic security utility of the alliance to de-escalate regional tensions signalling that the Chinese infringements will likely be met with indecisiveness (Misalucha & Amador-III, 2016, p. 58). A big-power conflict would cost an arm and leg. Yet US failure to defend Manila against the reoccurring Chinese hostilities could question the defence value of the RP-US alliance, necessitating a meticulous review of the 1951 MDT but also relations with China given its assertive rise and economic opportunities presented.

Contrary to his predecessor, President Duterte's foreign policy has been more by potential economic opportunities than threat perception. Given that high cooperation with the US under Aquino provoked Chinese aggression than minimizing systemic uncertainties, first, Duterte strained RP-US alliance and

concurrently enhanced RP-PRC relations in several manifestations. First, Duterte downgraded the alliance by reducing war games to 13 (from 23), denounced the US presence in the Philippines and shifted the scope of Balikatan joint exercises to non-traditional security issues (i.e. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief – HADR) between 2016 and 2018 (Castro, 2017, pp. 169-171). By downscaling Filipino commitment, Manila aimed at gaining Beijing’s trust to increase the prospects of cooperation than confrontation. Second, Beijing and Manila advanced bilateral negotiations on maritime security; in fact, excluding the US from maritime disputes has been a Chinese objective. In 2018, the two countries established a working-level Bilateral Consultative Mechanism (BCM) to peacefully navigate SCS maritime differences prior to President Xi’s official state visit to the Philippines, the sixth Duterte-Xi meeting (Fook, 2018, p. 2). This shows that Duterte capitalized on threat perception to reassure China, an essential step to get China’s support for economic development objective.

Despite notable breakthroughs in PRC-RP relations and friction in US-RP alliance, renewed Chinese assertiveness in the SCS minimally strengthened the alliance, suggesting a new recalibration may have commenced. In April 2019, the Filipino Foreign Ministry described Beijing’s dispatch of nearly 200 vessels to Thitu island (Pag-asa), Palawan, as “*illegal*” and called for the execution “*of the DOC,*” which led to declaring Pag-asa as a marine-protected island (RP Department of Foreign Affairs, 2019). The DOC is a non-binding Declaration of Conduct concluded in 2002 to peacefully resolve disputes between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Given that the Sino aggression endured under solid and loose RP-US relations ignorant of selectively peaceful trajectories, the 1951 MDT deserves a thorough review to co-opt the challenges of the day.

### 3.2.2 South Korea

Precipitate and frontal North Korean threat played a leading role in deepening the US-ROK alliance analogous to the Filipino scenario. In a continued pattern of defiance between 2010 and 2016, Pyongyang allegedly committed 229 local provocations and 23 infiltrations according to the South Korean Ministry of National Defence (2016, p. 289). To counter these lingering threats, including nuclear and long-range ballistic missile tests in 2016, President Park Geun-hye (2013-2017) sought to develop a credible defence posture and retaliatory capability, most notably by procuring the US-supported ‘Triad System.’ The system, which comprises three cornerstone – Kill Chain, Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) and Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation (KMPR), increased ROK’s timely defence and reprisal. For instance, the surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities boosted real-time detection of threats – the Kill Chain. Building on intelligence gathered, the multi-layered KAMD intercepts missiles before hitting a target, after coordination between early warning and command and control units.

Although elevating threat perception positively recalibrated US-ROK relations, Seoul equally fostered ROK-PRC. Over the decades, the Korean strategic thought evolved to view good relations with Beijing as desirable and pivotal in the pursuit of national security and defence objectives. In other words, a full-fledged bandwagon in a zero-sum calculation with either China or America is largely unfeasible for three reasons (Kim & Park, 2019, p. 184).

Despite North Korean provocations, there was domestic disagreement over the direction of the ROK-US alliance before Moon assumed office in May 2017. For instance, Moon’s electoral spokesman, Park Kwang-on, described the THAAD agreement as “*very inappropriate*” for placing the next government in a tight alliance position (Kim & Park, 2017). Notwithstanding criticism, reoccurring DPRK tests, the launch of its ICMB (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) in July and its nuclear test on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, led to the

acceleration of the deployment of the anti-missile system, sparking friction with China (Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2017). While Pyongyang's sixth nuclear test, accompanied by the claim that an "*H-bomb for ICBM in the northern nuclear test ground*" was developed, intensified threat perceptions on the part of Seoul (Reuters, 2017). However, Beijing strongly protested over the THAAD deployment on grounds of its own national security threats and imposed punitive sanctions on Chaebol – Korea's largest business conglomerate, as THAAD could also intercept Chinese ICBMs and facilitate US spying on China (Martin, 2017; Reuters, 2017). That said, it is worth noting that the Moon administration has loosened ROK-US alliance in several domains to downplay the rising tensions and lay the groundwork for inter-Korean rapprochement (as the next two subsections demonstrate).

There are increasing security and political utility in deeper PRC-ROK relations – these are, tuning down the reckless behaviour of DPRK and engaging in inter-Korean rapprochement with China keen on discrediting Washington (Mazarr, et al., 2018, p. 6). More than anyone, Beijing has capitalised on the inter-Korean crisis to deepen regionalism and credibility as a rising global power and a regional hegemon. Given these reasons, it is no wonder that Seoul proposed the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) in quest of advancing regional cooperation and '*trust-based diplomacy*' (Ministry of National Defense, 2014, p. 38).

### **3.3 Domestic Politics: Favouring who and for what?**

The domestic political perception(s) of threats and cost-benefit calculations have positively influenced alliance recalibration with the RP-US and the ROK-US alliances. In Manila, the ruling elite and parliament did not afford mounting internal and external threats undermining their legitimacy between 2011 and 2016, perceiving a strategic utility in upscaling RP-US relations. Since then, however, the newly elected leaderships have significantly impacted alliance relations in the two countries, conjoined with a comparable event in the US: the

victory of Trump. Perhaps, what Duterte, Moon and Trump share are differing agendas from their immediate predecessors – be it protectionist, reconciliatory or nationalist. While Duterte’s anti-Americanism and accommodative policies towards Beijing have strained the RP-US alliance in near-term, the progressive comeback of President Moon has advanced a reconciliatory agenda towards North Korea with relatively hard – sanctions – measures acceptable, paving the way for confidence-building measures.

### **3.3.1 The Philippines**

With Beijing’s encroachments and anti-Chinese sentiments heightening, conflict in Mindanao unsettled and AFP’s vulnerability exposed, Aquino perceived high utility in pursuing maritime security with the US for national security. Complimenting presidential policy, the Senate of the Philippines (2011) decried Beijing’s unjustified “*harassment*” in Reed Bank, arguing that “*China's display of power - one that shows a big country strong-arming a poor country - should not be allowed to pass without strong complaint and vigorous protest.*” Yet despite signs of maritime concerns and deepening RP-US relations, China blatantly occupied Scarborough Shoal in April 2012, undermining its national image in the Philippines at 38% and fuelling anti-Chinese sentiment, with the US image at 92% (Poushter & Bishop, 2017, p. 7).

Reminiscent of loose RP-US’ implications on the Filipino economy and security in the 1990s, but also building on the American rebalancing strategy, President Aquino invigorated the RP-US relations in hopes of a more credible US commitment. Central to upgrading the alliance are the Manila Declaration and EDCA, strengthening counterinsurgency and counterterrorism cooperation to balance against local insurgents, MILF and Abu Sayyaf for instance, and China by reprioritising territorial defence (Avila & Goldman, 2015, p. 9). Following the Philippines’ carrot-and-stick approach with MILF, the two parties concluded the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB) in March 2014 (Lum & Dolven, 2014, p. 20). Consequently, the Aquino

administration minimised structural uncertainties and maximised close-ties benefits (see 3.1.1) to strengthen defence posture, develop underdeveloped towns, including Mindanao and Sulu, and modernise AFP's military capabilities.

It was largely due to Duterte that the policy towards the US changed from balancing vis-à-vis China to a form of hedging between bigger powers, contrary to what Castro (2017) described as appeasement towards China. At the idiosyncratic level the Filipino President is no special from Trump; in fact, the personal attributes – bashing, strong-tongued, self-centred and insensitive – qualified Duterte to be labelled “*Trump of the East*” (Rauhala, 2016; Samuels, 2016). In September, Duterte called Obama a “*son of a whore*,” which eventually caused the suspension of US state visit and military sale of 26,000 assault rifles to Manila (Timberman, 2019). Why this confrontation? First, the anti-Western sentiment and more specifically anti-Americanism, Duterte upholds stems from a Cold-War leftist indoctrination and high nationalism fuelled with societal inequalities, often blamed at the Manila-centred establishment (Teehankee, 2016, pp. 70-73). Unlike elitist families (i.e. Aquino, Arroyo), the President's political culture and background – a successful mayor of the underdeveloped Davao City, Mindanao region, who grasped the level of corruption and crime as well as infrastructural and investment policy changes required – justified elite perception of national priorities (Tidwell, 2016). Chief among concerns have been economic growth and opportunities, redirecting foreign relations, peace, inclusion and social development (Timberman, 2019).

Second, the quest for infrastructural development and ‘real change’ incentivized Duterte's economic pragmatism towards Beijing, devaluing the pursuit of maritime security in its orthodox orientation. In bid to attract Chinese aid, first, Duterte improved relations with Beijing by not actively pursuing the 2016 maritime judicial ruling during ASEAN meetings in Laos and Manila but



also declaring a surprising “*separation form the United States*” while in Beijing in 2016 (Teehankee, 2016, p. 70; Castro, 2017, p. 160). Duterte then justified his distancing policy by China’s willingness to fund developmental projects in the Philippines (Williams, 2017). In 2017, Manila announced ‘DuterteNomics,’ a presidential national development blueprint that anchors the 10-Point Socioeconomic Agenda of June 2016 (The Manila Times, 2017). Therefore, Duterte’s anti-US rhetoric has hampered US-RP relations in the quest of diversifying the Filipino economic portfolio, most notably with China. While the new Philippine president is no special fan of Trump, at the idiosyncratic level, they, in fact, share a number of attributes; mutual attributes – bashing, strong-tongued, self-centred and insensitive – qualified Duterte to be labelled “*Trump of the East*” (Rauhala, 2016; Samuels, 2016).

But as China returned to an assertive maritime policy, Duterte has faced, and will likely continue to, several challenges. First, the Chinese reoccurring threat fuels anti-Chinese sentiment in the Philippines ahead of the 2022 election. More precisely, the public sentiment clashes with Duterte’s anti-Americanism, undermining ‘China appeasement’ policy and suggesting that his actual strategy is yet to crystalize. Second, it is important for Duterte to balance between advancing developmental priorities and security interests. Given that the Chinese violation on Thitu succeeded maritime-focused Balikatan exercise, the Duterte administration may have signalled another recalibration in US-RP alliance relations or tactically adjusted its posture to maximise economic opportunities. Third, Manila has called to hold bilateral talks with China in the pursuit of détente based on the 1992 ASEAN Declaration and pertinent 2002 ASEAN-China DoC. Such development suggests that the Philippines has not necessarily appeased China but rather pursued a form of strategic hedging to maximize autonomy, leverage bargaining chips and diversify benefits without being tied to Aquino’s binary strategy: with or against either power.

### 3.3.2 South Korea

Seoul's binary political landscape has heavily shaped the Korean management of two issues: the ROK-US alliance and North Korea. While the progressives have historically sought to a reconciliatory inter-Korean reunification with loose alliance relations with Washington that includes the withdrawal of US troops, the conservatives have pursued a hardliner policy towards DPRK within the context of a robust ROK-US alliance. In 2008, the political comeback of conservative leaders – Lee and Park (2008-2017) – consolidated the ROK-US alliance in several ways (Kim & Heo, 2016). First, President Park continued his successor's hard-line approach towards North Korea, echoing the American Asia-Pivot engagement. Unlike Park and Roh, the progressive leaders favoured a conciliatory approach and loose alliance relations, let alone an ultimate vision of American withdrawal from the Korean Peninsula. Then, the contours of security cooperation between Seoul and Washington heightened in quest of strategically counterbalancing the fast-growing Chinese influence in the Pacific.

Yet despite deepening the US-ROK relations, the Korean public opinion bolsters Seoul's relations with both the US and China. Between 2010 and 2015, China's image significantly enhanced, with approval of China improving from 38% to 61%, compared to a minor change in the US' image, from 85% to 83% (Pew Research Center , 2017). Mirroring ROK's statistics fluid threat perception and reliability of the US security commitment, it is increasingly established that Seoul, public and elite, grasp their intertwined enigma in short-to-medium terms. They favour a degree of security cooperation with the US vis-à-vis the North Korean threat and robust economic relations with China but also a peaceful reunification of the two Koreas (as depicted in the 2016 white defense paper).

The victory of progressive leadership in 2017, however, has advanced a conciliatory agenda towards North Korea with punitive measures – namely,

sanctions – only regarded as partially acceptable. With Moon assuming the presidency, Seoul abandoned a decade of inflexible conservative orientation towards Pyongyang for an adjusted reconciliatory progressive (i.e. Roh Moo-hyun and Kim Dae-jung) approach: that is, negotiations with some sanctions. This has led to significant differences in the formerly robust US-ROK relationship. On the bright side, both parties have cooperated on rapprochement with DPRK and renegotiated US-ROK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2018. The sectoral cooperation came after the Moon administration maintained DPRK engagement while backing Washington's 2017 "*maximum pressure*" vis-à-vis Pyongyang, downplaying Trump's inclination to launch a preventive strike against Pyongyang following the latter's credible ICBM threat (Yun, 2019, p. 52).

Despite adjusted Korean priorities and efforts to maintain the US-ROK relationship, Moon reinvigorated the Sunshine Policy and achieved three symbolic breakthroughs, which built momentum for inter-Korean peace via mainly engaging Washington, Beijing and Pyongyang. First, Moon welcomed Pyongyang's participation in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in a bid to pave the way for peace negotiations in early 2018. Following this historic event, Presidents Moon and Kim Jong-un signed the 'Panmunjom Declaration' during the inter-Korean Summit in April ahead of the US-DPRK Summit (ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). Third, Seoul supported the Singapore-hosted US-DPRK Summit in June 2018 and by extension the Vietnam-based Summit in February 2019 accordingly (Park, 2018). Considering the US failure to conclude a basic understanding on denuclearization with DPRK in two summits, the Trump administration may have to increase coordination with Seoul to make tangible progress in the Korean Peninsula.

Despite the US-ROK cooperation, the level of coordination in other domains has dwindled – for example, the issues of alliance burden-sharing and 'concessions conditions' to North Korea have led to major policy friction.

While Trump has demanded a substantial increase of South Korea's share of the cost of stationing US troops in the country, Moon has rebuffed Trump and shares the DPRK's direction on sanctions – that is, relaxation of any form of punishment at the beginning of the peace process (Manyin, et al., 2019). It appears that the Moon administration has sought to advance comprehensive peace efforts in the quest of replacing the so-described “*unstable armistice*” – six-party talks – with a sustainable peace regime (Chanlett-Avery, et al., 2018, pp. 6-7). So far, the prospects for effective coordination, however, remain slim under Trump and Moon due to their incompatible strategies in their respective approaches to North Korea.

But as top Presidential priorities endure, Moon encounters a set of domestic concerns and constraints: declining economy, voters' satisfaction and the next elections. Against the US historic drop of Korean isolation, Moon has pioneered an intermediary role for South Korea with China actively involved, directly and indirectly. To sustain this role, the Korean President must overcome domestic economic challenges, strengthen cooperation with the US to that extent that does not jeopardise Korea's relationship with Beijing and Pyongyang. Contingent on whether the weakness of Korean economy continues to be a primary reason for voters' (dis)satisfaction, Moon's approach will likely be changed, especially if the conservatives make a comeback in the 2022 elections. The next subsection examines China's hybrid strategy and its implication on the two alliances.

### **3.4 Beijing's Hybrid Strategy: Deepening Realities?**

Domestic political changes in Seoul and Manila, compounded with an unprecedented US unpredictability under Trump and enduring North Korean threat, have led to a fluid policy environment for allies. In this context, Beijing has assertively diversified its statecraft – from aggressive to hybrid – to selectively deepen economic ties with US allies, exploit their friction and cement regional unipolarity objective. While the Chinese economic

inducements to Manila have significantly bolstered RP-PRC relations under Duterte and conflated maritime security tensions until sparking Thitu tension in April 2019, PRC-ROK relations continued to face both economic growth and political/security hurdles past the installation of THAAD on Korea soil.

#### **3.4.1 South Korea**

Complicating matters has been China's pursuit of a strategy of hybrid engagement. Beijing's strategy has affected South Korean strategic thinking since China has now become a central pillar for Korean economic prosperity (Zhimin, 2012). This has led to frequent strains in the ROK-US alliance. From upgrading 'Collaborative Partnership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century' under Kim Dae-Jung into a 'Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership' under Roh to 'Strategic Cooperative Partnership' under Lee and the conclusion of an FTA with China under Park, ROK-PRC relations have been substantially fostered, making China Seoul's largest trading partner since 2004 (Hwang, 2014, p. 2). These bilateral economic arrangements have stimulated economic interdependence, with exports sharply rising from \$50 billion to \$162 billion and imports from \$30 billion to \$106 billion between 2004 and 2018; by comparison, Korean exports to Washington represented less than half of China's, averaging \$73 billion (Korea Customs Service, 2018).

Beijing has also assertively and astutely capitalized on regional security issues in the quest of cementing its aspiration for regional dominance as well as exploited friction between allies. While Seoul perceives high utility in taming the reckless behaviour of DPRK, China has used its patronage to facilitate inter-Korean rapprochement, with the aim of discrediting, and ultimately disengaging Washington in the Pacific (Mazarr, et al., 2018, p. 6). Beijing, especially under President Xi Jinping, has leveraged the inter-Korean relationship and relative patronage over DPRK to deepen its regional role as well as to enhance China's credibility as a rising global power and responsible regional hegemon. Among the most recent symbolic signals are two-fold: the

Xi-Kim summit in March a month before the inter-Korean summit and Kim's ride to the Singapore-based US-DPRK summit on an Air China plane in June 2018 (The Straits Times, 2018).

Drawing on the close geographical proximity between Seoul and a rising Beijing, several forms of *de facto* cooperation are inevitable given regional concerns and interests. The two capitals, like many other Asian countries, value averting an armed conflict that will undoubtedly lead to a deterioration of regional stability and affect their economic prosperity. To reduce subordination to both bigger powers and leverage economic, security and autonomy interests, Seoul has pursued double economic hedging and activism in regional integration initiatives consistent with Moon's Berlin speech that South Korea has to be in the "*driver's seat*" in managing regional affairs (Choi, 2017, p. 245; Frank, 2017). In that, Seoul shares aspirations that contradict those of the US and China for the Pacific – namely, a "*multipolar world with a multipolar Asia*" (Ahlawat & Smith, 2016, pp. 39-42). How successful South Korea will be in pursuing this objective, however, remains to be seen.

Notwithstanding an upscale in the PRC-ROK and the ROK-US relations under President Park, China-centred-and-influenced regional integration projects gained greater credibility in the face of increasing US unpredictability. The US abandonment of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in January 2017 and imposition of trading tariffs on friends, including Seoul, as well as perceived adversaries in 2018 have undermined the US Asia Pivot Policy. A month following TPP dismissal, South Korea signed an MoU with Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) but has resisted (until the time of writing) joining the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) due to its fear of domination by China. Given these interests, it is no wonder that Park proposed the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) in the quest of

advancing regional cooperation and ‘*trust-based diplomacy*’ (Ministry of National Defense, 2014, p. 38).

There has been a primary interest to thaw Chinese ‘unofficial’ sanctions vis-à-vis Korean businesses, especially since China has been Korea’s favourite investment destination. Causing loss in billions and market uncertainty, affected industries include Chaebol, cultural and entertainment entrepreneurship and car industries (Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2017, p. 6). Given that an economic entrapment between Washington barriers and Beijing punishments is too costly, South Korea has aimed at emulating Moon’s inauguration speech – that the country must not fall a victim, whether in political, security or economic terms, to either China or the US – and increasing regional activism (Yun, 2019, p. 53). Therefore, it is no wonder that China’s hybrid engagement leveraged political role and Seoul’s economic dependency at a time when closer ROK-US ties threaten Chinese strategic interests, or at a minimum, advance US interests at its expense on its proximate playground. That is why a traditionally full-fledged bandwagon strategy with either Beijing or Washington in a zero-sum calculation is, largely unfeasible for South Korea (Kim & Park, 2019, p. 184).

### **3.4.2 The Philippines**

Notwithstanding the growth in PRC-RP relations post-Cold-War, the Chinese quest to meet Filipino developmental needs and questionable intention to downplay the intensity of security concerns have affected the prospects of Beijing’s hybrid strategy. Under President Aquino’s balancing orientation, China’s strategy strained RP-PRC ties in two ways. In the realm of bilateral trade, first, Manila’s exports to Beijing averaged \$15 billion in 2016, a stagnant increase compared to a doubled record soaring from nearly \$7.6 billion in 2004 to \$14.4 billion in 2011 (The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2018). However, this export-oriented record was paralleled by a consistently

substantial increase in imports from China, growing from about \$3.3 billion to \$19.4 billion between 2004 and 2016.

Second, stronger US-RP relations led to the replacement of bilateral maritime consultations with multilateral arbitration in the Hague, contradicting the Chinese bilateral approach in managing regional affairs. Relating these figures to the alliance status, President Arroyo's equibalancing strategy between China and the US benefited the Filipino economy more than Aquino's pure balancing vis-à-vis Beijing in the absence of Chinese threat, especially given an evident perplexity in the Philippines with regards to US protection.

By comparison, the PRC-RP trade relations have substantially grown, most notably when Manila and Beijing deescalated the maritime escalation since Duterte assumed office. In a bid to attract foreign aid, President Manila improved relations with Beijing by not actively pursuing maritime judicial ruling during ASEAN meetings in Laos and Manila, or even relevant multilateral arrangements contrasting his predecessor (Castro, 2017, p. 160). As a result, RP's total trade with China surged from \$9.8 billion to \$25.5 billion within 2016-2017, making Beijing the Philippines largest trading partner in 2017 by nearly one sixth share, albeit with a Filipino trade deficit at \$9.45 billion (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2017, p. 6). Building on Duterte's attempt to gain Chinese confidence, Beijing has attentively increased economic inducements to pull the Philippines closer towards China, which relatively strained the US-RP alliance. For instance, Duterte downgraded the alliance by reducing war games to 13 (from 23), denounced American presence in the Philippines and shifted the scope of RP-US cooperation to non-traditional security to gain Beijing's trust and therefore reap greater economic advantages (Castro, 2017, pp. 169-171).

Second, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has increased China's perceived attractiveness as an economic opportunity meeting Duterte's developmental – “*build, build, build*” – aspirations (Fook, 2018). During



Duterte's first visit to China in October 2016, both countries concluded deals worth \$24 billion, \$7.34 billion of which aimed at bolstering inter-island connectedness, reconstruction of Marawi (in Southern Philippines), logistical infrastructure (i.e. North-South railway project), defense sales (i.e. small arms, patrol boats) and rehabilitation capacity in Mindanao (Rabena, 2018, p. 690).

Conscious of Manila's needs and pitfalls, third, the PRC has grasped Duterte's anti-Americanism to further disengage the US in maritime discussions after rewarding Duterte's economic pragmatism. In this regard, both parties developed a working-level Bilateral Consultative Mechanism (BCM) on the SCS to peacefully navigate maritime differences prior to President Xi's official state visit to the Philippines, the sixth Duterte-Xi meeting (Fook, 2018, p. 2). Building on accommodation milestones, fourth, PRC and RP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on joint oil and gas exploration in disputed territories, a major breakthrough in security interactions (Fook, 2018, p. 5). That said, as RP-PRC economic and security deepening continues, the sustainability of the process heavily relies on Chinese reassurances. Perhaps, the recent encroachment on Thitu questions success prospects of the Chinese hybrid strategy to take US allies into a more complex entanglement (Estrada, 2018; Torrecampo, 2019).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter has compared why the Philippines and South Korea have distinctly recalibrated their alliances between 2011 and April 2019. First, it is increasingly evident that changing domestic calculations of both interests and threats have moderated structural pressures and drove alliance in recalibration in the two countries. Second, while the US commitment to the two alliances substantially increased between 2011 and 2016, the reliability of MDT commitments is questionable under Trump (but also under Obama in the case of the Philippines). Third, China's hybrid strategy has increased economic interdependence with US allies and strained their alliance relations but also

complicated the security assertiveness in the SCS. Fourth, it is highly observed that threat environment remains fluid in the Asia-Pacific but appears not to be a solid, singular explanation to why states recalibrate alliances.

## **Chapter VI: Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This section deconstructs research findings and proceeds in four-fold: first, it describes the explanatory power of each variable across examined timelines while the following section analyses research findings and engages with the broader literature, which, in other words, answers research questions. Third, the author articulates research limitations; and fourth, highlights potential areas of inquiry for future research.

### **4.1 Results**

#### **Variable 1: Reliability of US Commitment**

The reliability of US security guarantees to South Korea and the Philippines seem to have had limited impact on the degree of alliance relations, albeit has been and will highly likely continue to be an important structural factor that the ruling elite in the two countries consider. Evident in a consistent abandonment pattern, the Philippines continued to deepen alliance relations, from concluding MLSA, the Manila declaration and the EDCA to reorienting maritime security exercises and increasing the size of participating troops, despite US reluctance to defend the former vis-à-vis Chinese hostilities in 1995 and 2012. However, President Duterte decided to loosen the RP-US alliance and downscale the scope of cooperation on geo-economic and domestic grounds, with the US unpredictability in mind, but not directly causing policy shift.

In the case of Seoul downgrading alliance commitment with Washington by rescheduling or suspending joint exercises and demanding greater Korean cost-sharing contribution, for instance, past the deployment of THAAD in South Korea reiterates the fact that the reliability of US commitment is not necessarily the legitimate explanation of smaller states' behaviour – be it deepening or loosening alliance relations. The Korean and Filipino orientations, in part, question the implications of US security

commitment on smaller states' alliance management behaviour and whether the degree of cooperation leads to a more reliable US role as per the MDTs.

### **Variable 2: Intensity of Threat Perception**

Although both Seoul and Manila recalibrated the two alliances for compelling factors, including threat perception, it would, however, be impetuous to conclude that the intensity of threat was no important structural factor. There are five patterns in the case of the Philippines. First, it is observed that while Manila has deepened alliance relations with the US to balance against mounting internal and external threats but also modernize AFP capabilities in the post-9/11 environment, it downgraded the alliance during the early 1990s for low threat perception.

Second, President Arroyo, like Duterte, downplayed alliance politics when Chinese threat was low, or at a minimum in a remarkable decrease by deepening relations with Beijing while loosening security ties with Washington. Third, the Filipino maritime cooperation with the US under the Aquino administration triggered Chinese aggression and led to the latter's occupation of Mischief reef in 2012, exposing Manila's vulnerability and therefore incentivising closer security ties with the US. Fourth, renewed Chinese menaces prioritised robust RP-US relations under Aquino despite the declining reliability of US security provision to Manila. Fifth, renewed Chinese hostilities in Thitu reproduced perceived threats to Filipino national security, however, the extent to which Duterte is keen on strengthening the RP-US alliance remains unclear given economic pragmatism towards China and domestic development objectives.

By comparison, there are four Korean patterns showcasing the contextually significant extent to which the intensity of threat has affected alliance behaviour. First, Seoul and Washington loosened the alliance in the 1990s despite vital North Korean threat to the South Korean security apparatus under the tenure of progressive regimes. Second, President Roh supported

sanctions on the US following DPRK's nuclear tests in 2006. Third, Seoul departed from a reconciliatory approach to a hardliner approach towards North Korea under conservative regimes, most notably by gaining a credible deterrence capability – THAAD – and coordinating the North Korea policy with the US. Fourth, President Moon, however, has maintained THAAD for enduring threat perception but minimised sectoral cooperation with the US in hopes of upgrading the Sunshine policy and therefore navigating the inter-Korean affair into a sustainable peace process.

### **Variable 3: China's Hybrid Strategy**

It is conspicuous to observe the gradually growing role of China's hybrid strategy on the security orientations of Seoul and Manila at nearly 3-decade length. While economic relations between the three countries substantially expanded in the 1990s, Beijing developed high economic interdependence with both capitals to the extent that it became the largest trading partner in the following decade. This perceived utility of economic ties with Beijing seems to have reflected on security behaviour of the two countries in some instances: downgrading US alliance under the Arroyo and Duterte administrations in the Philippines and a consistently enhanced China policy under all Korean regimes, both conservative and progressive, despite alliance shifts. If anything, the Chinese strategy seems to have conflated high-stake security concerns with economic bargaining chips that may likely raise long-term opportunities and threats.

### **Variable 4: Domestic Pulls**

The domestic political dynamics in Seoul and Manila have largely driven policy behaviours more than any other factor. More precisely, the perceptions of the ruling elite on systemic constraints and domestic pressures have heavily contributed to shaping the breadth and depth of alliance relations with the US. In Manila, there is increasing evidence that Filipino administrations value three issues besides threat perception: public opinion, congressional support and

national development. First, the Congress restrained President Corazon Aquino from renewing the base agreement with the US in the absence of immediate external threats, which led to downgrading the RP-US alliance, and later supported reinvigorated ties following the Chinese aggression in 1995, 2012 and 2019. Second, public protest on the De La Cruz case compelled President Arroyo to withdraw Filipino military contingents from Iraq in 2004 without Washington's approval to enhance regime legitimacy. Third, growing anti-Chinese sentiment on grounds of China's repetitive infringements on Filipino territories supported elitist establishments (i.e. Aquino) to deepen RP-US relations. All these domestic changes allude to the importance of leadership change and its implications on interpreting the policy environment elite operate within.

On the other hand, there has been an enduring binary theme in explaining alliance recalibration in the ROK-US alliance. That is, power shifts between conservative and progressive candidates in Seoul. When progressive regimes assume power, their policy is often guided by a reconciliatory agenda towards North Korea with an increasingly evolving understanding on the utility of China as a strategic player and the US as an external actor. However, conservative regimes have favoured robust ROK-US alliance in the quest of deterring North Korean threat and coercing behavioural change. Fairly, the role of public opinion on alliance recalibration has been important given the democratic nature of South Korea and its implications on electoral shifts. To that, domestic politics in the two countries have moderated structural effects and domestic dynamics across nearly alliance shifts.

#### **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

This paper has explained why Manila and Seoul have recalibrated their alliances with Washington since Obama's Pivot Policy. The function of this section is to debate the findings of this study within available scholarship against research questions posed: 1) Why do smaller states recalibrate military

alliances? 2) Under what conditions do smaller states recalibrate alliances? 3) Why do small powers pursue varying degrees of recalibration despite shared features? 4) To what extent and in what ways do recalibration occur? And 5) What are the limits and constraints of recalibrating alliances in the Asia-Pacific?

#### **4.2.1 Why Smaller States Recalibrate Alliances?**

Before drawing generic conclusions, one should begin by explaining why South Korea and the Philippines recalibrated the alliances. Mindful of frequent changes in the depth and breadth of alliances since the early 1990s, it is increasingly evident that alliance recalibration is a norm rather than an exception within the broader realm of alliance management. Contrary to power-centered assumptions, this study shows that smaller states, in the pursuit of security strategies, influence the potency of military alliances and utilize these arrangements to advance security and non-security interests, complimenting previous research (Vital, 1967; Rothstein, 1968; Keohane, 1969; Vital, 1971). Throughout the 3-decade duration, alliance recalibration has been largely contingent on a reoccurring theme in the two capitals: the leadership's changing perception of interests and threats domestically and externally. In this, structural factors that influence elite decision-making are three-fold: 1) the reliability of US security guarantees, 2) intensity of threat perception and 3) China's hybrid strategy, most notably the value of economic ties.

While Duterte has significantly downgraded the RP-US alliance for reasons of economic pragmatism and personal anti-Americanism to attract Chinese aid and hedge against US unpredictability, Moon has recalibrated the ROK-US alliance in pursuit of progressive ideals aimed at fostering the inter-Korean peace process and thawing Chinese sanctions, after nearly a decade of solid alliance relations with the US under the former conservative establishment. The chronological analysis presented shows that smaller states recalibrate alliances for several reasons: 1) a change in geostrategic

environment, 2) perceived the utility of trade-offs, including economic benefits from a rising power, 3) geopolitical proximity and capability of rising actors, 4) power asymmetry and 5) development stagnancy (Brawley, 2004; Gunasekara, 2015; Choi, 2017; Manyin, et al., 2019). Almost in no way does the security contextualization show rigorous ability in explaining security orientation of the two countries rather in maintaining the two alliances under certain conditions.

#### **4.2.2 Under What Conditions do smaller states recalibrate alliances?**

The conditions under which smaller states decide to deepen or loosen alliances with the US vary. Chief among them are the 1) (un)reliability of US security guarantees which are integral to structural uncertainties, 2) utility of available economic ties and potential opportunities, 3) intensity of threat perception, and 4) domestic political changes, including change of leadership and public opinion. With the US reliability as a security provider under question, especially under the Trump administration, Manila and Seoul loosened the breadth and depth of security and defence cooperation with the US in several respects. Interestingly, this study offers clear-cut insight that strong alliance relations neither necessarily provoke mutual defense obligations nor protects the *status quo* unconditionally as evident in Filipino and South Korean dynamics accordingly.

Such realisation elucidates that the US defence abandonment of the Philippines in instances of external armed threats raises questions on the strategic utility of the RP-US alliance from a US viewpoint supporting the conclusions of Leeds (2003) on big-power selective abandonment of alliance commitments. This uncertainty of US security guarantees extends the findings of Kuik (2016) – that smaller states naturally hedge to maximize wide-ranging benefits and minimise structural uncertainties while avoiding a costly entrapment in a highly unpredictable, evolving geostrategic environment.



Despite the assumptions of Castro (2016; 2017), Manila has neither fully appeased Beijing nor significantly reinvigorated the RP-US alliance under Duterte. It has rather pursued a form of hedging in order to advance its multifaceted interests with Beijing and Washington.

#### **4.2.3 Why smaller powers pursue varying degrees of recalibration?**

Seoul and Manila have exhibited major policy difference in managing a rising China. While the first has consistently upgraded the ROK-PRC relations conscious of Chinese red lines despite friction or convergence with the US, the latter has viewed the RP-US and/or the RP-PRC relations in a zero-sum game, especially under the Aquino administration (Lum & Dolven, 2014). No doubt, this variation mirrors the state of strategic thought in each country and short-term electoral priorities, let alone the degree of domestic pressure cementing or weakening the level of strategic complexity at multiple structures. Despite policy difference and fear of dominance by China, the two alliances demonstrate that robust alliance relations with Washington have constrained relations with China and led to sporadic perceptions of insecurity.

A robust ROK-US alliance in the past had partially strained sectoral cooperation with Beijing as evident in China's unofficial sanctions on South Korea, meanwhile, strong RP-US relations under Aquino provoked China's uncontested aggression in 2012, which again highlights the reluctance by the US to defend the Philippines. Therefore, Washington's selective commitment to the ROK-US alliance by deploying defensive capability in South Korea while it seemed to relinquish its mutual defense obligation towards the Philippines, despite existing MDTs, illustrates the vagaries of alliances and why states recalibrate differently. They do recalibrate distinctly due to contextual dynamics, ranging from the nature of partnership to security threats and from interpreting geo-strategic environment to the importance of non-security interests, let alone the primacy of domestic politics.

#### **4.2.4 To what extent and in what ways do recalibration occur?**

Of course, the two capitals exhibited that alliance recalibration has occurred to the extent that neither alliance was abrogated nor severely hampered given the fluid state of Asian security architecture. Under present conditions of mounting structural uncertainties and unpredictable threat environment, but also sluggish economic performance, none can afford to surrender security guarantees provided by the US – be it symbolic or actual – for that jeopardises national security in the absence of alternatives and presence of credible, capable actor whose intentions is behaviourally well-defined. The ways in which smaller states recalibrate alliances are enormous and not necessarily obvious. These include, but not limited to, the 1) frequency of joint exercises, 2) their scope, 3) number of participating troops, 4) political/diplomatic stances, 5) armament, voluntarily and commercially, 6) upgrading agreements, and 7) consultations.

#### **4.2.5 What are the limits and constraints of recalibrating alliances in the Asia-Pacific?**

Drawing on the increasingly perceived utility of China as an economic opportunity and taking into account China's hybrid strategy aimed at the two alliances and the regional security architecture, there is a long-term fear that China will leverage its economic power vis-à-vis US allies to advance Beijing's regional position, which is consistent with the findings of Kim and Kim (2018) and Choi (2017). Eventually, the security-economy entanglement between growing Chinese multifaceted leverage and US security provision raises long-term questions on the utility of US-centered alliances in the Pacific. In this regard, the author posits that as China increases economic interdependency and emerges as a proximate, dominant regional actor within the next two decades, the Asian security conundrum will be more complex and intertwined, necessitating a fluid degree of alliance relations with the US.

There are no easy paths in the Pacific as the rise of China continues to be faced with US indecisiveness and hesitance. The declining reliability of US

security provisions and increasingly perceived utility of robust relations with Beijing in smaller Asian countries have long-term implications on the security architecture in the Pacific for the US and its friends. As China increases regional activism and integration projects, compounded with the fear of a China-led regional order, the three-decade question is: are US allies ready for a unipolar Asia?

### **4.3 Research Limitations**

The limitations of this academic inquiry are two-fold. First, the author acknowledges that field work, ideally in the form of semi-structured interviews with practitioners in both South Korea and the Philippines, would have been informative and useful; however, for time and resource constraint it was unfeasible. That highlighted, it is worthwhile to note that the visiting research attachment at Macquarie University's Department of Security Studies and Criminology, Australia, offered a critical opportunity to present this project, engage with a diverse pool of audiences and therefore contribute to refining discussed outcomes to some degree. Second, this research project mainly unpacked why smaller states recalibrate US-centred alliances, with a relative discussion on the US. It remains, however, important to examine why the US recalibrate alliance to understand the interaction from multiple lenses and therefore have a better understanding of the phenomenon – alliance recalibration.

### **4.4 Implications and Future Research**

This research has potentially significant implications for the study of international security and more specifically the realm of alliance management. First, it contributes to grasp the dynamics of alliance recalibration and suggests that the phenomenon is a norm than an exception within alliance management. In that, second, this study exhibits the extent to which smaller states influence alliance recalibration contrary to the conventional wisdom of power-centric explanations. The third implication is of policy relevance; the contemporary

evidence presented might be useful for decision-making centres in Manila and Seoul. Fourth, it demonstrates the nuances of smaller state's behaviour and how domestic political changes heavily affect the state of alliances with the US.

Looking ahead, analysis presented signals a window of opportunity to investigate several underexplored dynamics in military alliances. First, why bigger power honour some MDTs but violate others is undeniably an interesting question for inquiry. Evident in US behaviour towards both Seoul and Manila, one would realise that the first was keener on pre-emptively supporting South Korea vis-à-vis external threats than in the latter case, raising more wonders than providing answers. Second, under what conditions do allies invoke/bypass binding defence obligations? While the rise of China doubts whether any actor is interested in waging costly conflict in the foreseeable future or getting entrapped in a big-power dispute, present literature suggests that bigger powers are more likely to infringe on security pacts than their smaller states' counterparts. That mentioned, the conditions under which these decisions occur offer a significant contribution to the wider literature of alliance management. Third, it would be interesting to methodologically examine a similar case by adopting field work as a research methodology to further grasp political dynamics affecting alliance recalibration at decision-making centres.

## 5.0 Bibliography

- Ahlawat, D. & Smith, F. C., 2016. Indo-Pacific: Evolving Strategic Contours. In: D. Gopal & D. Ahlawat, eds. *Indo-Pacific: Emerging Powers, Evolving Regions and Global Governance*. Delhi: Aakar Books, pp. 33-59.
- Amador, J., 2019. *The Philippine-US Alliance in 2019*, Washington, DC: East-West Center.
- Avila, A. P. C. & Goldman, J., 2015. Philippine-US relations: the relevance of an evolving alliance. *Journal of the Global South*, 2(6), pp. 1-18.
- Bae, J.-Y., 2010. South Korean Strategic Thinking toward North Korea: The Evolution of the Engagement Policy and Its Impact upon U.S.-ROK Relations. *Asian Survey*, 50(2), pp. 335-355.
- Beach, D., 2012. *Analyzing Foreign Policy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Beach, D., 2018. Process tracing methods. In: C. Wagemann, A. Goerres & M. Siewert, eds. *Handbuch Methoden der Politikwissenschaft*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, pp. 1-21.
- Benson, B. V. & Clinton, J. D., 2014. Assessing the Variation of Formal Military Alliances. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 60(5), pp. 1-33.
- Berkemeier, M. & Fuhrmann, M., 2018. Reassessing the fulfillment of alliance commitments in war. *Research and Politics*, 5(2), pp. 1-5.
- Brawley, M. R., 2004. The Political Economy of Balance of Power Theory. In: T. V. Paul, J. J. Wirtz & M. Fortmann, eds. *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 76-99.
- Bump, P., 2017. *What Trump told The Post he'd get done in his first 90 days*. [Online] Available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2017/04/20/what-trump-told-the-post-hed-get-done-in-his-first-90-days/?utm\\_term=.8599a63a8899](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2017/04/20/what-trump-told-the-post-hed-get-done-in-his-first-90-days/?utm_term=.8599a63a8899) [Accessed 30 April 2019].
- Burnham, P., Lutz, K., G., G. W. & Layton-Henry, Z., 2008. *Research Methods in Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Bush, R. C., 2018. *Why assurances matter in U.S.-Taiwan relations*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/08/29/why-assurances-matter-in-u-s-taiwan-relations/> [Accessed 18 March 2019].
- Cambridge Dictionary, 2019. *Meaning of recalibrate in English*. [Online] Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/recalibrate?q=recalibrating> [Accessed 12 February 2019].

Casarini, N., 2014. *Visions of North-East Asia: China, Japan, Korea and the EU*, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies.

Castro, R. C. D., 2005. Philippine Defense Policy in the 21st Century: Autonomous Defense or Back to the Alliance?. *Pacific Affairs*, 78(3), pp. 403-422.

Castro, R. C. D., 2006. Twenty-First Century Philippine–American Security Relations: Managing an Alliance in the War of the Third Kind. *Asian Security*, 2(2), pp. 102-121.

Castro, R. C. D., 2016. Twenty-First Century Philippines’ Policy Toward an Emergent China: From Equi-Balancing to Strategic Balancing. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 8(2), p. 305–328.

Castro, R. C. d., 2017. The Duterte Administration’s appeasement policy on China and the crisis in the Philippine–US alliance. *Philippine Political Science Journal*, 38(3), pp. 159-181.

Chanlett-Avery, E., Manyin, M. E., Lawrence, S. V. & Nikitin, M. B. D., 2018. *A Peace Treaty with North Korea?*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

China Military Online, 2017. *Scale of U.S.-Philippines military exercises escalates to "territorial defense"*. [Online]  
Available at: [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/pla-daily-commentary/2016-04/07/content\\_6995537.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/pla-daily-commentary/2016-04/07/content_6995537.htm)[Accessed 24 March 2019].

Chivvis, C. S., 2017. *Understanding Russian "Hybrid Warfare" and What Can be Done About It*, California: RAND Corporation.

Choi, Y., 2017. A middle power’s trade policy under U.S.-China FTA competition: South Korea’s double hedging FTA diplomacy. *Contemporary Politics*, 24(2), pp. 233-249.

Collins, R., 2014. *A Brief History of the US-ROK Combined Military Exercises*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.38north.org/2014/02/rcollins022714/>  
[Accessed 08 March 2019].

Copp, T., 2018. *President Trump has ordered the Pentagon to cancel military exercises with South Korea — what happens next?*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2018/06/12/pentagon-assessing-trump-directive-to-cancel-korea-military-exercises/> [Accessed 2 May 2019].

Estrada, D. V., 2018. *China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Implications for the Philippines*, Manila: RP Foreign Service Institute.

Felix, V. A., 2005. *Philippine – US Security Relations: Challenges and Opportunities after the 9/11*, Pennsylvania: US Army War College.

Ferrier, K., 2019. *What Does the Signed Cost Sharing Agreement Mean for the US-South Korea Alliance?*. [Online]

Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/02/what-does-the-signed-cost-sharing-agreement-mean-for-the-us-south-korea-alliance/> [Accessed 2 May 2019].

Fook, L. L., 2018. *China-Philippine Relations and Xi Jinping's State Visit: Context, Significance and Challenges*, Singapore: ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute.

Fook, L. L., 2018. *The China-Philippine Bilateral Consultative Mechanism on the South China Sea: Prospects and Challenges*, Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

Frank, R., 2017. *President Moon's North Korea Strategy*. [Online] Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/president-moons-north-korea-strategy/>[Accessed 5 May 2019].

Ghez, J., 2011. *Alliances in the 21st Century: Implications for the US-European Partnership*, California: RAND Corporation.

Glaser, C., 2011. Will China's rise lead to war?. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(2), pp. 80-91.

Goldstein, J. S. & Pevehouse, J. C., 2014. *International Relations*. 10th ed. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Graham, A., 2012. Military Coalitions in War. In: Y. Boyer & J. Lindley-French, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 320-329.

Greitens, S. C., 2016. *The U.S.-Philippine Alliance in a Year of Transition: Challenges and Opportunities*, Washington: Brookings Institute.

Griffiths, M. & O'Callaghan, T., 2002. *International relations: The key concepts*. London: Routledge.

Gunasekara, S. N., 2015. Bandwagoning, Balancing, and Small States: A Case of Sri Lanka. *Asian Social Science*, 11(28), pp. 212-220.

Hepinstall, S., 2019. *U.S., South Korea agree 'in principle' on sharing troop cost: State Department*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-southkorea-troops/us-south-korea-agree-in-principle-on-sharing-troop-cost-state-department-idUSKCN1PU05Z> [Accessed 1 May 2019].

Hiebert, M., Nguyen, P. & Poling, G. B., 2015. *Building a More Robust U.S.-Philippines Alliance*, Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Hoffman, F. G., 2009. Hybrid Warfare and Challenges. *Small Wars Journal*, 52(1), pp. 34-39.

Hong, K., 2005. South Korea's Dilemma on the Proliferation Security Initiative. *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 17(1), pp. 105-127.

Humphrey, A., 2019. *South Korean parliament ratifies cost-sharing accord with US*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/south-korean-parliament-ratifies-cost-sharing-accord-with-us-1.575803> [Accessed 1 May 2019].

- Hwang, J., 2014. *The ROK's China policy under Park Geun-hye: A New Model of ROK-PRC Relations*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Ikenberry, G. J., 2008. *The Rise of China and the Future of the West*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2008-01-01/rise-china-and-future-west> [Accessed 5 March 2019].
- Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2017. *THAAD on the Korean Peninsula*, Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy.
- John, J. V., 2014. *South Korea–China Relations and the Northeast Asian Strategic Puzzle*, New Delhi: Institute of China Studies.
- Johnson, J. C., 2015. The cost of security: Foreign policy concessions and military alliances. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(2), pp. 665-679.
- Jung-hoon, L., 2004. The Emergence of “New Elites” in South Korea and its Implications for Popular Sentiment Toward the United States. In: D. J. Mitchell, ed. *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, pp. 59-66.
- Keohane, R. O., 1969. Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics. *International Organization*, 23(2), pp. 291-310.
- Key-young, S., 2004. *South Korean Identities in Strategies of Engagement with North Korea: A Case Study of President Kim Dae-jung's Sunshine Policy*. Volume II ed. Sheffield: University of Sheffield.
- Kim, A. & Kim, J., 2018. China's aggressive ‘periphery diplomacy’ and South Korean perspectives. *The Pacific Review*, 31(2), pp. 267-277.
- Kim, D. & Heo, U., 2018. Factors Affecting ROK–US Relations, 1990–2011: An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 51(1), p. 115 –131.
- Kim, H. & Heo, U., 2016. What Affects Korea–US Relations?. *Pacific Focus*, 31(1), p. 31–55.
- Kim, I. & Park, S., 2019. Deterrence under nuclear asymmetry: THAAD and the prospects for missile defense on the Korean peninsula. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 40(2), pp. 165-192.
- Kim, J. & Park, J.-m., 2017. *South Korea presidential frontrunner Moon regrets move to deploy THAAD: spokesman*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-thaad-moon/south-korea-presidential-frontrunner-moon-regrets-move-to-deploy-thaad-spokesman-idUSKBN17S01L> [Accessed 4 May 2019].
- Kim, M.-h., 2016. South Korea's China Policy, Evolving Sino–ROK Relations, and Their Implications for East Asian Security. *Pacific Focus*, 31(1), pp. 56-78.
- Kissinger, H., 2015. *World Order*. New York: Penguin Books.



- Klingner, B., 2019. *Don't Let Cost Dispute with Seoul Undermine U.S. Strategic Interests*, Washington: The Heritage Foundation.
- Korea Customs Service, 2018. *Import/export By Country*. [Online]  
Available at: <http://www.customs.go.kr/kcshome/trade/TradeCountryList.do>  
[Accessed 7 May 2019].
- Kraft, H. J. S., 1993. *Philippine-US security relations in the post-bases era*, Canberra: Australian National University.
- Kristensen, H. M. & Norris, R. S., 2017. A history of US nuclear weapons in South Korea. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 73(6), pp. 349-357.
- Kuik, C.-C., 2016. How Do Weaker States Hedge? Unpacking ASEAN states' alignment behavior towards China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 25(100), pp. 500-514.
- Kuik, C.-C., 2016. Malaysia Between the United States and China: What do Weaker States Hedge Against?. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 8(1), p. 155–177.
- Kwon, P. B., 2017. *Beyond Patron and Client: Historicizing the Dialectics of US-ROK Relations amid Park Chung Hee's Independent Defense Industry Development in South Korea, 1968–1979*, Seoul: The Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies.
- Leeds, B. A., 2003. Alliance Reliability in Times of War: Explaining State Decisions to Violate Treaties. *International Organization*, 57(4), pp. 801-827.
- Leeds, B. A., 2003. Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(3), p. 427–439.
- Lee, W., 2012. The Different Choices of South Korea: Seeds of Discord of South Korea and US Relations. *Pacific Focus*, 27(3), p. 443–465.
- Liang, X., 2018. *The Six-Party Talks at a Glance*, Washington, DC: Arms Control Association.
- Lieberthal, K. G., 2011. *The American Pivot to Asia*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-american-pivot-to-asia/>  
[Accessed 16 October 2018].
- Liu, J., Tang, J., Zhou, B. & Liang, Z., 2018. The Effect of Governance Quality on Economic Growth: Based on China's Provincial Panel Data. *Economies*, 6(4), pp. 1-23.
- Liu, R. & Sun, X., 2015. Regime security first: explaining Vietnam's security policies towards the United States and China (1992–2012). *The Pacific Review*, 28(5), pp. 755-778.
- Lobell, S. E., Jesse, N. G. & Williams, K. P., 2014. Why do secondary states choose to support, follow or challenge?. *International Politics*, 52(2), pp. 146-162.

- Lum, T., 2012. *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*, Washington: Congressional Research Service.
- Lum, T. & Dolven, B., 2014. *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests—2014*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.
- Lum, T. & Nicksch, L. A., 2006. *The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.
- Maass, M., 2019. Defining and quantifying the small state. In: M. Maass, ed. *Small States in World Politics The Story of Small State Survival, 1648-2016*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 19-39.
- Manyin, M. E. et al., 2015. *U.S.-South Korea Relations*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.
- Manyin, M. E., Chanlett-Avery, E. & Williams, B. R., 2019. *South Korea: Background and U.S. Relations*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.
- Martin, B., 2017. Moon Jae-In's THAAD Conundrum: South Korea's "candlelight president" faces strong citizen opposition on missile defense. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 15(18), pp. 1-10.
- Maxwell, J. A., 2012. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. California: Sage publications.
- Mazarr, M. J. et al., 2018. *The Korean Peninsula: Three Dangerous Scenarios*, Washington, DC: RAND Corporation.
- McGuire, K., 2018. *China-South Korea Relations: A Delicate Détente*. [Online] Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/china-south-korea-relations-a-delicate-detente/> [Accessed 19 October 2018].
- Mearsheimer, J., 2007. Structural realism. In: T. Dunne, M. Kurki & S. Smith, eds. *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 71-88.
- Ministry of National Defense, 2014. *2014 Defense White Paper*, Seoul: Ministry of National Defense.
- Ministry of National Defense, 2016. *2016 White Defense Paper*, Seoul: Ministry of National Defense.
- Misalucha, C. G., 2014. The Language of Security in Philippine-US Relations. *African and Asian Studies*, Volume 13, pp. 121-146.
- Misalucha, C. G. & Amador-III, J. S., 2016. U.S.-Philippines Security Ties: Building New Foundations?. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 8(1), p. 51-61.
- Mumford, M., 2017. *The Trump Administration's approach to the security of South Korea*, Canberra: Department of Defence.

- Neumann, I. B. & Gstöhl, S., 2004. *Lilliputians in Gulliver's World? Small States in International Relations*, Reykjavík: Centre for Small State Studies, University of Iceland.
- Nexon, D. H., 2009. The balance of power in the balance. *World Politics*, 61(2), pp. 330-359.
- Noble, G. B. & Parks, E. T., 1957. *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents*. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.
- Nuechterlein, D. E., 1976. National Interests and Foreign Policy: A Conceptual Framework for Analysis and Decision-Making. *British Journal of International Studies*, 2(3), pp. 246-266.
- Nye, J. S., 2019. The rise and fall of American hegemony. *International Affairs*, 95(1), p. 63–80.
- Parameswaran, P., 2016. *Advancing the US-Singapore Strategic Partnership*. [Online] Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/07/advancing-the-us-singapore-strategic-partnership/> [Accessed 18 March 2019].
- Park, J.-J., 2011. A Comparative Case Study of the U.S.-Philippines Alliance in the 1990s and the U.S.-South Korea Alliance between 1998 and 2008 Alliance (Dis)Continuatio. *Asian Survey*, 51(2), pp. 268-289 .
- Park, S.-w., 2010. *Strategic Posture Review: South Korea*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strategic-posture-review-south-korea/> [Accessed 14 March 2019].
- Park, S. N., 2018. *The Man Behind the North Korea Negotiations*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/03/moon-jae-in-south-korea-north-korea/555338/> [Accessed 6 May 2019].
- Petty, M., 2017. *U.S., Philippine troops train for typhoon as Duterte puts war games on hold*. [Online] Available at: <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-philippines-usa-defence-idUKKBN1881NU> [Accessed 24 March 2019].
- Pew Research Center , 2017. *Opinion of China*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.pewglobal.org/database/custom-analysis/indicator/24/countries/109,173,116,233/> [Accessed 27 March 2019].
- Philippine Stastics Authority, 2017. *Foreign Trade Stastics of the Philippines*, Quezon City: Philippine Stastics Authority.
- Poushter, J. & Bishop, C., 2017. *People in the Philippines Still Favor U.S. Over China, but Gap Is Narrowing*, Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
- Rabena, A. J., 2018. The Complex Interdependence of China's Belt and Road Initiative in the Philippines. *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 5(3), pp. 683-697.

- Rauhala, E., 2016. *The 'Trump of the East' could be the next president of the Philippines*. [Online]  
Available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asias-version-of-donald-trump-may-be-the-philippines-next-president/2016/05/06/f2c30f12-120b-11e6-a9b5-bf703a5a7191\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.6bf670202da7](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asias-version-of-donald-trump-may-be-the-philippines-next-president/2016/05/06/f2c30f12-120b-11e6-a9b5-bf703a5a7191_story.html?utm_term=.6bf670202da7)  
[Accessed 3 May 2019].
- Reeves, J., 2014. Rethinking weak state behavior: Mongolia's foreign policy toward China. *International Politics*, 51(2), p. 254–271.
- Reuters, 2017. *China reiterates opposition to anti-missile system despite delay*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southkorea-usa-thaad-idUSKBN18Z0U1> [Accessed 4 May 2019].
- Reuters, 2017. *North Korea announces successful test of hydrogen bomb*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nknews.org/2017/09/north-korea-announces-successful-test-of-hydrogen-bomb/?c=1504422580020>  
[Accessed 3 May 2019].
- ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018. *Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula*. [Online]  
Available at:  
[http://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_5478/view.do?seq=319130&srchFr=&%3BrchTo=&%3BsrchWord=&%3BsrchTp=&%3Bmulti\\_itm\\_seq=0&%3Bitm\\_seq\\_1=0&%3Bitm\\_seq\\_2=0&%3Bcompany\\_cd=&%3Bcompany\\_nm=&page=1&titleNm=](http://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5478/view.do?seq=319130&srchFr=&%3BrchTo=&%3BsrchWord=&%3BsrchTp=&%3Bmulti_itm_seq=0&%3Bitm_seq_1=0&%3Bitm_seq_2=0&%3Bcompany_cd=&%3Bcompany_nm=&page=1&titleNm=) [Accessed 6 May 2019].
- Romero, A., 2011. *Balikatan closes, boosts Bayanihan*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2011/04/16/676445/balikatan-closes-boosts-bayanihan> [Accessed 23 March 2019].
- Rose, G., 1998. Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics*, 51(1), pp. 144-172.
- Rosenau, J., 1966. Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy. In: R. B. Farrell, ed. *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, pp. 27-93.
- Rothstein, R. L., 1968. *Alliances and small powers*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Roy, D., 2005. Southeast Asia and China: Balancing or Bandwagoning?. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 27(2), pp. 305-322.
- RP Department of Foreign Affairs, 2019. *Statement: On the Presence of Chinese Vessels Near and Around Pag-asa*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/statements-and-advisoriesupdate/21089-statement-on-the-presence-of-chinese-vessels-near-and-around-pag-asa> [Accessed 3 May 2019].

Samuels, G., 2016. *Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte mental health assessment reveals tendency to 'violate rights and feelings'*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/philippines-president-rodrigo-duterte-mental-health-psychological-condition-a7355891.html>

[Accessed 3 May 2019].

Sankaran, J. & Fearey, B. L., 2017. Missile defense and strategic stability: Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) in South Korea. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 38(3), pp. 321-344.

Seawright, J. & Gerring, J., 2008. Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), pp. 294-308.

Senate of the Philippines, 2011. *Statement on the Reed Bank Incident*. [Online]

Available at: [https://www.senate.gov.ph/press\\_release/2011/0308\\_angara2.asp](https://www.senate.gov.ph/press_release/2011/0308_angara2.asp)

[Accessed 27 March 2019].

Sen, R., 2005. Philippines – U.S. Special Relationship: Cold War and Beyond.

*Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, 9(1), p. 85–92.

Seung-hwan, K., 2014. Yankee Go Home? A Historical View of South Korean Sentiment toward the United States, 2001–2004. In: D. J. Mitchell, ed. *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, pp. 24-35.

Simmons, B., 2010. Treaty Compliance and Violation. *Annual Review of Political Science*, Volume 13, pp. 273-296.

Smith, A., 1995. Alliance Formation and War. *International Studies Quarterly*, 39(4), pp. 405-425.

Snyder, G. H., 1984. The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics. *World Politics*, 36(4), pp. 461-495.

Snyder, G. H., 2007. *Alliance Politics*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Snyder, S., 2002. China-Korea Relations: Happy Tenth for PRC-ROK Relations! Celebrate While You Can, Because Tough Times are Ahead. *Comparative Connections*, Volume 4, pp. 1-8.

Snyder, S., 2009. *Strengthening the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, San Francisco: The Asia Foundation.

Social Security Online, 2002. *The President's State of Union Address-- January 22, 2002*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.ssa.gov/history/gwbushstmts2.html#1>

[Accessed 13 March 2019].

Spoehr, T., 2019. *Why Ending U.S.-South Korea Joint Exercises Was the Wrong Move*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/why->

[ending-us-south-korea-joint-exercises-was-the-wrong-move](#)

[Accessed 2 May 2019].

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019. *Military expenditure by country, in constant*. [Online]

Available at:

<https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Data%20for%20all%20countries%20from%201988%E2%80%932018%20in%20constant%20%282017%29%20USD%20%28pdf%29.pdf> [Accessed 24 April 2019].

Storey, I., 2016. *Assessing Responses to the Arbitral Tribunal's Ruling on the South China Sea*, Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

Taliaferro, J. W., Lobell, S. E. & Ripsman, N. M., 2009. Introduction: neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy. In: S. E. Lobell, N. M. Ripsman & J. W. Taliaferro, eds. *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-41.

Teehankee, J. C., 2016. The Early Duterte Presidency in the Philippines. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 35(5), pp. 69-89.

Tertrais, B., 2004. The changing nature of military alliances. *Washington Quarterly*, 27(2), pp. 133-150.

The Manila Times, 2017. *Timeline for Duterte's Economic Agenda*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.manilatimes.net/timeline-dutertes-economic-agenda/329785/> [Accessed 4 June 2019].

The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2018. *What is the trade balance for the Philippines to China? (2004-2016)*. [Online] Available at:

<https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/line/hs92/show/phl/chn/all/2004.2016/> [Accessed 25 March 2019].

The Straits Times, 2018. *Trump-Kim summit: Kim Jong Un believed to be on Chinese private jet to Singapore*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/trump-kim-summit-kim-jong-un-believed-to-be-on-chinese-private-jet-to-singapore> [Accessed 15 May 2019].

Tian, N. et al., 2018. *World military spending in 2017 was \$1.74 trillion*. [Online]

Available at: <http://visuals.sipri.org/> [Accessed 24 March 2019].

Tidwell, A., 2016. *Duterte, Mindanao, and Political Culture*, Washington, DC: East-west Center.

Timberman, D. G., 2019. *Philippine Politics Under Duterte: A Midterm Assessment*, Washington, DC: Carnegie endowment for International Peace.

Torrecampo, R. C., 2019. *It's Time to Rethink Philippine Policies on China*. [Online]

Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/its-time-to-rethink-philippine-policies-on-china/> [Accessed 9 May 2019].

- U.S. Department of State, 2011. *Signing of the Manila Declaration On Board the USS Fitzgerald in Manila Bay, Manila, Philippines*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/11/177226.htm>  
[Accessed 29 March 2019].
- U.S. Department of State, 2015. *Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm>  
[Accessed 13 March 2019].
- U.S. Department of State, 2016. *Remarks With Republic of Korea Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se at a Press Availability*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/10/263333.htm>  
[Accessed 26 March 2019].
- U.S. Department of State, 2018. *U.S. Security Cooperation With Korea*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2018/281247.htm>  
[Accessed 26 March 2019].
- U.S. Department of State, 2019. *Remarks With Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr.* [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2019/03/289799.htm>  
[Accessed 3 May 2019].
- U.S. Department of State, 2019. *U.S. Collective Defense Arrangements*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/collectivedefense/>  
[Accessed 18 March 2019].
- USAID, 2018. *U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Korea Republic*. [Online]  
Available at:  
[https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/KOR?fiscal\\_year=2011&measure=Disbursements](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/KOR?fiscal_year=2011&measure=Disbursements)  
[Accessed 26 March 2019].
- USAID, 2018. *U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Philippines*. [Online]  
Available at:  
[https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/PHL?fiscal\\_year=2011&measure=Disbursements](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/PHL?fiscal_year=2011&measure=Disbursements)  
[Accessed 20 March 2019].
- Vakil, S., 2018. *Iran and the GCC Hedging, Pragmatism and Opportunism*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Vicedo, C. O., 2017. *Philippines-U.S. Alliance under the Duterte and Trump Administrations*, Manila: National Defense College of the Philippines.
- Vital, D., 1967. *The inequality of states: a study of the small power in international relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Vital, D., 1971. *The Survival of Small States: Studies in Small Power/great Power Conflict*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Walt, S., 1987. The Origins of Alliances. In: R. J. Art & R. Jervis, eds. *Explaining Alliance Formation*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, pp. 1-48.

- Walt, S., 2009. Alliances in a Unipolar World. *World Politics*, 61(1), pp. 86-120.
- Waltz, K., 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. 1st ed. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Welch, J., 2019. *US, Filipino, Aussie troops wrap up Balikatan exercise in Philippines*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/us-filipino-aussie-troops-wrap-up-balikatan-exercise-in-philippines-1.576996> [Accessed 3 May 2019].
- Wertz, D. & Gannon, C., 2015. *A History of U.S.-DPRK Relations*, Washington, DC: The National Committee on North Korea.
- Wickett, X. et al., 2017. *America's International Role Under Donald Trump*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Williams, A., 2017. *Philippines' Duterte: 'bye-bye America' and we don't need your money*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-usa/philippines-duterte-bye-bye-america-and-we-dont-need-your-money-idUSKBN14528Q> [Accessed 3 May 2019].
- Williams, P., 2009. *Criminals, Militias, and Insurgents: Organized Crime in Iraq*, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College.
- World Bank, 2018. *Gross Domestic Product*. [Online] Available at: [https://www.google.co.uk/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9\\_&ctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselm=h&met\\_y=ny\\_gdp\\_mktp\\_cd&scale\\_y=log&ind\\_y=false&rdim=country&idim=country:CHN:PHL:PRK:KOR:USA&ifdim=country&tstart=-310006800000&tend=983833200000&hl=en&dl=en&in](https://www.google.co.uk/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9_&ctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselm=h&met_y=ny_gdp_mktp_cd&scale_y=log&ind_y=false&rdim=country&idim=country:CHN:PHL:PRK:KOR:USA&ifdim=country&tstart=-310006800000&tend=983833200000&hl=en&dl=en&in) [Accessed 6 March 2019].
- Yoo, H. J., 2013. The China factor in the US–South Korea alliance: the perceived usefulness of China in the Korean Peninsula. *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, 68(1), pp. 85-104.
- Yoon, S., 2018. *North and South Korea's New Military Agreement*. [Online] Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/north-and-south-koreas-new-military-agreement/> [Accessed 19 November 2018].
- Yun, S., 2019. Re-Examining the Viability of the ROK-U.S. Alliance: Can the Alliance Survive the 'Illiberal Hegemony' of the Trump Era?. *SNU Journal of International Affairs*, 3(2), pp. 46-70.
- Zhao, H., 2014. Sino-Philippines Relations: Moving Beyond South China Sea Dispute?. *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 26(2), pp. 57-76.
- Zhimin, C., 2012. Embracing the Complexities in China-ROK Relations: A View from China. *Asian Perspective*, 36(2), pp. 195-218.