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The US Global Defense Posture Review and the Implications for the Security Architecture in the Asia-Pacific Region

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I. Introduction[1]

Aims

- Explain the US Global Defense Posture Review (GDPR)
  - Origins, content and lexicon
- Explain and evaluate the implications of the GDPR for US force posture and US security relationships in Asia
- Evaluate the implications of GDPR for future stability in Asia-Pacific region

Salience

- Relevance of US force posture to assessing Asian regional "security architecture"
  - 5 of 7 US's mutual defense treaties are with Asian nations[2]
  - During Cold War, US fought 2 "hot wars" in Asia
  - World's six largest armed forces are in Asia
    - Peoples Republic of China, United States, Russia, India, North Korea, and South Korea.
  - 40% of US trade with Asian-Pacific region

[1] Since the release of the US Defense Posture Review is a relatively new development, there are few documents which specifically address the implications for US forces in Asia. Many of these issues are still under negotiation with US "allies and friends" in Asia. The sources used for this presentation include: "Regarding the Defense Global Posture Review," Testimony of Admiral Thomas B. Fargo, Commander US Pacific Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, United States Senate, 23 September 2004; "Regarding US Pacific Command Posture," Testimony of Admiral Thomas B. Fargo, Commander US Pacific Command, Before the House Armed Services Committee, United States House of Representatives, March 31, 2004; Statement of Douglas J. Feith, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy before the House Armed Services Committee, Regarding US Global Defense Posture Review, June 23, 2004; for a non-government, expert commentary see Ralph A. Cossa, "Global Posture Review: Is the US Marching Out?" *Comparative Connections*, 3rd Quarter, 2004. The author also conducted extensive conversations with current and former US officials involved in the GDPR process.

[2] US-Republic of the Philippines (Mutual Defense Treaty, 1952); ANZUS (Australia/New Zealand - US, 1952); US-Republic of Korea (Mutual Defense Treaty, 1954); US security commitments to Thailand are based on the 1954 Manila pact of the former Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (which dissolved in 1977) and the Thanat-Rusk communiqué of 1962; and U.S.-Japan (Mutual Defense Treaty, 1960). The other two treaties are NATO and the Rio Pact.

II. US Global Defense Posture Review: Origins, Content and Lexicon

- GDPR is the most far-reaching restructuring of US forces deployed abroad since 1953 when US Cold War force posture was first set in place.

- Cold War military forces were characterized as "defensive, tripwire forces, which are expected to fight where they are based."

- GDPR demands that such forces be re-positioned to facilitate the "global sourcing" of US military operations and specifically to facilitate the rapid deployment of US forces for global contingencies.

Origins

- Process began in early 2001 to fix the major geographic discontinuities in deployment of US forces abroad
  - US forces were not positioned to fight the "most likely contingencies"; for example, the forces for a second Korean war would come from Europe
  - Originally outlined in 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)

- The US recognized the need for a global military presence that is consistent with transformation of US armed forces *and* also new strategic circumstances
  - Uncertainty and surprise as defining elements of warfare.
  - Global (vice regional) nature of security challenges
  - Threats require immediate response
  - Threats increasingly destructive because of WMD proliferation
  - Use of asymmetric warfare by adversaries to undermine US conventional military superiority.

Content of GDPR

- GDPR guided by five goals:
  - *Increase Flexibility to Contend with Uncertainty:* plan to be surprised so enhanced operational flexibility is a top goal.
  - *Focus Within and Across Regions:* to deal with globalized threats
  - *Develop Rapidly Deployable Capabilities:* not fight where based
  - *Focus on Capabilities, Not Numbers:* what capabilities can US bring
  - *Strengthen Allied Roles*: better manage US alliance and security relationships (especially relevant to Asia)
    - Increase interoperability and reduce unhealthy dependencies to facilitate higher quality security cooperation and war-fighting capabilities
    - Lighten US foreign footprints and reduce stresses, frictions and irritations in key relationships.
    - Facilitate modernization/transformation of US forces and partner forces: modernize doctrine, strategies and forces.

Lexicon: how DOD thinks and talks about GDPR

- Defense "posture" means more than just "bases" but also includes: relationships, activities, facilities, legal arrangements and "surge" capabilities.

- Key Structures

  - *Power Projection Hubs* (classic structure)
    - Forward infrastructure to project forces globally
    - Permanently stationed US forces (e.g. UK, Italy, Japan and SK)

  - *Main Operating Bases* (classic structure)
    - Permanent base with robust infrastructure
    - Supports joint training and security cooperation
    - Established command and control facilities
    - Enduring family support facilities

  - *Forward Operation Sites* (new structure)
    - Rotational use by operational forces
    - Small permanent presence
    - Scalable; can support sustained operations
    - May contain pre-positioned equipment
    - "Warm facilities" such as Singapore's Changi Naval Base

  - *Cooperative Security Locations* (new structure)
    - Austere infrastructure with no permanent party
    - May contain pre-positioned equipment
    - Exercise through security cooperation activities
    - Used for logistics and reconnaissance purposes
    - Example, civilian runways in northern Philippines

III. GDPR and US Force Posture in Asia

- Overall Goals of new US posture in Asia
  - Asia is critical to US global military operations
    - For OEF, most forces flowed across Pacific and logistics supply lines ran across Pacific as well.
  - Better prepare the US for regional contingencies in Korea, the Taiwan Strait, and to conduct counter-terrorism operations.
  - Renovate US alliances in Asia: make them more peer-like; increase inter-operability; reduce frictions and stresses, and reduce unhealthy dependencies.
    - Encourage transformation of regional militaries
  - Increase US interactions with other regional security partners
  - US military presence heavily located in Northeast Asia and US lacks sufficient access to South Asia and Southeast Asia/"East Asian Littoral"

- Overall Changes in US Force Posture in Asia
  - Consolidate and rationalize troops, facilities and HQs in Japan and SK
  - Increase forward deployment of naval and air force capabilities in region: Guam
  - Establish nodes for SOF operations and other contingency operations, especially in Southeast Asia.

South Korea

- South Korea (2nd Infantry Division and 7th Air Force)

- Main changes:
  - Reduce US troops from 37,500 to 25,000[3]
  - Move 2nd ID to 2 hub bases south of Han River
    - To be completed by 2008
  - Relocate Yongsan base from metropolitan Seoul
    - To be completed by 31 December 2007
  - Consolidate existing USFK installations from 97 to 12

- Multiple US motivations:
  - Reduces US troop vulnerability to NK artillery so they are no longer at a day-to-day risk
  - Position the 2nd ID in a more "rational position" for fighting and defending SK, which is key goal for fighting a second Korean War.
  - Allows US ground forces to have a greater regional role for possible deployment elsewhere; global movement of 2nd ID is now a real option and would not be totally disruptive to SK.
  - Reduce SK dependency on US forces and forces them to invest more in their ground forces capability.

- This initially created tensions with SK: worried about level of US commitment and whether it will draw SK into a conflict.
  - US argues its security commitment is not tied to numbers but rather to capabilities.

Japan

- Japan: (5th Air Force, 7th Fleet, and 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF))

- Main Changes in US Forces in Japan:

  - Increase US interactions with Japan's Ground Self Defense Forces by moving I Corps HQ to Japan (from Fort Lewis, Washington State.)[4]

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[3] The planned reduction of 12,500 troops is the equivalent of one "combat brigade team." The reduction is expected to be complete by the end of this decade.

[4] I Corps is composed of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and the 3d Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division. It is also home to the 593d Corps Support Group, the 555th Engineer Group, the 1st MP Brigade (Provisional), the I Corps NCO Academy, Headquarters, Fourth ROTC Region, the 1st Personnel Support Group, 1st Special Forces Group

- Air base consolidation: to reduce noise and safety issues
  - Move Navy fighters from Atsugi to Iwakuni
  - Possibly move 5th AF HQ from Japan to Guam (combined with 13th AF); Japan wants the HQ to stay.

- Okinawa: *possible* changes location of 3rd MEF and Kadena and Futenma air bases.
  - Okinawa is a major irritant in US-Japan security relations; no agreement on how to resolve this issue.
  - Okinawa in critical to possessing an expeditionary force capability:
    - Augmented by new capability of "Westpac express": a DB hulled catamaran vessel, which can transport one battalion of troops and equipment at 960nm/day.

- US motivations for change:
  - Reduce irritants in the US-Japan political relationship
  - Increase US ability to globally source military operations (e.g. OEF and OIF) and to facilitate rapid deployment of forces for expeditionary forces
    - Host nation support as critical for these missions.
  - Reduce Japan's dependency on US and to create a more "balanced and symmetric alliance"

Guam

- Guam: "main operating base" (13th Air Force HQ)

- Main Changes in US Forces:
  - Increase Air Power Capabilities:
    - B52s now on permanent rotation to Guam and expansion of Anderson AFB (max capability: 140 B52s during Vietnam)
    - US seeks a Global Strike Task Force in Guam: composed of fighters, bombers, and ISR

  - Augment Naval Capabilities:
    - 3 SSNs currently deployed but SSN force will grow
    - SSGN capabilities based in Guam

  - Possible deployment of a second carrier battle group in Guam or Hawaii?
    - Militarily, Guam makes most sense because its 3 days from the TW Strait
    - Guam is useful for both East Asia and Arabian Gulf contingencies

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(Airborne), 2d Battalion (Ranger), 75th Infantry, and Headquarters, 5th Army (West). See http://www.lewis.army.mil/garrison/sites/local/

Hawaii

- Hawaii: US Pacific Command (PACOM)
  - Improve command and control; increase capabilities for rapid deployment; new operating patterns and concepts; improve force posture by diversifying access and en-route logistics[5]
  - Linked to GDPR goals

- New capabilities:
  - Co-locating C-17 transport aircraft and Stryker brigades in Hawaii and Alaska (for Korea)
  - Enhanced command and control: establish a combined air operations center based in Hawaii; nerve center for air-war in Asia.
  - See Guam force enhancements which are under PACOM control.

Other Allies and Regional Security Partners: Australia, Thailand, Philippines

- PACOM is looking for new access and logistics pre-positioning opportunities in Asia in order to create "a network of CSLs."
  - This would facilitate contingency operations and enhanced SOF presence in Asia
  - Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Mongolia

- Redundancy needed for such arrangements

- Institutionalize bilateral security cooperation with regional partners:
  - US will soon conclude a Strategic Framework Agreement with Singapore;
  - India and Mongolia are possibilities

- Generally expand military and security cooperation with Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Taiwan.

IV. Regional Security Implications of Changing US Force Posture in Asia

- US goals is to bolster the long-term prospects of US alliances in Asia
  - Bolster the sustainability of US alliances in Asia by reducing sources of tensions and frictions; limited indications to date
  - Improve the quality of our military interactions with existing alliance partners by increasing interoperability

- Short-term tensions in alliances as changes are proposed, negotiated and then implemented

[5] See "Regarding the Defense Global Posture Review," testimony of Admiral Thomas B. Fargo Commander, US Pacific Command, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, United States Senate, 23 September 2004.

- South Korea consistently resistant to changes in US forces
- SK and Japan concerned about *perceived* reduction in US security commitment
- High public expectations in Japan for reductions in US troops
  - Will Marines *really* move from Okinawa?

- Possible future tensions as US troops in host nations are used for expeditionary operations in Asia or other regions:
  - South Korea leaders reluctant to endorse "expeditionary role" for USFK forces
    - Such deployments could draw them into regional or global conflicts
    - Diminish deterrence role on the Korean Peninsula
    - Complicate South Korean relations with China
  - Japan more willing than SK to have US forces involved in a Taiwan contingency
  - Public opinion in host nations could affect US ability for "global sourcing" in future conflicts
  - Such decisions bring debates about "China's rise" to forefront in SK and Japan

- How far can US push allies on military transformation?
  - Will this emerge as a source of tension in alliance relationships?
  - Can allies financially afford a US-oriented military transformation?

- US efforts to push Asian allies and security partners to codify basing and access agreements now and during times of crisis may alienate them
  - Reinforces the existing view that the US is singularly focused on the WOT and not regional economic development
    - Plays into China's efforts to improve its regional influence
  - At the same time, they seek continued US military presence in Southeast Asia

- Complications are likely as the US proposes, negotiates and/or implements CSL agreements?
  - Philippines, Thailand and Singapore are likely to provide CSLs but, if a contingency arises, will such facilities be available?
    - Thailand was reluctant to publicly acknowledge assisting US during OIF
    - Certain countries not willing to sign legal agreements, such as the Philippines.
  - During a Taiwan conflict, US access agreements in these nations would force them to choose between the US and China.
  - Are non-treaty "security partners" willing to provide such access agreements?
    - In a crisis, are local politicians willing to agree to US access in a crisis?
    - Even is they agree, will access be denied during a sensitive crisis such as over the status of Taiwan?

- Variables affecting US ability to conclude access agreements:
  - Opposition to US military policies in general (i.e. Iraq) and US military operations in the "War on Terrorism" (Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines.)
  - The rise of China and local concerns about complicating bilateral relations with China. Access for US military operations during a China-Taiwan conflict could be denied depending on host nations relations with China.

- Chinese reactions to US GDPR?
  - Beijing is readily aware of and concerned about forward basing of US forces in Guam and changing HQ arrangements in SK and Japan.
    - Recognize this is for a Taiwan conflict
    - Multiple commentaries in *Renmin Ribao* and *Jiefangjun Bao*
  - Beijing will be concerned about Japan's growing military independence and Tokyo's growing role in the US-Japan alliance
  - Beijing may forge bilateral political relationships with Southeast Asian nations to undermine US ability to utilize CSLs in wartime, such as ones in Thailand and the Philippines.
    - Critical variable to watch in the future.