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Australia's Geostrategic Position in 2018

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A Geostrategic SWOT Analysis for Australia

Strengths (internal)

- natural resources
- Strong economy
- Educated workforce
- Boutique, honed & hi-tech ADF
- Leverage from US hi-tech, Intel & interoperability

Opportunities (external)

- **SWP:** climate, resource & social challenges provide opening for greater Australian leadership
- **ASEAN:** regional and sub-regional appetite for closer Australian engagement & investment
- **NE-Asia:** trade growth opportunities
- **Indian Ocean:** Growing ties to India and beyond
- **ROW:** UK, France etc interest in Australia

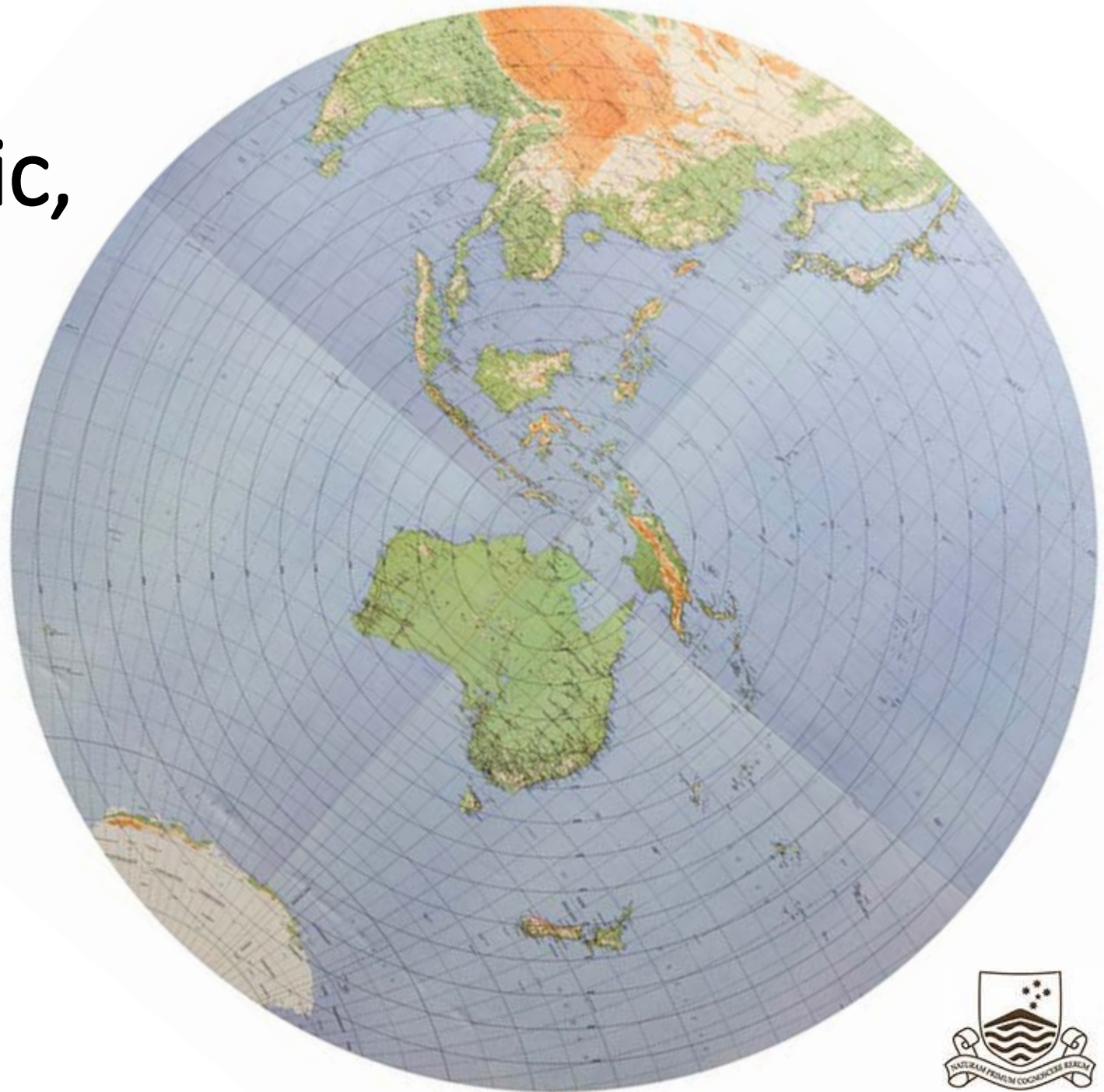
Weaknesses (internal)

- **Complacency** about security & our place in the world
- **Uneven pop'n distribution**-SE-Aust coastal fringe & big cities
- **Oil Refinery fuel dependency**
- **Power** vulnerabilities & Underdeveloped solar/nuclear power
- **Cyber** dependence & vulnerabilities

Threats (external)

- **foreign interference**
- **Cyber attack** – industrial, military state & non-state actors
- **US** transactional **retreat** from ideational leadership
- Politically & religiously motivated **violence** at home & near abroad
- **US-China rivalry** turns violent
- Conventional +/- or thermonuclear **war** - Korean Peninsula, SCS, ECS, Taiwan, Iran, etc

The Indo-Pacific, Centrality of Australia & SE Asia as the 'maritime fulcrum'



US Alliance Prospects

- US National Defence Strategy

- Russia & China at the forefront
- Countering Terrorism secondary
- “America First but not America Alone”
- Expectations of Australian support
- DPRK ...

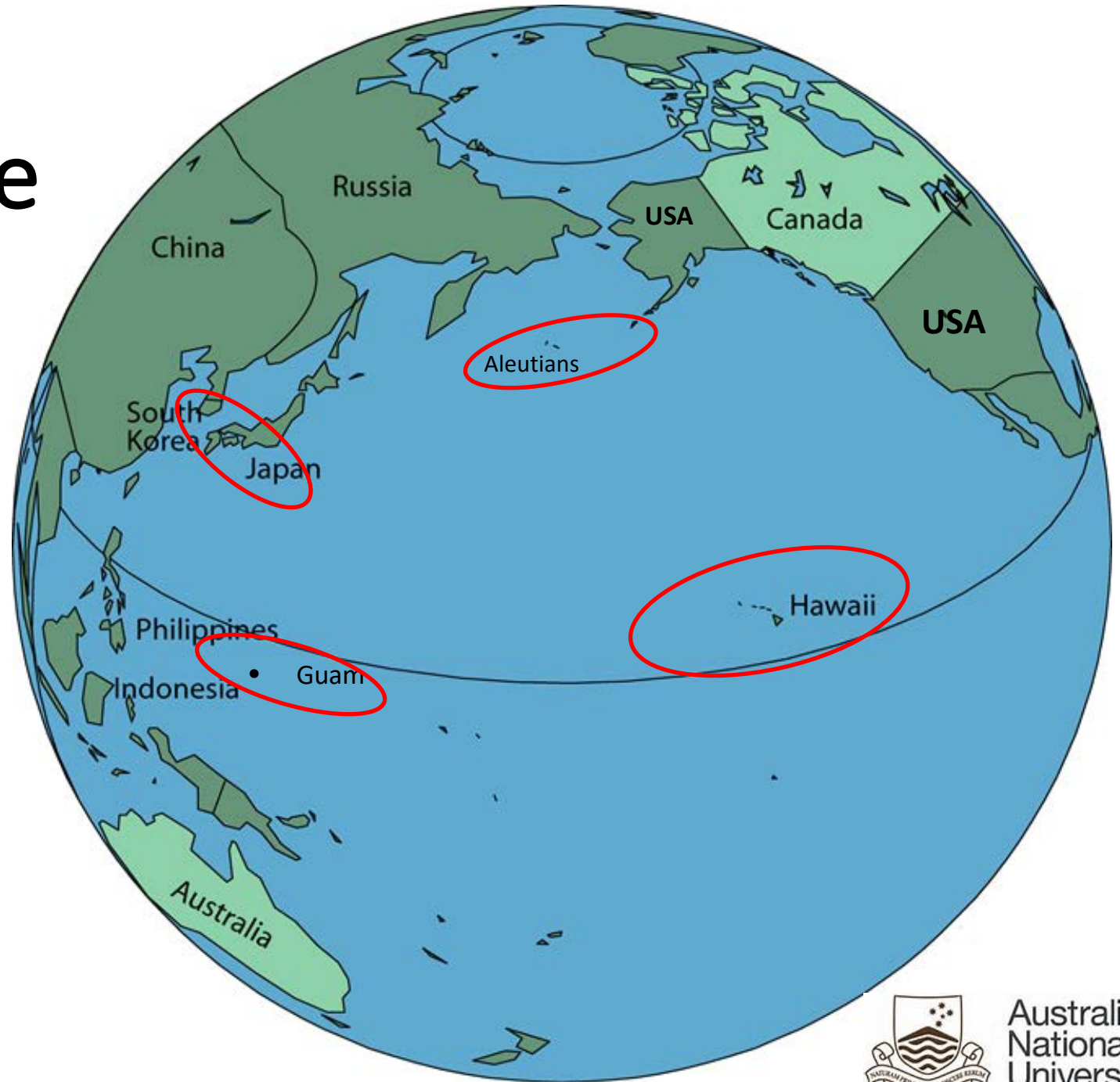
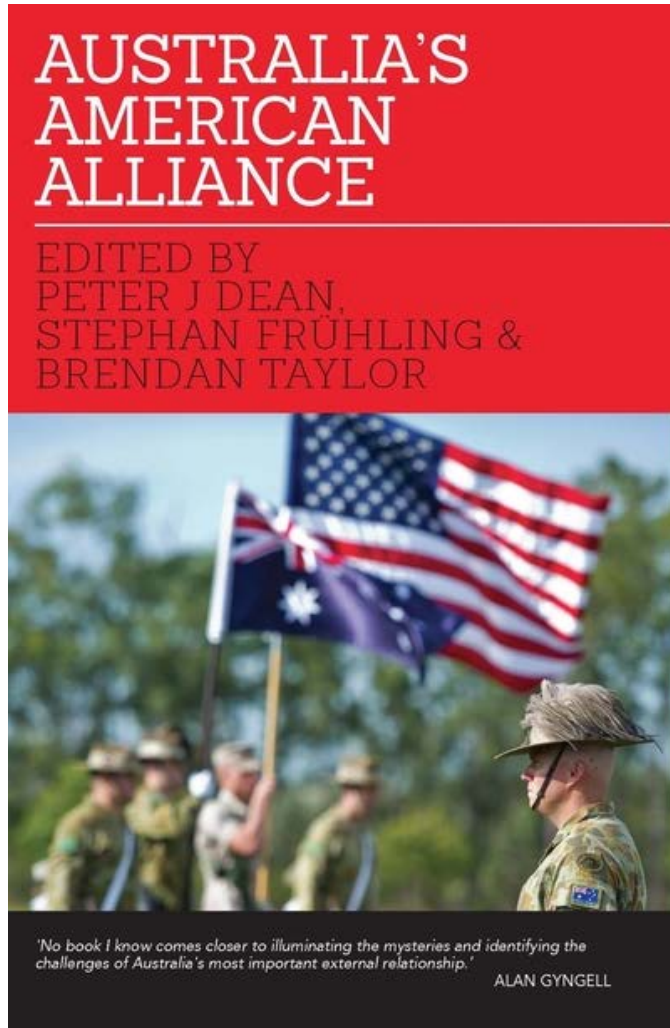


- Without America?

- “America will lose, and China will win”



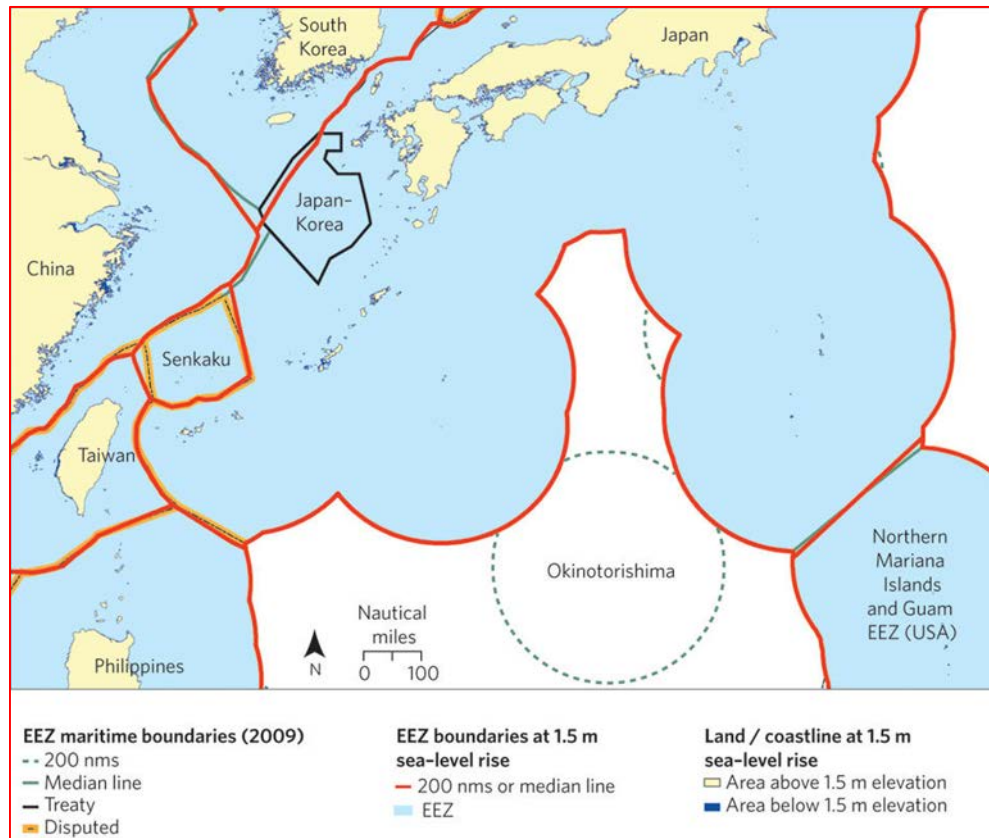
America's Enduring Asia-Pacific Presence



But Growing PRC Assertiveness



China's Tiny EEZ c.f. Australia & the Pacific (& why SCS matters so much to China)



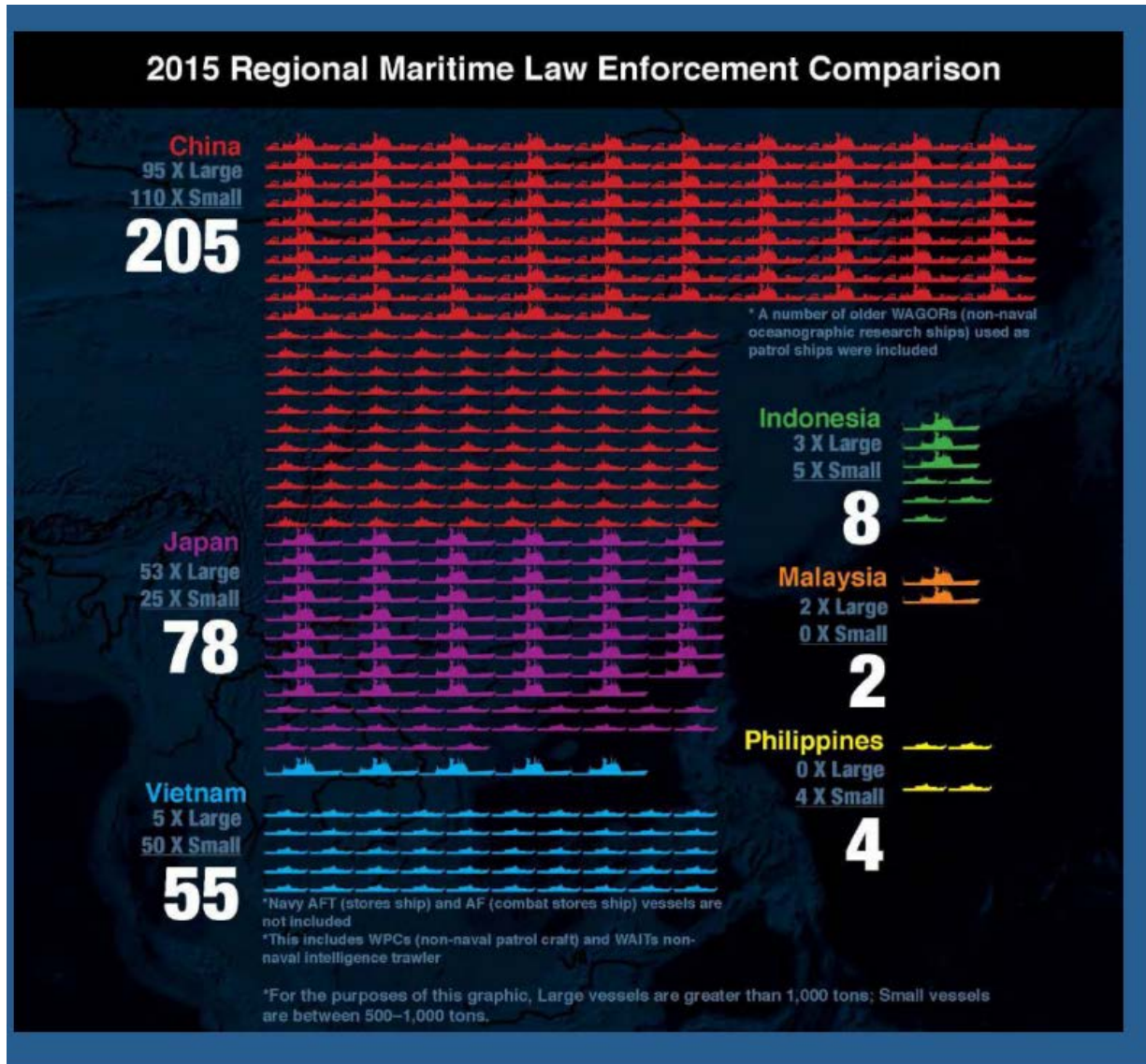
Australia - territory: 7.69km²; **EEZ: 10m km²**
China - territory: 9.3m km²; **EEZ: 877k km² / 3.87m km² claimed**

Arbitral Tribunal Ruling July 2016

- None can lay claim to a 200 nautical mile EEZ or a continental shelf
- **Rocks** for the purposes of Article 121 (entitled to a 12 nautical mile territorial sea at best)
 - Scarborough Shoal,
 - Cuarteron Reef,
 - Fiery Cross Reef,
 - Gaven Reef (North),
 - McKennan Reef,
 - Itu Aba,
 - West York,
 - Spratly Island,
 - South-West Cay and
 - North-East Cay
- **Low-tide elevations** that generate **no maritime zone**
 - Hughes Reef,
 - Gaven Reef (South),
 - Subi Reef,
 - Mischief Reef and
 - Second Thomas Shoal



But China ignores it and Duterte's complicit

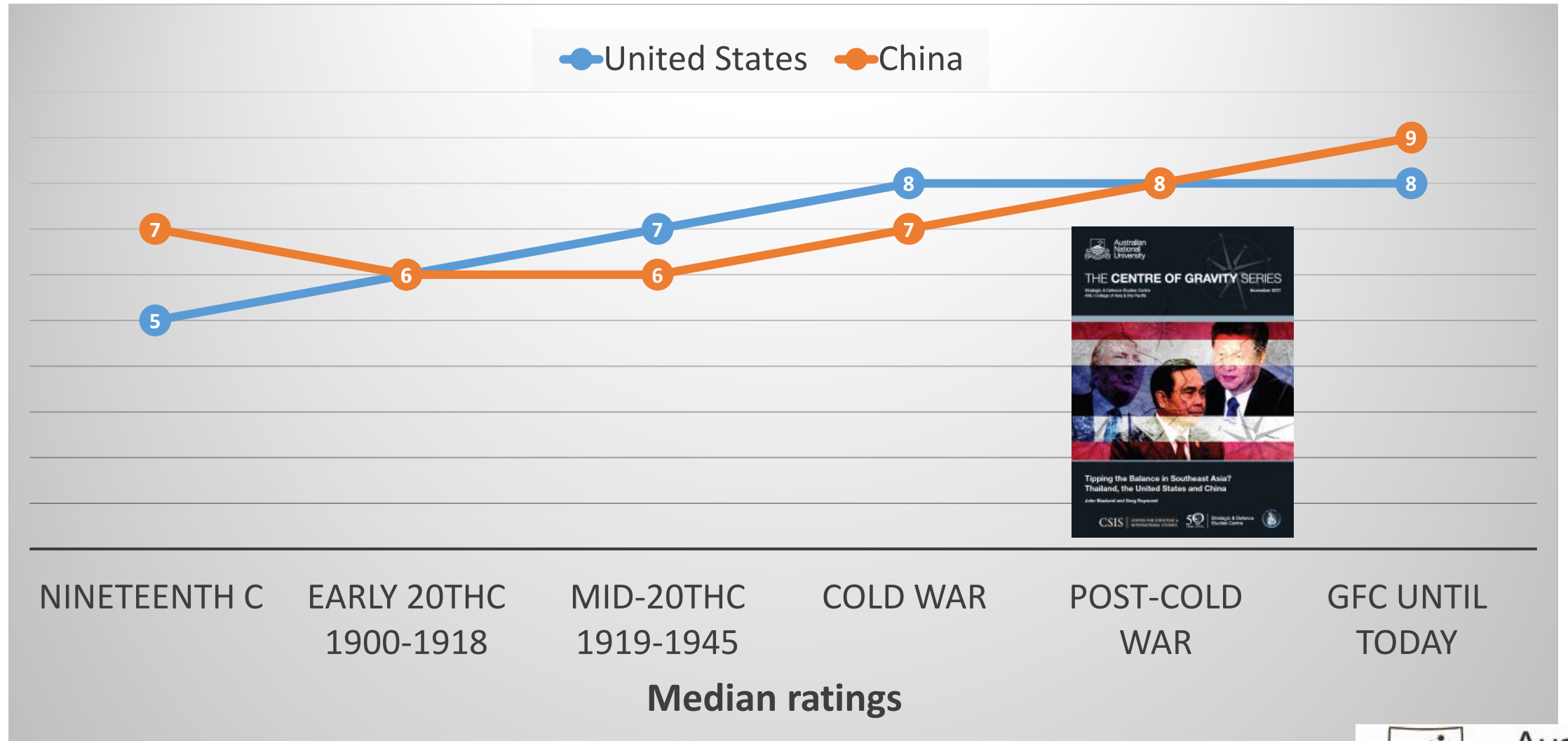


- Maritime Law Enforcement
- White Painted Ships
- Fisheries Militia
- Might is Right



Figure 1

SE Asia Perceptions of Influence over time



Plan B: The Australian Foreign Policy White Paper

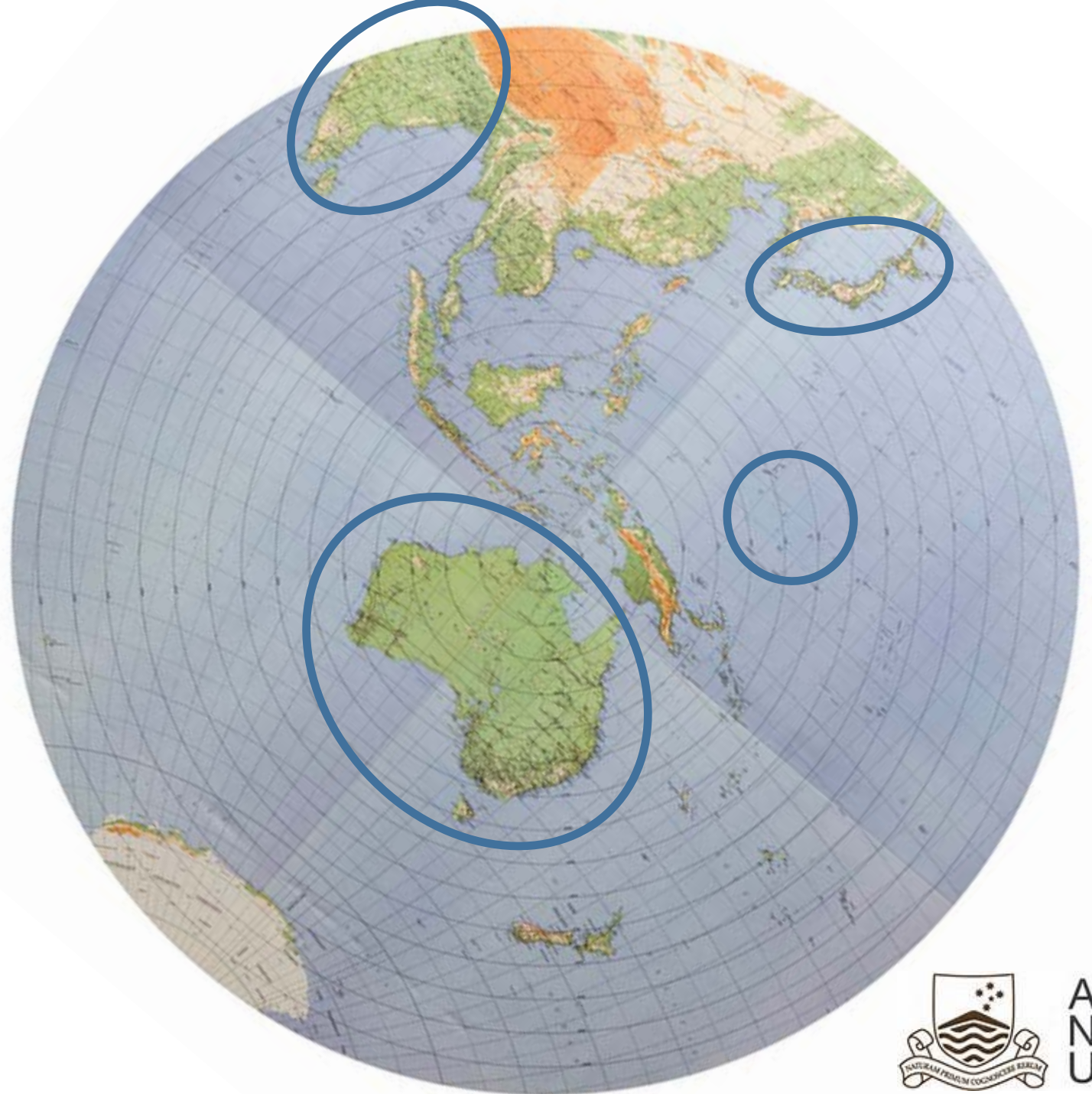


- “Indo-Pacific” & US Alliance, but emphasis on ...
- Regional multilateral forums
- Quad: US-Japan-India-Aust
- ASEAN



Quad or Not?

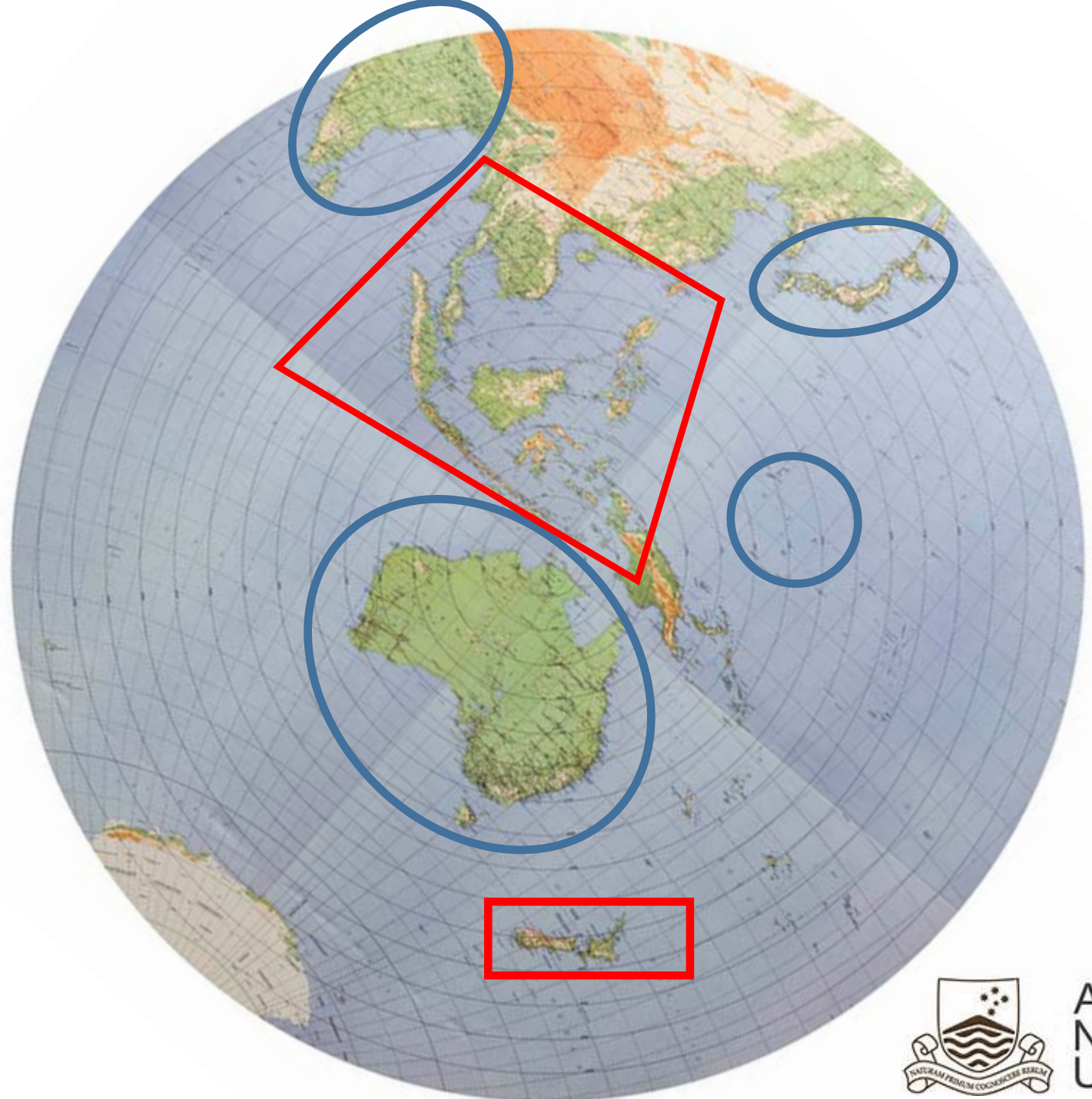
- Bilateral ties already strong
- India realignment dependent on Modi?
- Japan enhanced strategic partnership (tbc)



Quad or Not?

- Whither NZ?
- Whither SE-Asia?

• **ASEAN:**
**Fulcrum of the
Indo-Pacific**



Indonesia

Key to understanding Australia's outlook



- 250m people
- 17K+ islands
- 3rd largest democracy
- Largest Muslim popn
- Contentious relations with Australia
- “Maritime Fulcrum”



Indonesians: wary of Australia



President Joko Widodo & the TNI

- History of disagreements:
- *Konfrontasi* – 1963-66
- Papuan sovereignty - 1969
- East Timor -1975 & 1999

Snakes & Ladders



- Mended fences after Timor:
 - Silver lining to Bali bombings & Indian Ocean Tsunami
- But problems persist:
 - Timor, beef, boats, spies, clemency, Papua
- Yet Australia's security inextricably linked with Indonesia

Complexity of ASEAN today (unity in diversity?)

Differences:

- ethnic
- religious
- economic
- historical
- geographic
- political
- strategic
- cultural
- linguistic



Growing Trade Links with ASEAN

MAJOR INDO-PACIFIC SHIPPING LANES



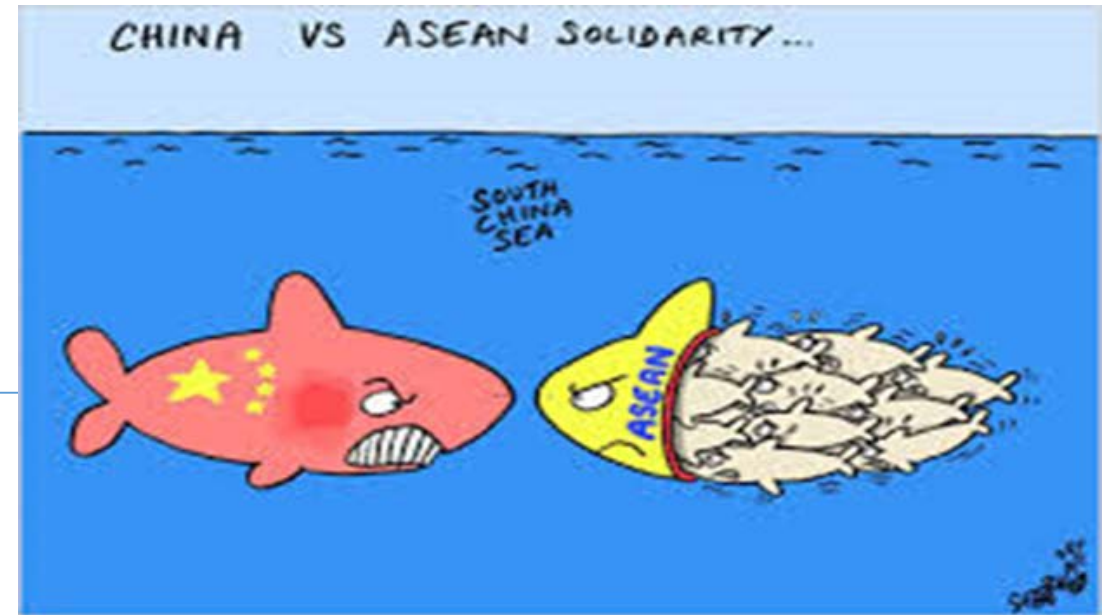
- 10 countries
- 637m people
- GDP USD2.5 trillion
- \$93.2 Billion trade with Australia
- **3rd largest trading partner**
- AANZFTA/TAFTA/MAFTA/SAFTA

Growing links to ASEAN: Education, Tourism Migration

- 1million visitors
- 110K students enrolled
- 896K Australian residents with SE-Asian heritage

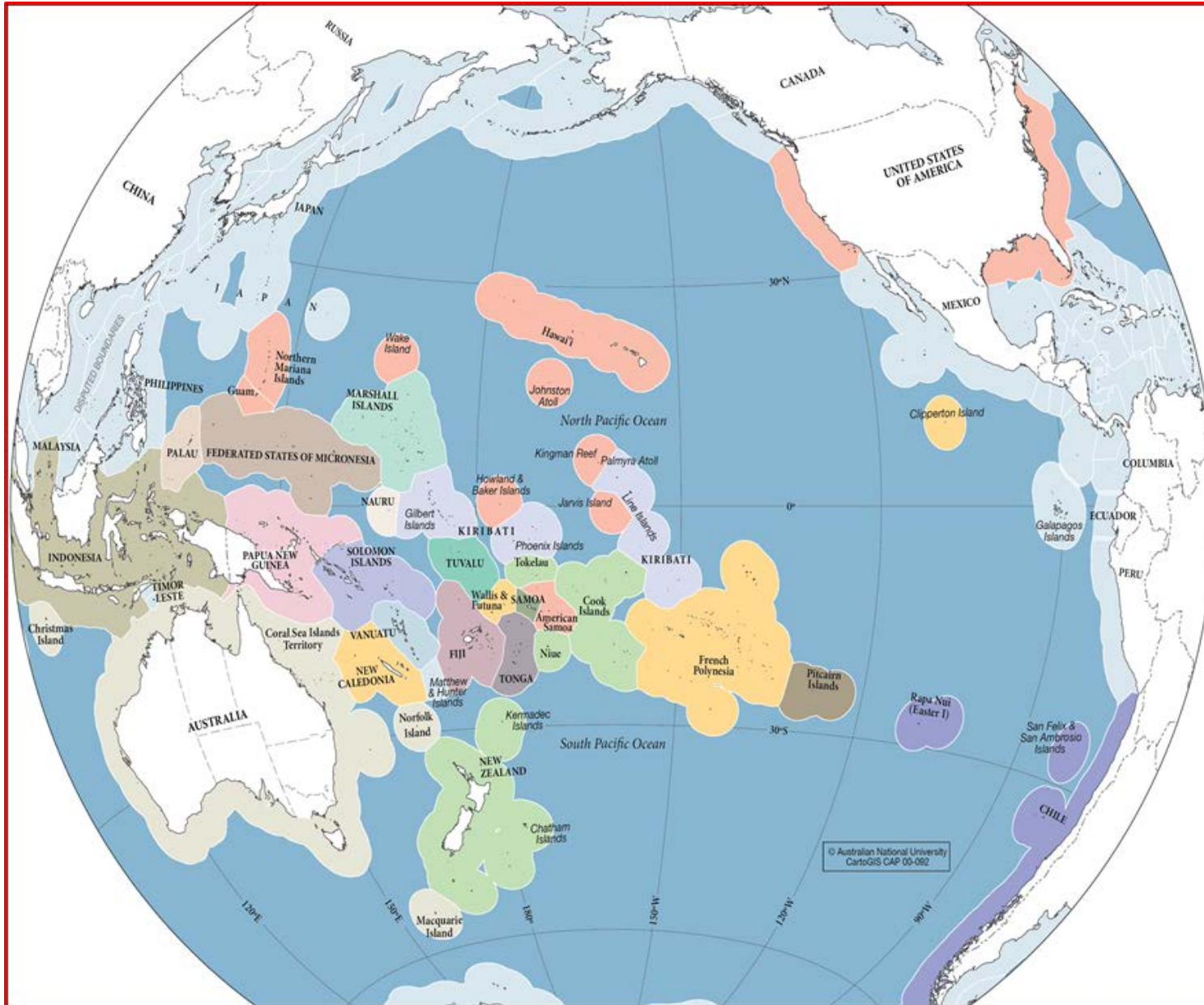


ASEAN'S ASPIRATIONAL INFLUENCE?



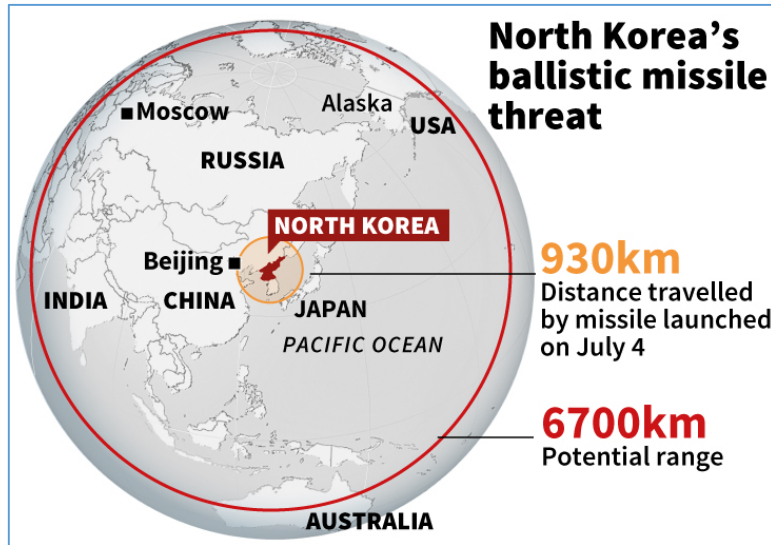
- **Proto-Great Power**
- But Consensus basis ...
- & China's influence precludes one voice
 - insistence on bilateral talks
- So, limits to utility, but ties important

SWP Security Challenges



- Surge in Great Power Interest & Competition
 - Lucrative EEZs
- Environmental challenges (fisheries/sea level)
- Governance challenges (corruption/narcotics/violence)
- Time for Grand Bargain for shared governance?

Responding to DPRK Threats & => wrt PRC

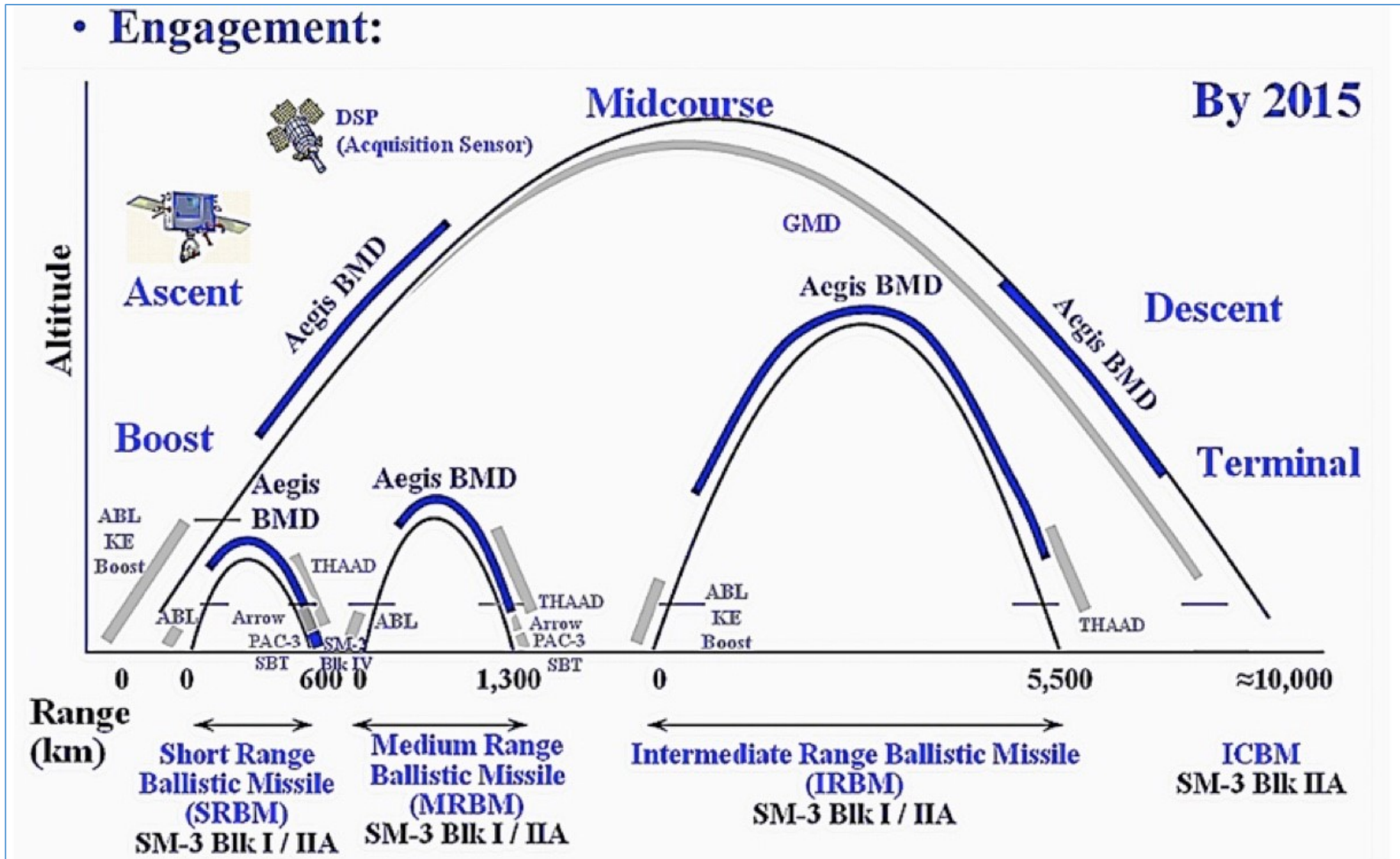


- US force posture optimized for action
- Brinkmanship – breakthrough or precipice?
- Expectations of ADF role in conflict?
- BMD
 - Aegis / SM3 THAAD



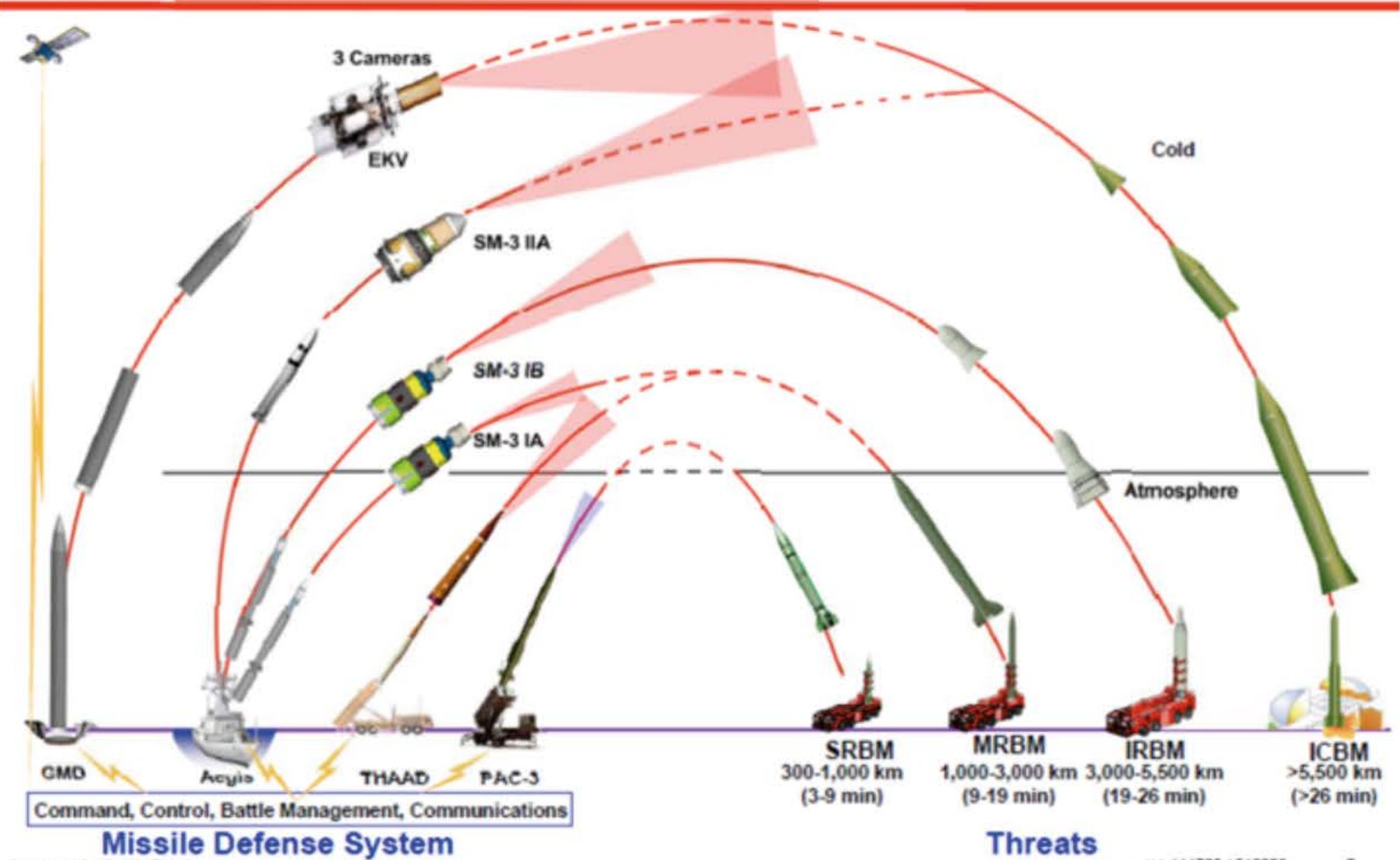
Missile Defence Options:

- Engagement:





Missile Defense Interceptor Basics



Approved for Public Release
09-MDA-4234 (23 JAN 09)

ms-111728 / 012809

Kim Trump Summit Implications

- USFK?
- UN Command
- Japan
- Taiwan,
- ASEAN
- Australia
- India
- Iran



Transnational Security Concerns:

- Networked extremists
- Rise of “Islamic State” (Daesh)
 - Philippines – Mindanao - Marawi
 - Malaysia – Bangsamoro /Sultanate of Sulu
 - Indonesia – Jemaah Islamiya?
 - Thailand - BRN
 - Singapore
 - Cambodia?
- Bali bombing repeat?
- Transnational Crime
- Piracy

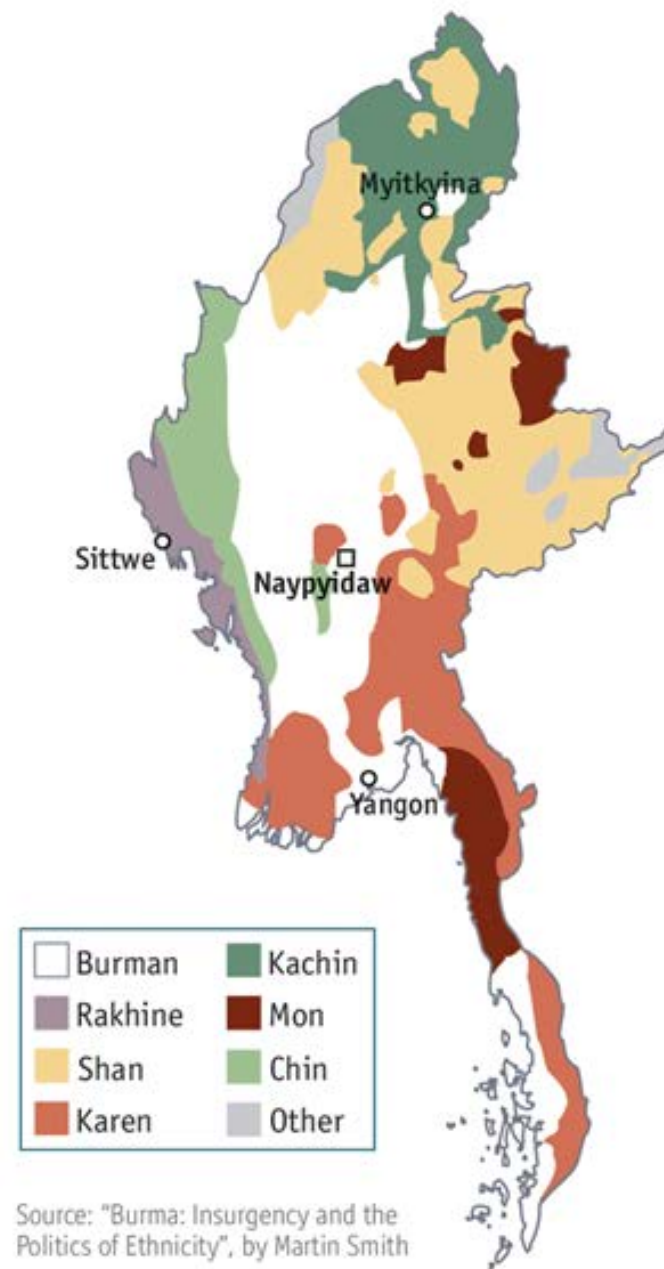


Rohingya Crisis

- Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army - ARSA
 - Pakistani Jihadist links
- Tatmadaw brutality
- UN impotence
- Bangladesh impoverished
- Next wave of Boat People?
- Next Stop: Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia?
- Regional Solution?
 - Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia



Main ethnic groups





Irregular/Unregulated People Movement



Australian National University

Sweeter and broader ties

- A MANIS regional maritime cooperation forum should be established to address a range of shared concerns
- drawing in expertise from participating ministries
 - foreign affairs,
 - defence,
 - border protection,
 - police forces,
 - environmental authorities,
 - universities,
 - think tanks



Philippines/Malaysia/Indonesia - form maritime pact to curb IS

- Aug 2016: DefMins Ryamizard Ryacudu, Delfin N. Lorenzana (right) & Dato Seri Hishamuddin
- Aim: to secure Sulu Sea from piracy, terrorism, human trafficking and drug smuggling.
- Options for added respectful Australian cooperation



“Our Eyes” Sub-Regional CT & Intelligence Network 2018

- Unprecedented regional CT collaboration
- Indonesia’s Def-Min, Ryamizard Ryacudu, instrumental
- Aust – US – Japan observers : Potential for ↗



Australia-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

- Ties akin to NZ CER & security ties
- Growing range of shared security & economic interests
- But Singapore under pressure from China ...



What This Means



- Sound relations with Indonesia fundamental
- Recognise ASEAN significance but fragility
- Continue engaging China constructively, encouraging mutual restraint
 - OBOR/BRI , AIIB, SCS, ECS, DPRK
- Recognise China's gains as undo-able short of war
- Closer regional traditional & NTS ties
- "Middle Power" engagement, bolsters ties:
 - ASEAN/FPDA/MANIS/"Our Eyes"/Japan/India

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Averting Catastrophe

Rethinking Ties Between Economics, Security, Stability, Prosperity & Prospective Existential Threats

Grand Challenges:

- Critical review of the spectrum of global security challenges
- Economic security
- Environmental challenges
- Political and human security
- Cyber security
- Maritime, territorial & homeland security

- DFAT role?





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