

POLICY BRIEF

Dec 25, 2018

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A deteriorating security environment in Europe: Lessons for the Indo Pacific regionⁱ

Dr Thomas S. Wilkins

The Warsaw Security Forum: A view from the Vistula

The October 2018 Warsaw Security Forum (WSF) gathered government, military, and think tank personnel from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and beyond (including a delegation from Japan) in one of Europe's most prominent Track 1.5 dialogues to focus upon the deteriorating regional and global security environment. Just as the emphasis of their Asian counterparts has been on revisionist challenges to the regional security order in the Indo-Pacific, the WSF focused upon the aggressive behavior of the Russian Federation (Russia) toward its neighbours in CEE and its so-called "near abroad". As the host country celebrating 100 years of independence, Poland, along with its CEE counterparts in NATO/EU, are countries that are acutely aware of the dangers presented by Russian actions and know that, as history has taught them, their sovereignty cannot be taken for granted. A disintegration of the liberal world order, international law, and the Transatlantic relationship, would leave small, and even medium-sized, states at the potential mercy of more powerful and aggressive neighbours.

Worryingly, this comes at a time when Europe itself faces an array of changes to its unity, such as Brexit, as well as distractions such as migration, populism, and economic strains. Compounding this US President Trump has opened-up serious cleavages in the Transatlantic alliance, both in the narrow sense of questioning US commitments to NATO Allies, and in the broader sense of undermining the values and identity shared across the Atlantic since the Cold War. Concern about the unity, integrity, and effectiveness of Western security architecture and military postures, and the

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ⁱ The author wishes to acknowledge the kind support of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for participation at the WSF under the ongoing project "Balance Sheet of US Allies and Implications for Alliance Policy".
<https://www.spf.org/en/security/programs/V20180171.html>

challenge to Western values and identity from within and without, loomed large over the Forum. Overall, the WSF drove home a pressing need for Europe itself, and the Transatlantic alliance, alongside partners in the Indo Pacific, to strengthen their capabilities in order to meet the serious challenges to the liberal rules-based international order from the revisionist powers.

The aim of this *Policy Brief* is to apprise an Indo-Pacific based audience of the European security situation, and to examine the implications for our own region. Within this context, the first section of this *Policy Brief* aims to provide a tour *d’horizon* of the key challenges faced by Europe and the Transatlantic allies by a resurgent Russia, and how such dangers are being met. The second section then relates these challenges to the Indo Pacific region, where obvious parallels exist relating to Russia itself, but also with regards to similar behaviour on the part of China. It also draws out the less obvious *cross-regional* dimensions of such challenges – encapsulated in the Russo-Chinese strategic alignment – and some of the myriad interactions between the European and Indo Pacific security complexes. The following analysis is inspired by the many plenary sessions and breakout sessions in which the author participated at the WSF and reflect a sampling of key issues raised, rather than a definitive assessment.ⁱⁱ

Russian challenges to the European security order: a new Cold War?

While Europe continues to face a spectrum on so-called “Non-Traditional Security” challenges such as Terrorism (as the recent Strasbourg attack demonstrated), irregular migration, as well as the rise of populism and consequent risk to the integrity of Europe, including the ill-fated Brexit, the renewed strategic threat from

Russia dominates the present security discourse in the capitals of CEE especially. CEE states have watched uneasily as Russia recovered its poise during the 2000s and initiated a series of military interventions on its borders - in Georgia 2008 leading to the subsequent detachment of Abkhazia/South Ossetia - and crowned with the annexation of Crimea in 2014. But the ongoing operations against eastern Ukraine are testament to the methods Moscow is willing to employ to retain its fading “grandeur” (*Derzhavnost*) and its perceived co-equal Great Power status with the US and Europe. Despite a consensus on the long-term trajectory of decline faced by Russia due to its weakening economy and declining demographics, analysts rightly focused upon the actual “capabilities” that it currently has at its disposal, and its demonstrated propensity to use them to serve its revisionist agenda under President Vladimir Putin. As Bill Emmott has observed “Russia is keen to challenge international norms and laws, and show it remains a superpower that needs to be listened to...It has also been trying to undermine the very Western solidarity and alliances that otherwise make Russia look isolated and weak.”¹

Russia’s conventional military capability was a familiar cause for concern (and sessions related to this attracted an overflowing audience). Russian armed forces have been through a process of continual military modernisation (initiated under the 2008 “new look” reforms), and maintain a high-pitch of readiness as multiple large scale strategic exercises such as ZAPAD (“West”) and Syrian intervention have demonstrated. Indeed, ZAPAD 2017 was one of the largest military exercises since the end of the Cold War and represented a formidable show of force, with speculations that these drills were a potential dress rehearsal for an

ii Since attribution is not permitted under Chatham House rules, no *direct* citations are supplied from among the WSF participants. Additional open sources are cited as normal.

1 Bill Emmott, *The Fate of the West*, (London: The Economist, 2017), p. 203.

incursion into the Baltic states (and included a nuclear component).² Such readily deployable forces are not matched in NATO despite recent efforts to redress this (see below). Indeed, NATO's two largest armies are Greece, whose forces are estimated at only 7% readiness, and Turkey, whose forces would prove very difficult to deploy to the Northern/Eastern flank, are no match for Russian capabilities at this time, according to WSF experts.

What makes current Russian superiority in conventional capabilities all the more menacing, is the fact that these are back-stopped with a nuclear deterrent of rough equivalent to that of the United States, and a dangerous doctrine that allows for the first-use of nuclear weapons, should they lose a conventional battle in Europe. Indeed, the use of a so-called “de-escalation” strategy, first enunciated in *ZAPAD* 1999, indicates that a rapid incursion into CEE could turn into a *fait accompli* before NATO could marshal its long-term conventional superiority to reverse the gains, with Moscow then threatening nuclear attack to deter this. The doctrine is entirely credible since Russia has deployed SS-26 *Iskandar* SRBMs in the exclave of Kaliningrad Oblast, directly adjacent to Lithuania and Poland. Unlike the US, which disposed of its battlefield nuclear weapons under the Obama Administration, it retains nuclear artillery among its ground forces. Russia also stands accused of INF Treaty violations, but US withdrawal from this agreement would potentially benefit Moscow's designs and further endanger Europe.

As an adjunct to this, Russia can employ a range of hybrid capabilities, either in tandem or independent of actual military operations. Such

hybrid warfare involves the use of information warfare – including disinformation campaigns and cyber-attacks – and can be coupled with “*maskirovka*” (“military deception”) techniques such as the infiltration of Russian armed forces without insignia (so-called “little green men”).³ It can be used as part of a specific operation, such as the seizure of the Crimea, or infiltration into eastern Ukraine and ongoing separatist War in the Donbas, or as part of an ongoing strategy to sow disruption and instability among the polities of NATO. Examples include the use of Russian “trolls” based in the Moscow's Internet Research Agency (IRA) to influence and exacerbate sources of instability in the Western alliance, such as Brexit, and the election of President Trump, as well as direct attacks on critical infrastructure, as witnessed in 2007 in Estonia. The Russian role in downing Malaysian airliner MH17 and dispatch of Russian operatives to the UK to assassinate former spy Sergei Skripal further reveal the extent of the lawlessness of Russian international behaviour. The presence of substantial ethnic Russian minorities in the Baltic states, provides a further potential resource to drive such a strategy (a “fifth column”). To weaken and divide one's opponents without overt recourse to military force is the acme of strategy according to Sun Zi, and is an integral part of Russia's offensive against the West.

Western responses: improve readiness and resilience

The Western powers, through the NATO military alliance and the European Union are now forced to adapt to “a new security reality”. Participants in the WSF voiced their concern that Russia was exploiting weaknesses

² ‘ZAPAD 2017 and Euro-Atlantic security’, *Nato Review*, 14 December, 2017, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2017/also-in-2017/zapad-2017-and-euro-atlantic-security-military-exercise-strategic-russia/EN/index.htm>

³ Frans-Paul van der Putten, Minke Meijnders, Sico van der Meer and Tony van der Togt (eds.), *Hybrid Conflict: The Roles of Russia, North Korea and China*, The Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’, The Hague, May 2018.

in Western cohesion for its own benefit and purposefully seeking to sow further discord and division among NATO and Europe as a whole. It was stressed that “Western/European” values were in danger from both *within* (Trump, populism, social media) and *without* (Russia), and that preserving and upholding these was a matter of priority. Trump’s questioning of US security guarantees to European allies was widely deplored by officials and experts, and strenuous efforts were made on the part of military and civilian officials to limit the damage to political cohesion that had resulted. The need for Transatlantic unity also extended towards calls for membership, or some form of “special status”, for Georgia and Ukraine in the near future, particularly given the clash with Russia in the Black Sea over Ukrainian ships attempting to enter the Sea of Azov in December 2018, and the critical mass that Ukraine armed forces, (numbering 204,000) could bring to the alliance.⁴ More concretely, calls for a “smart defense” and a more “coherent response” were urgently required to restore conventional military credibility, effectiveness, and readiness to match Russian gains, in accordance with the Wales (2014) and Warsaw (2016) NATO Summit commitments. Thus, the effort to reach the standard 2% of GDP defence budget was a matter of priority, and CEE states in particular were determined to demonstratively meet this target. Yet it was noted that the selection of capabilities, and the need to get more out of existing budgets was more important than the 2% “magic number”.

There was a recognition that the US may have to bring back quantities of military equipment (for example Battle Tanks) to Europe after their prior withdrawal, since the kind of conflict likely to be faced would not provide sufficient time for these to be transported and deployed across the Atlantic in time to meet threats. Therefore, under the banner of Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) and the European

Reassurance Initiative (ERI) multinational battlegroups including US forces have been deployed in Poland and the Baltic States (e.g. Operation Atlantic Resolve). Furthermore, the necessity of making the NATO Response Force (NRF) and its newest component the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) realities rather than paper plans was stressed. In addition, to facilitate internal movement across European states for military formations and their equipment improved legislation to expedite cross-border movement was essential, and current trans-European logistical capacity was inadequate. Allies were encouraged to further explore functional specialisation and comparative advantage of their capabilities within NATO (e.g. Anglo-Dutch amphibious force). In light of later controversy relating to French President Macron’s statement about a “European Army”, further efforts toward Europe developing local capabilities were under the spotlight. The activation of the long dormant Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) envisages far reaching defence cooperation under the EU framework, alongside other proposed initiatives (e.g. European defence Fund; Coordinated Annual review on Capabilities). It was well-recognised that these would be complementary rather than competing with NATO requirements, and coordinated under the framework of the NATO-EU strategic Partnership.

Additionally, due to the nature of hybrid attack discussed above, cyber resilience was a key issue for debate. Experts warned that the Western powers were woefully underprepared and vulnerable and that redressing this weakness was a matter of critical import. Indeed, the Helsinki-based European Centre for Excellence in Countering Hybrid Threats and the Tallinn-based NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence were (literally) on the front line of combatting such threats. The hardening of key systems, patching of

⁴ *The Military Balance 2018*, (London: IISS, 2017), p. 209.

vulnerable entry-points, and employment of new systems that incorporated “security by design” and “defense in depth” were required to keep pace with the emerging “cyber arms race”. A focus on negating information warfare techniques such as “fake news” and better strategic communication among allies to counter disinformation and get the message across was seen as an appropriate response. Finally, some concluded that despite its provocative posture Russian resources had reached their limits as sanctions continued to erode its budget, causing delays in the delivery or development of some key weapons platforms, and that a vigorous arms-build up by NATO would be successful in facing down the Russian challenge, as had occurred under Reagan in the late-stage of the Cold War. In the long-run Russia shorn of the Soviet territories and the Warsaw Pact alliance that made it so formidable in the Cold War is ultimately overmatched by the economic and military power of the Transatlantic allies, yet as it continues to decline whilst retaining a fierce attachment to imperial glory, a crisis or conflict remain an ever-present danger, according to Russian experts.

Lessons for the Indo Pacific region: asymmetric threats on the rise

Shifting to the Indo Pacific region, much of Russia’s behaviour in Europe strikes a familiar cord with security experts closer to home and the nature of many of the challenges described above are readily transferable to the Asian context. Firstly, as a country with vast Siberian and Far Eastern territories and borders with several Central Asian and East Asian countries, its geopolitical presence is keenly felt on the borders of the Indo Pacific, including the Sea of Okhotsk, and occasionally, in the East China Sea. Notably, the Russian Pacific Fleet, based

in Vladivostok, has impressive capabilities including its SLBM flotilla, and Russia has recently augmented military deployments to Etorofu and Kunashiri islands claimed by Japan as part of its Northern Territories. Despite budgetary constraints Moscow appears keen to maintain the momentum of its own Pacific “pivot”.⁵ It continues to take an assertive stance in its military manoeuvres in the region, in particular conducting a high tempo of air patrols that encompass the Japanese archipelago, as well as major land-based exercises such as *VOSTOK* (“East”). *VOSTOK* 2018, was double the size of the previous *VOSTOK* 2014, (with limited participation from China and Mongolia). These exercises also attracted attention from NATO which described them as “demonstrat[ing] Russia’s focus on exercising large-scale conflict”.⁶ Russia remains a significant geopolitical and military power in Central Asia and the Pacific, though it has not engaged in military provocations or concentrated hybrid operations in this region to date, as it is fully committed at present in the West. Yet, the two theatres are far from insulated, as the example of the downing of MH17 by Russian backed separatist forces over Ukraine showed, with Australia and other Asian nations suffering casualties and weighing in diplomatically against the Kremlin.

Moreover, in a dedicated breakout session at the WSF, Moscow’s deepening security ties with Beijing raised concern, giving the European theatre of concern an important cross-regional dimension. The Russo-Chinese strategic Partnership which has strengthened steadily since its 1996 inauguration, not only ties these authoritarian regimes together in geopolitical alignment (including the UN P5) seeking a multipolar world, but also provides a stable backdrop for one another’s outwardly-aimed

5 Bobo Lo and Fiona Hill, ‘Putin’s Pivot: Why Russia is Looking East’, *Op-Ed*, Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 31 July, 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/putins-pivot-why-russia-is-looking-east/>

6 ‘Russia begins its largest ever military exercise with 300,000 soldiers’, *The Guardian*, 11 September, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/11/russia-largest-ever-military-exercise-300000-soldiers-china>

assertive policies in CEE and the Indo-Pacific respectively.⁷ Thus, “Moscow and Beijing both seek to weaken, if not yet overthrow, prevailing rules and existing international institutions.”⁸ For example, Beijing has backed Moscow over the Crimea (and Moscow backs Beijing against THAAD deployments in Asia), and they are mutually supportive of one another’s positions *vis-a-vis* the DPRK denuclearisation issue. In addition, Chinese economic support, including cooperation in Central Asia, provides welcome relief from the full force of Western sanctions to Moscow (including major energy deals). One American analyst has noted “Russia no doubt welcomes this signal of Chinese support at a time when political tensions with NATO and the United States show no sign of abating.”⁹ The Strategic Partnership also acts as the core of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which allows them to maintain dominance over the geographically important and resource rich ‘hinterland’ of Central Asia, where they both provide support and succour to a range of authoritarian regimes. Under the auspices of the SCO Russia conducts major bilateral military exercises with China (PEACE MISSIONS) and supplies the latter with advanced weapon systems, (which are subsequently deployed toward the Indo Pacific). American and NATO preoccupation with Russia activities in the West also creates space for manoeuvre for China closer to home by distracting attention from its own localised agenda (e.g. the South China

Sea). Fears were expressed that this Strategic Partnership may be the precursor of a more formal military alliance that would lead to a formidable Eurasian power bloc or “new Warsaw pact”, portending greater interoperability, cohesion, and effectiveness in confronting the West, though this is far from certain at this time.¹⁰

Many of the destabilising actions and disruptive techniques employed by Russia in the West are echoed in China’s recently assertive policies in the Indo Pacific, even though it has eschewed direct confrontation or territorial aggression seen in Europe. Like Russia, this is based upon a platform of modernising conventional military capabilities, but with fewer financial constraints, and an upgrading of its nuclear forces.¹¹ But China also seeks to employ a similar range of asymmetric tools that strike at the US and its Allies through destabilising their domestic systems and challenging their core values, as with NATO/Europe. The 2018 US National Defense Strategy identifies that “China is leveraging military modernisation, influence operations, and predatory economics to coerce neighbouring countries to reorder the Indo Pacific regions to their advantage.”¹² This extends to information warfare to sow disinformation and discord in the domestic systems of the US and its allies (with Australia being a notable case).¹³ Again, the presence of significant Chinese or ethnically Chinese

7 Robert Sutter, ‘China-Russia Relations: Strategic Implications and U.S. Policy Options’, *NBR Special Report no. 73*, The National Bureau of Asian Research, Seattle, September 2018.

8 Aaron Friedberg, *The Authoritarian Challenge China, Russia and the Threat to the Liberal International Order*, (Tokyo: Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2018), p. 8.

9 Dmitry Gorenburg, ‘5 things to know about Russia’s Vostok-2018 military exercises’, *The Washington Post*, 13 September, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/13/5-things-to-know-about-russias-vostok-2018-military-exercises/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.38aff549326a

10 Bobo Lo, *Wary Embrace - A Lowy Institute Paper: What the Russia-China Relationship Means for the World*, (London: Penguin, 2017).

11 *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2018*, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington DC, 16 May 2018

<https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/16/2001955282/-1/-1/1/2018-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT.PDF>

12 *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy*, Executive Office of the President, Washington DC, 2018, p. 2.

13 Clive Hamilton, *Silent Invasion China’s Influence in Australia*, (London: Hardie Grant Books, 2018).

populations in many of the states of the Indo Pacific echoes fears of a “fifth column” noted above (exploited through Beijing’s *Qiaowu* policies). As in the case of Russia, US Vice President Mike Pence stated “It’s employing this power in more proactive and coercive ways to interfere in the domestic policies of this country and to interfere in the politics of the United States.”¹⁴

Moreover, China has been adept at using “hybrid” techniques to advance its interests and to exploit “gray zones” in contested maritime-territorial boundaries, and has flouted international law (as seen in the rejection of the Permanent Court of Arbitration’s ruling on Philippine claims). China has built artificial features in the contested waters of the South China Sea (90% of which it claims as its own territory), its navy regularly challenges US patrols in the area, and Chinese vessels make frequent incursions into the waters of the Japanese administered Senkaku Islands (joined by Russian probing in 2016). The increasing rivalry between the US and China alarmed some European analysts who saw American attention and resources being diverted away from the serious Russian challenges above, again showing the interactive nature of the problem. The West therefore simultaneously faces a conflict on two fronts.

Allied responses in the Indo Pacific: building new cross-regional partnerships

Responding to China’s challenge in the Indo Pacific is perhaps more complicated, though potentially more risky, than in the case of Western responses to Russia indicated above. China is a far more powerful country than a

declining Russia, and the majority of regional states are highly economically dependent upon China for their continued prosperity (even as some European countries are dependent upon Russia for energy security), and just like Europe, not all countries are immediately or immanently affected. But the stakes are equally high for a range of like-minded countries in the region, as they seek to uphold international law and the rules-based international order in which their liberal democratic values are enshrined and upon which their security depends. In parallel to NATO, the primary platform for countries whose security is imperilled by China’s rise has been the US-led hub-and-spoke alliance system of “major non-NATO allies”. Yet, as a result of both Chinese efforts to undermine the alliance, which has seen some success in the case of the Philippines, for example, and Trump’s interventions questioning the role of allies such as Japan and South Korea (in an echo of his NATO-related comments), the network is in need of some degree of repair. After the abandonment of the “rebalance” policy of the Obama era, and the American withdrawal from the TPP, a substitute strategy has been unveiled in the form of the “Free and Open Indo Pacific” (FOIP) as a way of uniting America’s Asian allies and countering many of the challenges presented by China’s rise.¹⁵ Key allies such as Japan and Australia have strengthened their commitment to the US defense posture in the region, as they have sought enhance their own capabilities. Allies have also been browbeaten into assuming a greater responsibility for their own defense – with the NATO 2% magic number being transferred to the Indo Pacific. Australia, for example, has confirmed it will raise its budget to meet expectations, though Japan seems to have been quietly exempted, though

14 ‘Remarks by Vice President Pence on the Administration’s Policy Toward China’, The Hudson institute, Washington DC, 4 October, 2018,

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-administrations-policy-toward-china/>

15 Thomas Wilkins, ‘Australia and the “Indo Pacific” concept – disambiguating the “idea” and the “region” from quadrilateral “strategy”’, *JIIA Policy Brief*, Japan Institute for International Affairs, Tokyo, 19 July 2018,

<https://www.jiia-jic.jp/en/policybrief/>

it has undertaken some efforts to increase its defense contributions in other ways.

New partners have also been sought in the region such as Vietnam and Singapore to buttress the US presence (though their values do not fully align with the liberal democracies). Notably, key European states such as the UK and France, have signalled their participation in the FOIP and committed themselves to its economic and strategic objectives. Perhaps most emblematic of the cross-regional dynamic is the formation of the Japan-EU Strategic Partnership toward the same purpose (including an Economic Partnership Agreement), which indicated not only the cross-regional nature of the Russian/Chinese challenges, but the need for cross-regional responses.¹⁶ Japan and NATO consider themselves “natural partners” in their adhesion to a liberal world order and rules-based international system, and shared the values of democracy, human rights and sanctity of international law that underpins these. Moreover, Paul Bacon and Joe Burton have identified explicitly the “strategic parallelism” between Japan and NATO in their respective efforts to preserve these values against hybrid challenges against Russia and China respectively.¹⁷ In this sense, the NATO/European allies are increasingly coordinating with their US-ally counterparts in the Indo Pacific, especially Japan. Another example shows how the interstices of the European and Indo-Pacific security systems interact, but in a negative way. Japan has concerns about NATO’s handling of its expansion and the Ukraine crisis,

and considers that its failure to deter Russia has implications for Chinese ambitions in the SCS (and allied concern relating to the credibility of alliance guarantees and deterrence). On the other hand, Japanese pretensions toward rapprochement with Russia including easing of sanctions do not sit well with NATO, and the Europeans also point to the damage that doing business with Moscow does to the values that underpin the liberal world order.¹⁸

Lastly, as in Europe, US allies in the Indo Pacific need to do more to improve the resilience of their societies to disinformation and manipulation and regain control of the narrative with vehement rebuttal of propaganda and domestic interference, and an unflinching willingness to uphold their values in the face of the use of “sharp power”.¹⁹ Examples such as the strengthening of foreign interference laws in Australia, are exemplary of allied efforts. They likewise need to urgently address vulnerabilities in their critical infrastructure and the “architecture” of their security solutions. Ideally, this can be done in cooperation with the US or other trusted strategic partners, for example Australia-Japan.²⁰ And while formal alliance between the two Atlantic and Pacific parts of the US alliance system is unlikely prospect, important synergies in worldview and strategic objectives do exist and degrees of coordination on various functional areas – for example information sharing, maritime issues, cyber security are entirely possible. With increasing fluidity of alignments in the Indo Pacific, more task orientated “coalitions

16 Luis Simon and Ulrich Speck (eds.) ‘Natural partners? Europe, Japan and security in the Indo-Pacific’, *Policy Paper*, Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, 2018, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org>

17 Paul Bacon and Joe Burton, ‘NATO-Japan Relations: Projecting Strategic Narratives of “Natural Partnership” and Cooperative Security’, *Asian Security*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (2018), pp. 38-50,

18 James Brown, ‘Japans New Approach to Russia’, *The Diplomat*, 18 June, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/japans-new-approach-to-russia/>

19 Yasunori Nakayama, ‘The Strategic Significance of US Vice President Pence’s Address’, *JIIA Strategic Comments* No. 2, Japan Institute for International Affairs, Tokyo, 16 November, 2018.

20 Thomas Wilkins, ‘From “Strategic Partnership” to “Strategic Alliance”? Australia-Japan Security Ties and the Asia-Pacific’, *Asia Policy*, No. 20, (2015), pp. 81-111.

of the willing”, perhaps including “external” security partners may be the wave of the future as configuration such as the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD), “Quad”, and FOIP potentially indicate. The participation of selected European/NATO countries in multinational military exercises such as RIMPAC 2018, as well as bilateral manoeuvres, such as the UK-Japan exercise in October of the same year, point the way toward achieving this.

Conclusion

The challenges faced by Europe and the Transatlantic alliance have deep resonance in the Indo Pacific region. The lessons from the European experience with Russia are clear. We live in times of heightened insecurity where dissatisfied or “revisionist” powers are seeking to expand their influence at the expense of the West and the liberal international order it espouses. But despite talk of an emerging new “Cold War”, the struggle for dominance will not take the form of ideological contest of the past, and deep economic interdependence between the antagonists precludes “containment” policies. Instead, the contest is multidimensional and will increasingly play out in the shadows through the use of information warfare, cyberwarfare, and other hybrid techniques, deliberately held below the level of a direct kinetic military use, but with the threat of such coercion ever present – “a continuation of politics by other means”. In this respect just as “declarations of war” have become obsolete, the binary distinction of being at “war” or at “peace” is blurred and increasingly less meaningful (a dynamic Sun Zi would readily identify with). The price of security is increased vigilance in all domains, especially the information/cyber spheres and a need for increased unity and cohesion in upholding shared open-democratic values (the same open and democratic values that opposing powers deem as an existential threat to their regimes). As Bill Emmott reminds us, the West

is being ‘undermined and subverted, not just by ill-wishers outside but by inadvertent, self-interested and sometimes malign insiders’.²¹ The nature of the challenges and the exigencies of the responses required also recommend an increased pooling of resources among Western powers (including those of Asia). Arresting the American slide to disengagement is paramount as the vacuum created will open up the necessary space for revisionist powers to achieve their objectives of creating a post-Western international order, and perhaps ultimately the death-knell of the primacy of liberal democratic powers.

²¹ Bill Emmott, *The Fate of the West*, p. 6.