

## *Non-Traditional Security Dilemmas*

Can military operations other than war intensify security competition in Asia?

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**ABSTRACT:** Can seemingly benign deployments of armed forces on military operations other than war (MOOTW) – such as humanitarian relief, anti-piracy, and search and rescue missions – exacerbate security dilemmas? The security dilemma has long held a central role in international relations theory, but existing analyses have focused on examining whether an actor’s defensive activities vis-à-vis a rival drive competition if misperceived as threatening. Despite increased MOOTW participation militaries throughout Asia, scant attention has been paid to the broader strategic implications of these operations. This article proposes a hypothesis in which MOOTW participation exacerbates security competition by revealing offensive military capabilities and providing a state with skills that make offensive action easier. The article then examines Japan’s post-3/11 earthquake response to assess whether MOOTW drive security competition. The findings suggest that MOOTW participation can intensify long-term security competition, especially when rising powers are involved.

**KEY WORDS:** security dilemma, security competition, military operations other than war (MOOTW), non-traditional security, defense cooperation, 3/11

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In March 2014, China deployed a flotilla of nearly twenty warships and Coast Guard vessels along with long-range military transport aircraft to assist in the search for missing Malaysian Airlines Flight 370.<sup>1</sup> Beijing's deployment showcased China's growing military capabilities and highlighted its ability to sustain operations far beyond its periphery. Did the mission showcase military capabilities that stoked concerns among China's rivals, even though the operation was ostensibly benign and not targeted at an adversary? Cases like the search for the missing Malaysian airliner lead us to ask whether seemingly altruistic military operations other than war (MOOTW) that respond to non-traditional challenges – such as humanitarian assistance, search and rescue, and anti-piracy missions – exacerbate security dilemmas and security competition.<sup>2</sup>

The classic security dilemma holds that a state's efforts to increase its security may have the paradoxical effect of leaving it less secure in the long run. Since the international system lacks a central arbiter, states must take steps to guarantee their own security.<sup>3</sup> When deciding how to respond to a potential rival, however, states are faced with both a dilemma and a paradox. On one hand, failing to take defensive action may leave a state weak vis-à-vis its rivals. On the other hand, rivals may misperceive a state's defensive security seeking behavior as offensive in nature, ratcheting up tension and security competition between potential adversaries.<sup>4</sup>

The same factors that shape the security dilemma in traditional security contexts may also apply to MOOTW participation. Governments that fail to take part in MOOTW may face

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Townsend, "MH370: Chinese Satellite Spots Potential Debris," *The Guardian*, March 22, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/22/mh370-chinese-satellites-spot-potential-debris-malaysian-airlines>.

<sup>2</sup> Although the United States Department of Defense no longer uses the expression "military operations other than war" in official documents, MOOTW is still used by several other states and captures a range of operations that fall below the threshold of traditional combat operations.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth N Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> John H. Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 1950): 157–80; Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1, 1978): 167–214.

domestic audience costs or criticism imposed by the international community, which can weaken a leader's or state's standing. Participation, however, also comes with risks that can decrease a state's security. MOOTW deployments reveal military capabilities, such as strategic airlift, blue water naval capacity, and alliance interoperability that could also be used to support offensive missions. MOOTW participation may also make offensive action easier and less risky by enhancing expertise in expeditionary operations. In addition to showcasing capabilities, shortcomings in MOOTW execution may prompt a state to modernize its military forces. If a rival views these actions as threatening, they may initiate their own military modernization efforts, potentially resulting in security competition that leaves both states less secure. These risks may be particularly severe when rising powers are involved with MOOTW as deployments may unmask previously unknown capabilities and because greater uncertainty often surrounds the intentions of emerging powers.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, MOOTW are only one set of activities that contribute to security competition, but existing literature overlooks the potential for seemingly benign MOOTW to intensify security competition between states.

Examining whether MOOTW can drive security competition and arms racing contributes to both policy and academic discourse. From a policy perspective, militaries throughout Asia are increasingly involved in operations that fall short of traditional war. In recent years, China has carried out several non-combatant evacuations from warzones like Libya and Yemen; Japan has deployed advanced warships and patrol aircraft to conduct anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden; and India has dispatched forces – including its newest transport aircraft – to provide humanitarian relief following cyclones and floods in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.<sup>6</sup> Because of the

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> “Yemen Crisis: China Evacuates Citizens and Foreigners from Aden,” *BBC News*, April 3, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32173811>; “Japan’s Actions against Piracy off the Coast of Somalia,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, February 15, 2016,

seemingly altruistic nature of these operations, policymakers and think tanks have increasingly called for cooperation on MOOTW as a means of enhancing relations between states with strained ties.<sup>7</sup> If, however, MOOTW worsen security competition, policymakers may want to rethink participation in such missions.

This article also contributes to academic studies on the security dilemma and builds upon research on MOOTW participation. Scholars have dedicated significant attention to studying the security dilemma in conventional contexts where one state or group attempts to increase its security against another<sup>8</sup>, in ethnic conflict<sup>9</sup>, and in alliance politics<sup>10</sup>, but have yet to assess whether security dilemma dynamics plague MOOTW. Existing research on MOOTW has studied state motivations for participation<sup>11</sup>, effectiveness<sup>12</sup>, and provided in-depth studies of specific deployments<sup>13</sup>, yet the broader ramifications of MOOTW participation on interstate relations remain largely unexplored.

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[http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/piracy/ja\\_somalia\\_1210.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/piracy/ja_somalia_1210.html); Sankalp Gurjar, "India's Projection of Power Through Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief," *The Diplomat*, June 2, 2017, <http://thediplomat.com/2017/06/indias-projection-of-power-through-humanitarian-assistance-and-disaster-relief/>.

<sup>7</sup> For example see, Rohan Anand, "Joint Military Exercise 'Hand in Hand' - 2015 Commences" (Indian Ministry of Defence, October 12, 2015), <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=128642>.

<sup>8</sup> Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma"; Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma"; Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler, *Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation, and Trust in World Politics* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Robert Jervis, "Dilemmas About Security Dilemmas," *Security Studies* 20, no. 3 (2011): 416–23.

<sup>9</sup> Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993): 27–47.

<sup>10</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (July 1, 1984): 461–95.

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Miller, "The Logic of US Military Interventions in the Post - cold War Era," *Contemporary Security Policy* 19, no. 3 (1998): 72–109; International Crisis Group, "China's Growing Role in UN Peacekeeping" (ICG, April 17, 2009); Courtney J. Fung, "What Explains China's Deployment to UN Peacekeeping Operations?," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 16, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 409–41.

<sup>12</sup> Virginia Page Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work?: Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Séverine Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Travis Tanner, eds., *Learning by Doing: The PLA Trains at Home and Abroad* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2012); Andrew S. Erickson and Austin M. Strange, *No Substitute for Experience: Chinese Antipiracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2013).

This article proceeds in four sections. First, I define MOOTW and briefly assess rationales for state participation. Second, I apply the security dilemma to MOOTW. I describe the mechanisms that may contribute to security spirals and explain why the dilemma may be particularly severe when rising powers are involved. Third, I examine the plausibility of MOOTW-driven security dilemmas by analyzing government documents, media, interviews, and scholarly works to process trace security dilemma dynamics that resulted from Japan's post-3/11 earthquake relief efforts. The findings of this analysis tentatively suggest that even the most-benign military deployments can amplify mistrust and arms racing, suggesting that capabilities – rather than intentions – play a more significant role in driving competition between rivals. The paper concludes by offering a set of policy recommendations that encourage continued participation in MOOTW, albeit with limitations on the types of assets deployed.

### **MILITARY OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR**

Military Operations Other than War entail a range of activities that fall short of “large-scale, sustained combat operations.”<sup>14</sup> On one end of the spectrum are non-combat MOOTW – including humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and the evacuation of non-combatants – which generally do not involve the use or threat of force. At the other end of the spectrum are activities such as freedom of navigation missions, strikes and raids, and support to counterinsurgency operations, which inherently involve the use or threat of force. Between these two extremes are tasks like peace operations, support to counter drug operations, and the protection of shipping from non-state actors.<sup>15</sup> While some MOOTW are designed to intentionally deter or threaten, this article concentrates on operations that are intended to enhance regional stability or respond to humanitarian disasters, rather than threaten or use force against other actors. Within this subset

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, “Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (Joint Pub 3-07),” June 16, 1995, i.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, “Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (Joint Pub 3-07),” I-5.

of missions, there is significant variation between MOOTW; some are complex overseas operations with significant logistical demands, while others may be narrow, short-term domestic missions.

States throughout Asia have not only increasingly participated in MOOTW, but have incorporated these operations into their national security strategies. China considers MOOTW to be a key element of its military's "new historic missions", and its National Defense Strategy directs the PLA to "emphasize the employment of armed forces in peacetime...[and] strengthen overseas operational capabilities such as emergency response and rescue, merchant vessel protection at sea and evacuation of Chinese nationals, and provide reliable security support for China's interests overseas."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, India's 2015 maritime strategy argues that "[t]here has also been a higher incidence of natural disasters and regional instabilities over the past decade necessitating increased deployment of the Indian Navy for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)."<sup>17</sup> To address these "increased non-traditional threats" the maritime strategy calls for "a revised focus and suitable augmentation of capabilities in some areas[.]"<sup>18</sup> The formalization of MOOTW in state strategy suggests these non-traditional operations are now a fixture in the modern security environment.

Although MOOTW are ostensibly intended to promote collective security or defend national interests from non-traditional threats, several domestic and international factors may shape a state's decision to launch an operation. States may participate to signal adherence to

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<sup>16</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces" (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, April 16, 2013); James Mulvenon, "Chairman Hu and the PLA's 'New Historic Missions,'" *China Leadership Monitor* (Hoover Institute, Winter 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Defence (Navy), *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy* (New Delhi: Directorate of Strategy, Concepts and Transformation, 2015), 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

international norms, bolster soft power, safeguard national interests, or project an image of growing military competence to domestic and international audiences.<sup>19</sup> These factors may operate in parallel, with several factors motivating state participation in a single MOOTW. As states adopt more holistic conceptions of national security that include non-traditional issues such as refugee flows, food security, and health crises, the likelihood of MOOTW participation increases.<sup>20</sup>

While government press releases and official speeches often frame MOOTW participation in the most altruistic of terms – for instance alluding to international norms or cooperative security – the anarchic nature of the international system makes it difficult for other states to put faith in these explanations. First, potential rivals may view these philanthropic rationales as a mask for more self-interested motives. A state may claim to act out of unalloyed altruism, but only launch MOOTW in regions where it has significant economic, political, or strategic interests.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, activities like peacekeeping, securing sea-lanes, and conducting domestic disaster relief help maintain political stability and promote economic growth that is critical for both rising and established powers.<sup>22</sup> Second, even the most benign of missions provide impure public goods that privilege the MOOTW participant more than other states.<sup>23</sup> Unlike pure public goods that allow all individuals to benefit equally, impure public goods offer a mix of private and public payoffs. For instance, a state’s participation in an anti-piracy

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<sup>19</sup> For various explanations for MOOTW participation, see: Miller, “The Logic of US Military Interventions in the Post-cold War Era”; International Crisis Group, “China’s Growing Role in UN Peacekeeping”; Courtney J. Richardson, “A Responsible Power? China and the UN Peacekeeping Regime,” *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 3 (2011): 286–97; Nadege Sheehan, *The Economics of UN Peacekeeping* (London: Routledge, 2011), 16–22..

<sup>20</sup> Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones, *Governing Borderless Threats: Non-Traditional Security and the Politics of State Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Shebonti Ray Dadwal and Uttam Kumar Sinha, eds., *Non-Traditional Security Challenges in Asia: Approaches and Responses* (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Miller, “The Logic of US Military Interventions in the Post-cold War Era,” 73–74.

<sup>22</sup> M. Taylor Fravel, “Economic Growth, Regime Insecurity, and Military Strategy: Explaining the Rise of Noncombat Operations in China,” *Asian Security* 7, no. 3 (2011): 177–200.

<sup>23</sup> Sheehan, *The Economics of UN Peacekeeping*.

operation may provide the public good of enhanced regional stability and maritime security, while simultaneously providing the private payoff of closer commercial or diplomatic ties with regional actors and the opportunity to enhance its naval capabilities. This uncertainty surrounding a state's motives for MOOTW participation, and its intentions more broadly, is a necessary condition for the rise of the security dilemma.

### **THEORY: THE MOOTW SECURITY DILEMMA**

The security dilemma holds a prominent place in explaining behavior in an international system where states act to safeguard their interests and where the intent of rivals cannot be trusted. According to the classic theory, a state faces a dilemma when deciding how to defend itself against a potential adversary. On one hand, policymakers may choose to do nothing. Failing to take steps to counter the perceived threat, however, may leave the state weakened vis-à-vis its rival and susceptible to attack. Alternatively, the state could take steps to balance against its rival. For instance, a state might opt to develop new weapons to defend against the perceived threat, or, expand participation in alliances to share the burden of deterring the rival. Even if the state's efforts to enhance its security are purely defensive in nature, distrustful rivals may perceive the measures as threatening or offensively oriented.<sup>24</sup>

In the classic dilemma, two variables affect the likelihood that the defending state's actions will be viewed as threatening: capabilities differentiation and the offense-defense balance. First, military capabilities that can be used for both offensive and defensive purposes may increase the likelihood of security competition, as states cannot be assured that their rivals will use military equipment for defensive purposes. Second, capabilities that make offensive action easier and less risky may provide a state with incentives to initiate conflict. In turn, a rival that views these measures as an offensive threat may take balancing measures that

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<sup>24</sup> Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma."

set off a spiral of escalatory behavior and arms racing.<sup>25</sup> Paradoxically, measures intended to increase security can leave both states less secure and worse off.

The security dilemma has traditionally been used to explain the unintended consequences that occur when one state attempts to increase its security vis-à-vis another state.<sup>26</sup> While the security dilemma has been applied to cases other than interstate competition – such as intrastate ethnic conflict – these studies still examine circumstances where one group takes steps to increase its security relative to another group.<sup>27</sup> The same mechanisms that lead to the security dilemma between two groups, however, may be present even when a state’s military actions are intended to provide humanitarian assistance, promote stability, or establish peace, rather than bolster defenses against another actor. Just as with confronting a potential rival in an inter-group security dilemma scenario, a leader facing a humanitarian crisis, piracy, or some other non-traditional security threat, must decide how to react. A leader could do nothing and potentially face destabilizing domestic audience costs or the reputational consequences of international criticism. Or, she could deploy forces on a MOOTW, and potentially reveal military capabilities that rivals perceive as threatening, ratcheting up security competition. This represents a paradox similar to the classic security dilemma context in which a state’s efforts to promote stability unintentionally decrease stability.

Critics may argue that MOOTW participation is not a primary cause of the security dilemma and that these operations need not be destabilizing. Neither of these claims detracts from the argument presented in this article. First, since multiple factors drive a state’s security

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<sup>25</sup> Herz, “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma”; Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma.”

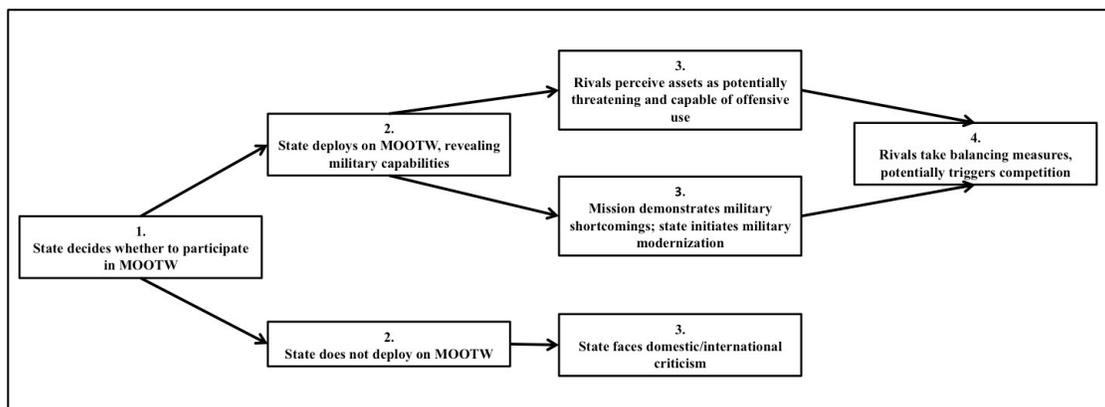
<sup>26</sup> Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma”; Robert Jervis, “Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 1 (2001): 36–60; Thomas J. Christensen, “Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940,” *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (January 1, 1997): 65–97.

<sup>27</sup> Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict”; David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, “Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict,” *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 41–75.

policies, MOOTW participation can be one of several contributors to competition between rival states. MOOTW are more likely to trigger security competition when the level of mistrust and tension between states is already high, but the revelation of capabilities during seemingly benign operations can still fuel competition between states with closer ties. Indeed, even close allies can never fully trust each other.<sup>28</sup> Second, even if a MOOTW enhances regional stability, promotes cooperation, or reassures allies and the international community in the short term, the mission can reveal capabilities that could be leveraged during future combat operations. A state’s use of its military to assist or reassure today does not necessarily commit it to continue using its forces in an altruistic manner in the future.

The remainder of this section spells out the MOOTW security dilemma argument, which is illustrated in Figure 1, below. The section assesses the dilemmas leaders face when deciding whether to launch a MOOTW, applies the capabilities differentiation and offensive-defense balance to MOOTW, and examines how the participation of rising powers in MOOTW may intensify security dilemma dynamics.

**Figure 1:**



<sup>28</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.”

### ***The Dilemma: Deciding to Participate***

MOOTW deployments typically involve significant risks and costs, so states must weigh the benefits of action against the consequences of inaction. An operation may help protect citizens, safeguard commercial and strategic interests, signal military prowess, or demonstrate a state's commitment to international norms and institutions. On the flipside, failing to participate in a MOOTW can leave citizens in harm's way; prolong suffering of those needing relief; or jeopardize access to material resources, markets, investments, and infrastructure. Because of the possibility for adverse consequences, both domestic and international audiences may demand that states launch MOOTW to promote stability or protect national interests. Ignoring these calls could generate domestic audience costs or result in criticism from the international community that weakens a leader or a state's global standing.

States routinely face domestic criticism for their hesitance to participate in MOOTW. During the Libyan Civil War, for instance, Chinese bloggers actively criticized their country's initially limited evacuation of citizens. One blogger, reportedly a Chinese railway worker living in Libya, called for Beijing's help on a popular Chinese website: "The UK, France, and South Korea are preparing to send over planes. How come there's still no movement from our government?"<sup>29</sup> The posts were shared thousands of times and generated hundreds of comments from Chinese 'netizens' urging their government to take action.<sup>30</sup> The evening after the blog posts began circulating, President Hu Jintao – in an announcement extensively carried by state media – ordered "all out efforts to ensure the life and property safety of Chinese nationals in Libya[.]"<sup>31</sup> Following Hu's directive, China's State Council established an emergency

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<sup>29</sup> Josh Chin, "China's Other Problem with Protests Abroad," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "Hu, Wen Order 'all-out Efforts' to Secure Life of Nationals," *Xinhua*, February 22, 2011.

headquarters that directed Beijing's "largest and most complicated evacuation ever," eventually evacuating 35,860 Chinese citizens from Libya.<sup>32</sup>

A government's failure to respond to domestic calls for MOOTW deployments can adversely affect public opinion toward the government. President Benigno Aquino, for instance, faced harsh criticism from Filipinos for his government's slow and ineffective response to Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013.<sup>33</sup> In the months following the typhoon, Aquino's approval ratings dipped and he eventually made a public apology for the government's lackluster MOOTW performance.<sup>34</sup> In the worst case for governments, criticism can spiral into mass protests that threaten security and stability. In recent years, Chinese protestors calling for better government response to natural disasters have besieged government buildings and destroyed official vehicles, leading authorities to deploy paramilitary forces to subdue the riots.<sup>35</sup>

Criticism for failing to participate in MOOTW can also come from the international community. International actors may view states that rely on other states to keep peace, maintain open sea lanes, or respond to humanitarian emergencies as free-riders that are unwilling to contribute their fair share to promoting stability.<sup>36</sup> These accusations increase distrust and make it difficult for perceived free-riders to cooperate with other states on tasks where international

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<sup>32</sup> "35,860 Chinese Nationals in Libya Evacuated," *Xinhua*, March 3, 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Damien McElroy, "Philippine President Makes Frank Admission of Typhoon Haiyan Relief Failures," *The Telegraph*, November 18, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/philippines/10456904/Philippine-president-makes-frank-admission-of-Typhoon-Haiyan-relief-failures.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Catherine Valente, "Aquino Apologizes for Slow Relief Efforts," *The Manila Times*, March 13, 2014, <http://www.manilatimes.net/aquino-apologizes-for-slow-relief-efforts/82335/>; "Binay Still Ahead of Aquino in Ratings Game," *The Manila Times Online*, January 13, 2014, <http://www.manilatimes.net/binay-still-ahead-of-aquino-in-ratings-game/67566/>.

<sup>35</sup> "China Flood Protests: Police out in Force in Yuyao," *BBC News*, October 16, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-24548515>.

<sup>36</sup> Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "Beijing, Global Free-Rider," *Foreign Policy*, November 12, 2009, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/12/beijing-global-free-rider/>; John Lee, "China Won't Be a 'Responsible Stakeholder,'" *The Wall Street Journal*, February 1, 2010.

collaboration is required or desired.<sup>37</sup> Although the available evidence cannot identify a causal link between calls for action and state decisions to launch MOOTW, leaders almost certainly take domestic and international pressures into account when making decisions about the deployment of military forces.

### ***Revealing Military Capabilities: The Challenge of MOOTW-Offense Differentiation***

Once a state commits to MOOTW participation, its deployment of forces provides potential rivals with information about its military capabilities. By employing weapon systems or demonstrating command and control functions, MOOTW shed light on a military's strengths and weaknesses, information that states often keep private or misrepresent to maintain strategic advantage over their peers.<sup>38</sup> If an operation is successful, the MOOTW participant demonstrates its military prowess. Conversely, if a mission fails or experiences challenges, a state may expose previously unknown military shortcomings. In either case, MOOTW provide rivals with valuable intelligence on a state's force structure, readiness, and tactics. Once unmasked, this information may lead rivals to initiate balancing efforts.<sup>39</sup>

According to the security dilemma, the likelihood of escalatory spirals is heightened when "offense-defense differentiation" is difficult.<sup>40</sup> A state may feel obligated to take balancing action to enhance its own security if a rival's actions to defend itself also enable offensive operations. Although military postures that are purely defensive in nature are thought to be stabilizing, few military measures are exclusively defensive, making differentiation a challenge.

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<sup>37</sup> Andrew B. Kennedy, "China and the Free-Rider Problem: Exploring the Case of Energy Security," *Political Science Quarterly* 130, no. 1 (March 1, 2015): 28–29.

<sup>38</sup> James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (July 1, 1995): 379–414.

<sup>39</sup> Bernard Brodie, "Military Demonstration and Disclosure of New Weapons," *World Politics* 5, no. 3 (1953): 281–301; Robert Axelrod, "The Rational Timing of Surprise," *World Politics* 31, no. 2 (1979): 231–33.

<sup>40</sup> Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," 199.

Most military capabilities – like tanks or multi-role fighter aircraft – can be employed to defend a state’s borders or to carry out offensive combat operations.<sup>41</sup>

The challenge of offense-defense differentiation plagues MOOTW just as it does traditional interstate conflict. The same assets that are used to carry out tasks like delivering humanitarian aid, evacuating non-combatants, and warding off pirates can also be used during offensive operations. While the requirement for combat equipment such as main battle tanks, submarines, and bomber aircraft is non-existent during most MOOTW, modern non-combat operations demand many of the same resources as traditional combat operations. U.S. joint doctrine, for instance, dictates that rapid mobility via sea, air or land; robust command and control and intelligence infrastructure; and combat support functions such as medical capabilities are required to support both combat and non-combat operations.<sup>42</sup>

Recent MOOTW have provided states the opportunity to showcase their mobility, intelligence, and combat support capabilities. China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force deployed its long-range Ilyushin Il-76 transport aircraft – capable of airlifting over 40 tons of supplies or 140 passengers nearly 3,000 miles – to evacuate non-combatants from Libya, help search for missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, and deliver relief supplies to Nepal.<sup>43</sup> Beijing has used the same aircraft to transport its national level rapid reaction unit, the 15<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps, to overseas exercises.<sup>44</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps is expected to be one of the first units deployed to any military contingency that requires ground forces, demonstrating the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, “Joint Publication 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States,” March 25, 2013, I-17.

<sup>43</sup> “Military Transporters Sent to Bring Home Chinese Nationals from Libya,” *Xinhua*, March 2, 2011; Ningzhu Zhu, “Two Chinese Il-76s Fly to Australia from Malaysia to Search for Missing Plane,” *Xinhua*, March 22, 2014; “Air Force Planes Sent to Nepal for Quake Relief,” *Xinhua*, April 27, 2015; Jamie Hunter, *Jane’s All the World’s Aircraft 2015-2016: In Service* (Surrey, United Kingdom: IHS Global, 2015), 341.

<sup>44</sup> U.S. Air Force, *People’s Liberation Army Air Force 2010* (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH: National Air and Space Intelligence Center, 2010), 116.

utility of air mobility assets to both MOOTW and conventional military operations.<sup>45</sup> In the intelligence arena, the U.S. Air Force deployed its remotely-piloted RQ-4 Global Hawk reconnaissance aircraft to assess structural damage following earthquakes in Haiti and to monitor the crippled Fukushima reactor, but more routinely use the jet to collect intelligence on potential adversaries, providing information that could aid targeting efforts during combat operations.<sup>46</sup> On the logistics support front, Beijing has used a combination of port calls and underway replenishment from auxiliary ships to sustain the deployment of advanced destroyers on anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa, but would use similar ships to support any combat deployments.<sup>47</sup> Washington also deploys military assets like the *USNS Mercy* hospital ship on humanitarian assistance missions, showcasing an asset with the primary task not of providing disaster relief, but of “provid[ing] rapid, flexible, and mobile acute medical and surgical services to support Marine Corps Air Ground Task Forces deployed ashore, Army and Air Force units deployed ashore, and naval amphibious task forces and battle forces afloat.”<sup>48</sup>

A state may demonstrate its ability to carry out many of these critical military tasks even if civilian assets are employed instead of military ones. Civilian and commercial entities have long played a role in supporting armed forces, particularly in providing surge sealift and airlift capacity. Beijing relied heavily on chartered commercial ferries and aircraft from Chinese airlines to carry out its 2011 Libya evacuation, and also used civilian airliners to supplement

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<sup>45</sup> Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 69.

<sup>46</sup> Russell Petcoff, “Global Hawk Collects Reconnaissance Data during Haiti Relief Efforts,” *U.S. Air Force News*, January 15, 2010, <http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/118014/global-hawk-collects-reconnaissance-data-during-haiti-relief-efforts.aspx>; Nathan Hodge, “U.S. Military Deploys Drones Above Fukushima, Libya,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 30, 2011; U.S. Air Force, “RQ-4 Global Hawk Fact Sheet,” *AF.mil*, October 27, 2014, <http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/FactSheets/Display/tabid/224/Article/104516/rq-4-global-hawk.aspx>.

<sup>47</sup> Erik Lin-Greenberg, “Dragon Boats: Assessing China’s Anti-Piracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden,” *Defense & Security Analysis* 26, no. 2 (2010): 219; Erickson and Strange, *No Substitute for Experience: Chinese Antipiracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden*, 128.

<sup>48</sup> U.S. Navy, “USNS Mercy Homepage,” accessed December 4, 2016, <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/usnsmercy/Pages/default.aspx>.

military aircraft to deliver aid and evacuate Chinese nationals from Nepal following an earthquake in 2015.<sup>49</sup> India also relied on chartered Air India A320s and civilian vessels to supplement Indian Navy ships and Indian Air Force C-17 transport aircraft to evacuate over 5,000 Indian citizens from Yemen in 2015.<sup>50</sup>

While these operations took place in largely permissive environments with only limited threats to air and maritime operations, the expertise gained in rapidly mobilizing civilian assets, and coordinating complex civilian-military operations can be applied if civilian assets are subsequently deployed on conventional military operations. The United States, for instance, relied on chartered civilian airliners to transport over 100,000 troops to the Middle East in the lead up to Operation Desert Storm, and the PLA uses civilian aircraft to deploy troops during force projection exercises.<sup>51</sup> More recently, commercial firms have also played an increasing role in providing a range of other services once conducted by government agencies.<sup>52</sup> For instance, commercial satellite firms like Digital Globe have provided the U.S. Government with intelligence imagery during both MOOTW and combat operations.<sup>53</sup>

Military hardware alone may trigger concerns about a rival's capabilities, but determinants of combat effectiveness like force employment and training levels play an equally important role.<sup>54</sup> Simply maintaining a military asset in an arsenal or using it during carefully

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<sup>49</sup> "China Sends Chartered Plane to Evacuate Nationals for Libya," *Xinhua*, February 23, 2011; "4,000 Chinese Stranded, Army Sent to Help Nepal," *Xinhua*, April 27, 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Pranav Kulkarni, "Explained: How India Evacuated 5000 Stranded in Yemen," *The Indian Express*, April 10, 2015, <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-leaving-yemen/>.

<sup>51</sup> Mary E Chenoweth, *The Civil Reserve Air Fleet and Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1993); Qiang Gao, Dayong Li, and Shanguo Du, "PLA Conducts Force Projection Drill With Civilian Aircraft," *Xinhua*, July 22, 2011, [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseMobilization/2011-07/22/content\\_4274437.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseMobilization/2011-07/22/content_4274437.htm).

<sup>52</sup> P. W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

<sup>53</sup> DigitalGlobe, "Creating Successful Public-Private Partnerships," November 24, 2015, <http://blog.digitalglobe.com/2015/11/24/creating-successful-public-private-partnerships/>.

<sup>54</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton, NJ:

scripted exercises provides little information about a state's ability to deploy the hardware operationally. MOOTW deployments, however, demonstrate a state's capacity to employ an asset and integrate it into real world operations, unmasking both strengths and weaknesses to potential rivals. Effective force employment during certain forms of MOOTW may be especially likely to exacerbate perceptions of a state's threatening offensive capabilities. For instance, anti-piracy missions demonstrate a state's ability to deploy and sustain forces far from a nation's borders and may signal greater military capabilities than a more limited or localized MOOTW, like a domestic disaster relief mission. Even limited missions, however, can showcase new capabilities that concern rivals.

While deployments can reveal new capabilities, failures and operational shortcomings during MOOTW are also informative to MOOTW-participants and their rivals. After experiencing challenges on MOOTW deployments, states may launch modernization and training programs to minimize perceived shortfalls. In turn, rivals may view these actions as threatening and increase their own military modernization efforts. For example, after facing significant challenges during post-typhoon relief efforts in 2013, the Philippine military sought to enhance its military processes and equipment. Evaluations of the operation authored jointly by Philippine and U.S. personnel offered several recommendations – such as increased interoperability between Philippine and U.S. military forces, continued forward basing of U.S. personnel, and streamlined coordination with regional partners – that would enhance Manila's capability to execute MOOTW.<sup>55</sup> Manila also took steps to modernize its sealift fleet, which

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Princeton University Press, 2006); Michael C. Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>55</sup> Gloria Jumamil-Mercado, *Advances in Civil-Military Coordination in Catastrophes* (Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, HI: Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance, 2015); Thomas Parker et al., "The U.S. Pacific Command Response to Super Typhoon Haiyan," *Joint Force Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (July 2016): 54–61.

proved less than capable during typhoon relief operations. The acquisition of transport vessels, including five surplus Australian tank landing ships, bolstered the Philippine Navy's disaster relief capabilities, but these acquisitions and enhancements in alliance interoperability could also be used to support conventional military operations in areas like contested islands in the South China Sea.<sup>56</sup> If, however, a state chooses not to rectify weaknesses exposed during operations, MOOTW participation can have a stabilizing effect on security competition, Rivals may feel more confident about their existing capabilities vis-à-vis the MOOTW-participating state and hold off on balancing efforts.

MOOTW deployments and post-MOOTW modernization offer ideal venues for states to gather information on their rivals' capabilities that might not otherwise be easily available. States allow for significant media coverage of MOOTW missions and routinely broadcast details about their participation – to include the type and number of assets deployed – in official announcements.<sup>57</sup> Governments have incentives to showcase these operations to highlight their military prowess, responsiveness to popular or international demands, and altruism to both domestic and foreign audiences. Further, military modernization programs following an ineffective MOOTW operation may be highly publicized in order to ameliorate domestic criticism for the state's poor performance.

To be sure, state-controlled press releases and media reports may intentionally overstate a state's capabilities. Despite the potential for actors to misrepresent their abilities, MOOTW participation still provides a degree of insight into a state's military capabilities that might not be available in the absence of operational deployments. In addition to information made available in

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<sup>56</sup> Jaime Laude, "Philippine Navy Gets 3 More Landing Ships from Australia," *The Philippine Star*, March 29, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/03/29/1567208/philippine-navy-gets-3-more-landing-ships-australia>.

<sup>57</sup> China, for instance, maintains both English and Chinese language websites that provide almost daily updates on their forces deployed on peacekeeping and anti-piracy operations, and embedded civilian journalists on their early missions in the Gulf of Aden.

media and government announcements, states with robust intelligence infrastructure can develop more precise assessments about a potential adversary's capabilities by collecting intelligence during their rival's MOOTW operations. By fusing geospatial, signals, and human intelligence reporting, analysts may be able to identify shortcomings, command and control processes, deployment timelines, or tactics.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, in the lead-up to China's first anti-piracy deployment in 2008, Chinese officials expressed concern that "secret reconnaissance" that could take place during MOOTW.<sup>59</sup>

### ***Gaining an Offensive Advantage***

In the traditional framing, the security dilemma is deepened when the offense-defense balance favors offensive action. If destroying an adversary's forces and seizing its territory is perceived to be easier, less costly, and more likely to yield benefits than defending one's homeland, states may be more apt to initiate offensive activity.<sup>60</sup> To avoid being the target of such an attack, states are likely to balance against a rival when they perceive offense to have the advantage. Conversely, states are less likely to engage in balancing behavior when defense has the advantage and protecting one's own territory is perceived to be easier than seizing adversary-held lands. MOOTW participation allows states to refine skills and gain geographic access that can make future missions easier and less risky, potentially leading military decision-makers to be more willing to deploy forces on offensively-oriented missions.

A combination of technology and geography determine the direction of the offense-defense balance. Technologies that enhance the mobility, survivability, and lethality of military

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<sup>58</sup> For more on intelligence disciplines and fused analysis, see Mark M Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy* (Los Angeles: SAGE/CQ Press, 2012).

<sup>59</sup> "Cooperation in Gulf Mission 'Smooth,'" *China Daily*, February 19, 2009.

<sup>60</sup> Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," 186–88.

forces allow states to more easily carry out first strikes, generating an offensive advantage.<sup>61</sup> Geographic features like level terrain make offensive action easier, while natural barriers such as mountains and oceans provide a defensive advantage by leveraging the stopping power of geography to hinder attacks.<sup>62</sup> Although the effect of the offense-defense balance is subject to an academic debate, certain military equipment and skillsets allow states to overcome geographic barriers and more easily conduct offensive operations.<sup>63</sup> The availability of these systems in skills may make it easier to conduct offensive action, potentially altering a state's decision calculus on the use of force.

The skills refined during MOOTW participation may allow a state to carry out offensive action during future contingencies with greater ease and less risk. As described above, many of the capabilities employed on MOOTW – such as mobility and ISR assets – help overcome geographic barriers or collect information that can increase the effectiveness and precision of combat operations. Skills that contribute to effective force employment, like logistics, joint operations, and command and control that are developed while orchestrating MOOTW also enhance a state's ability to plan and execute combat or force projection operations. Indeed, many of the systems and processes leveraged during MOOTW are what Celeste Wallander refers to as general assets, capabilities that can be employed across a range of theaters and missions, rather than being tied to a specific location.<sup>64</sup> States that refine utilization of general assets during MOOTW can avoid much of the international criticism that might arise during large-scale exercises designed to practice offensively-oriented skills. As states become more competent and

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 196–99; Karen Ruth Adams, “Attack and Conquer? International Anarchy and the Offense-Defense-Deterrence Balance,” *International Security* 28, no. 3 (2003): 45–83.

<sup>62</sup> Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” 194–96; John J Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 83–84.

<sup>63</sup> Charles L. Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann, “What Is the Offense-Defense Balance and Can We Measure It?,” *International Security* 22, no. 4 (1998): 44–82; Adams, “Attack and Conquer?”

<sup>64</sup> Celeste A. Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War,” *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (October 1, 2000): 708.

comfortable with employing these general assets, military decision-makers may believe that operations can be carried out more easily and with less risk, making them more willing to carry out subsequent offensive operations.

In addition to providing a venue to operationally test capabilities and refine tactics that make offensive action easier, MOOTW deployments may position a state's military forces well beyond traditional operating areas. This forward deployment of forces may place a state's troops in close geographic proximity to rivals, contested areas, strategic lanes of communication, or overseas economic interests, allowing a state to more rapidly respond to potential threats or to cut off a rival's access to strategically important areas. China's anti-piracy deployment, for instance, heightened concerns among Indian policymakers that China was encroaching on New Delhi's Indian Ocean region sphere of influence.<sup>65</sup> The need to support overseas MOOTW may also be used as justification for permanent overseas basing. Indeed, in July 2017 Beijing deployed military personnel to its first overseas base in the East African nation of Djibouti, which ostensibly serves as a resupply facility for PLA Navy vessels participating in antipiracy and humanitarian operations.<sup>66</sup> The reduced distance from flashpoints offered by overseas bases or forward deployed locations could allow MOOTW-participants to respond to crises far faster than deploying assets from domestic bases. China, for example, demonstrated its ability to use forward deployed assets by redeploying a frigate from its antipiracy mission in the Gulf of Aden to participate in an evacuation operation in Libya in spring 2011.<sup>67</sup>

Offensively oriented skills gained on MOOTW missions can diffuse across militaries as deployed personnel return home and share tactics, draft standardized operating procedures, or

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<sup>65</sup> Ananth Krishnan, "No Indian Ocean Military Base: China," *The Hindu*, December 12, 2011, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/no-indian-ocean-military-base-china/article2709137.ece>.

<sup>66</sup> "PLA Base in Djibouti to Help China Better Perform International Obligations," *Xinhua*, July 12, 2017, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-07/12/c\\_136438611.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-07/12/c_136438611.htm).

<sup>67</sup> Xiang Zhang, "Chinese Navy Frigate Crosses Suez Canal for Libya Evacuation," *Xinhua*, February 28, 2011.

integrate lessons learned and best practices into formal training and acquisitions programs. The PLA, for instance, has established MOOTW studies departments at various military academic institutions, helping to refine MOOTW doctrine and operations.<sup>68</sup> Lessons learned can also be disseminated across broader segments of a state's military as senior military officers who previously led MOOTW deployments are promoted into positions of greater authority. Research from management science finds that organizations can learn and improve their operations when employees rotate through assignments, particularly overseas postings.<sup>69</sup> Personnel gain expertise with processes and management skills, build up networks of overseas colleagues, and gain technological knowledge during their international assignments.<sup>70</sup> Upon their return, they not only apply their new skills, but help educate the organization by transferring knowledge to other personnel.<sup>71</sup> According to these findings, officers with MOOTW experience likely integrate best practices into exercises and doctrine, or develop acquisitions strategies informed by their MOOTW service, increasing a state's ability to carry out the full range of military operations.

The career progression of retired PLA Navy Vice Admiral Du Jingchen, the first commander of China's anti-piracy task force in the Gulf of Aden, illustrates how officers assigned to MOOTW may later spread skills gained on these deployments. Upon completing his assignment as task force commander, Admiral Du remarked that the operation was a learning opportunity that highlighted gaps in China's naval capabilities, and that shortcomings in areas

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<sup>68</sup> Morgan Clemens, "PLA Thinking On Military Operations Than War," in *China's Evolving Military Strategy*, ed. Joe McReynolds (Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, 2016), 301–2.

<sup>69</sup> Ingemar Torbiörn, "Staffing for International Operations," *Human Resource Management Journal; London* 7, no. 3 (1997): 42; Silke Bender and Alan Fish, "The Transfer of Knowledge and the Retention of Expertise: The Continuing Need for Global Assignments," *Journal of Knowledge Management; Kempston* 4, no. 2 (2000): 125.

<sup>70</sup> Bender and Fish, "The Transfer of Knowledge and the Retention of Expertise"; Ariane Berthoin Antal, "Types of Knowledge Gained by Expatriate Managers," *Journal of General Management* 26, no. 2 (2000): 32–51; B. Sebastian Reiche, Anne-Wil Harzing, and Maria L. Kraimer, "The Role of International Assignees' Social Capital in Creating Inter-Unit Intellectual Capital: A Cross-Level Model," *Journal of International Business Studies* 40, no. 3 (2009): 509–26, doi:10.1057/jibs.2008.86.

<sup>71</sup> Torbiörn, "Staffing for International Operations"; "International Assignments: Implications and Practices," *The Canadian Manager; Toronto* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 19–20; Bender and Fish, "The Transfer of Knowledge and the Retention of Expertise."

such as combat readiness, equipment development, and regulations experienced during “the escort mission can impel us to further update our concept and probe into new ways and new methods in naval building.”<sup>72</sup>

Du quickly advanced up the ranks after his anti-piracy deployment. He was promoted to commander of China’s East Sea Fleet, which would play a pivotal role in a war with either Taiwan or Japan.<sup>73</sup> He subsequently advanced to Chief of Staff of the PLA Navy, a position that oversees navy personnel management, operations, training, and logistics, allowing him to influence a range of PLA Navy policies.<sup>74</sup> Du finished his career as a Deputy Commander of the PLA Navy, one of China’s most senior naval officers.<sup>75</sup> During his tenure as Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander, the PLA Navy participated in several MOOTW including non-combatant evacuations and hospital ship deployments, while also stepping up more traditional deployments in the Western Pacific.

### ***Long Term Balancing***

Under the MOOTW security dilemma, balancing behavior is drawn out over an extended period of time, with limited short-term tit-for-tat balancing. Military research and development, acquisitions, and tactics development can take years, so balancing behavior might not be immediately observed. Instead, a state’s MOOTW deployment may serve as a critical juncture, a key event that sets off a series of subsequent actions that might otherwise not have happened.<sup>76</sup> After perceiving a rival’s MOOTW as threatening, a state may initiate a protracted series of

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<sup>72</sup> “Du Jingchen: Escort Is Conducive to Naval Building,” *PLA Daily*, April 29, 2009, [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/SpecialReports/2009hjdjhd/2009-04/29/content\\_4008276.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/SpecialReports/2009hjdjhd/2009-04/29/content_4008276.htm).

<sup>73</sup> Jeffrey Becker, David Liebenberg, and Peter Mackenzie, “Behind the Periscope: Leadership in China’s Navy,” *CNA China Studies* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2013), 93.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 64–65.

<sup>75</sup> Jeffrey Becker, “Who’s at the Helm? The Past, Present, and Future Leaders of China’s Navy,” *Naval War College Review* 69, no. 2 (2016): 74.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 251–67; Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 55–78.

balancing actions as governments and military services debate how to most effectively counter the perceived threat.<sup>77</sup> Once a solution is decided upon, new assets take time to design and build, personnel must be trained to operate the new systems, and equipment must be integrated into a nation's existing command and force structure.<sup>78</sup> As a result, capabilities developed in reaction to a rival's MOOTW may not become operational until decades later.

In the short term, a state may launch an operation parallel to a rival's MOOTW deployment, but destabilizing security competition is unlikely to occur within the relatively short time horizons of a specific mission. Indeed, sworn nemeses participating in the same MOOTW mission are often able to set aside broader strategic disputes. For example, Indian and Pakistani troops have historically cooperated on United Nations peacekeeping operations even as their comrades faced-off on the Indian subcontinent.<sup>79</sup> Similar dynamics exist between other rivals. The American commander of a multinational anti-piracy task force off the Somali coast hosted the PLA Admiral commanding China's unilateral anti-piracy operation in March 2009, amidst a significant diplomatic row caused by China's harassment of an American surveillance ship in the South China Sea just one week earlier.<sup>80</sup>

### ***The Intensity of the MOOTW Security Dilemma: The Role of Rising Powers***

The risk of a MOOTW security dilemma may be heightened when rising powers are involved since deployments have the potential to reveal more information about a rising power's military capacity than about an established power's. Ascendant powers regularly acquire new military technology, but are often hesitant to divulge information about their capabilities or intent

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<sup>77</sup> Morton H. Halperin, "The Decision to Deploy the ABM: Bureaucratic and Domestic Politics in the Johnson Administration," *World Politics* 25, no. 1 (1972): 62–95.

<sup>78</sup> Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power*, 18–64.

<sup>79</sup> Alan Bullion, "India and UN Peacekeeping Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 4, no. 1 (1997): 104.

<sup>80</sup> Terry McKnight and Michael Hirsh, *Pirate Alley: Commanding Task Force 151 off Somalia* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 164–83.

for fear of sharing too much information with militarily powerful rivals.<sup>81</sup> The operational employment of these systems during MOOTW, however, allows potential adversaries to update their assessments of the MOOTW-participating state's military power. To be sure, an established power's MOOTW participation can disclose new information, but far more is generally known about the military capabilities of these states as they have showcased their forces during previous deployments and exercises. When less information is available about a state's capabilities, the demonstration effect – or impact – of unveiling new technologies may be significantly larger.<sup>82</sup> In turn, these more significant revelations may contribute to more intense balancing behavior.

Uncertainty over the long-term intentions of rising powers may compound concerns about the military capabilities revealed during MOOTW deployments. Scholars who study shifts in the global balance of power have long argued that rising powers take actions to upset the world order once they accrue sufficient capabilities to challenge the dominant actor.<sup>83</sup> To prevent these power transitions, dominant actors often respond by taking balancing actions designed to stymie the challenger's rise. Accordingly, states may view the willingness of a rising power to deploy forces on MOOTW well beyond its home territory or in a manner that showcases advanced equipment as a threatening indicator of a state's more assertive foreign and defense policy. Even though MOOTW deployments are generally not intended to bolster defenses vis-à-vis rivals, states cannot be sure that the rising power's intentions will remain purely altruistic as it gains more power. In the worst case, the capabilities and skills used to support MOOTW today could be used to wage war tomorrow.

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<sup>81</sup> Oriana Skylar Mastro, "The Vulnerability of Rising Powers: The Logic Behind China's Low Military Transparency," *Asian Security* 12, no. 2 (2016): 63–81.

<sup>82</sup> Brodie, "Military Demonstration and Disclosure of New Weapons," 288–99.

<sup>83</sup> Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*.

## AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT

I rely on process tracing to conduct a hoop test of the MOOTW security dilemma.<sup>84</sup> Specifically, I examine a series of events surrounding Japan's response to the 2011 earthquake and tsunami for evidence of the causal mechanisms associated with security dilemma dynamics.<sup>85</sup> Passing the hoop test affirms the plausibility of the hypothesis, but does not confirm it. If, however, evidence does not indicate that MOOTW participation can cause security competition, the MOOTW security dilemma fails the test and is eliminated from subsequent consideration.<sup>86</sup> The timing and sequencing of post-earthquake events – like China's reaction to Japan's relief operations – is critical for effective process tracing, but chronology alone is insufficient for theory testing. Instead, evidence must indicate that temporally prior events actually shaped subsequent decisions related to balancing behavior.<sup>87</sup>

If MOOTW participation can cause security dilemmas, we should observe a specific sequence of events. First, a state should face pressure – from domestic or international audiences – to dispatch forces in response to a non-traditional security threat or natural disaster. During this deployment, the state reveals information about its military capabilities such as new equipment, previously undemonstrated tactics, an ability to rapidly deploy outside traditional operating areas, or operational shortcomings. A rival will observe these capabilities and will initiate balancing behavior if it believes the capabilities revealed during MOOTW or post-MOOTW modernization efforts weaken its security vis-à-vis the MOOTW-participant. In the long run, we expect to observe the development of similar capabilities or increased deployments on similar

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<sup>84</sup> Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 31–32.

<sup>85</sup> On process tracing see, Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6; Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 2–5.

<sup>86</sup> David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” *PS, Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 4 (October 2011): 825.

<sup>87</sup> Beach and Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods*, 120–43.

non-combat operations. To search for this evidence, I draw qualitative data from government documents, press releases, and media reporting.

Admittedly, there are several limitations to this analytic approach. First, governments may be hesitant to openly express concern about their rivals' MOOTW deployments; doing so might signal weakness or be denounced for criticizing an ostensibly altruistic mission. As a result, it is difficult to identify specific instances where leaders admit to viewing a rival's MOOTW as threatening or that it led them to take balancing action. In the absence of access to classified official records or senior level defense and foreign ministry deliberations that might reveal a state's true positions, this paper draws inferences solely from openly available information. Decision-makers are faced with a similar challenge: without unambiguous information about potential rivals, diplomats and intelligence services frequently make judgments based on incomplete information and often predict the most threatening, worst-case scenarios.<sup>88</sup>

A second challenge is distinguishing a state's actions taken in direct response to a rival's MOOTW from those that would have occurred even if the MOOTW did not take place. States face a multitude of security challenges and may enact policies, acquire new assets, or mobilize forces to balance against a range of these threats. Thus, even if a state takes an action shortly after a rival's MOOTW, the action may not be the direct result of the rival's deployment. As Robert Jervis posits, "appearances are not sufficient to determine whether actors are reacting to each other."<sup>89</sup> However, when observations of balancing actions are combined with other

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<sup>88</sup> Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable," *World Politics* 31, no. 1 (October 1, 1978): 73–75.

<sup>89</sup> Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 26.

indicators – like state-affiliated think tanks citing a rival’s MOOTW deployments as justification for military modernization – a MOOTW security dilemma may be at play.

Drawing from the spectrum of MOOTW described above, I examine a case where forces are deployed on a non-combat domestic relief operation. Japan’s humanitarian relief operations following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami were not launched in response to a hostile actor and did not require the use or threat of force. Further, the earthquake relief case involved a domestic deployment that did not dispatch Japanese troops beyond Japanese territory. If the MOOTW security dilemma appears in this case, it should also appear in cases where a MOOTW mission deploys more menacing forces further from a state’s borders.

### ***The 3/11 Earthquake Response***

On March 11, 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of eastern Japan. The quake and ensuing tsunami destroyed nearly half a million buildings, triggered a meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear reactor, and caused 16,000 deaths. Given the intense devastation, Tokyo had little option but to initiate a massive military operation to deliver humanitarian aid and begin the recovery process. Failing to deploy forces would have prolonged suffering and generated a significant economic downturn. Within days, Japan had launched its largest military mobilization since World War II, deploying over 106,000 Self Defense Force (SDF) personnel supported by 24,000 U.S. servicemembers.<sup>90</sup> For a nation constitutionally bound to limit the use of its armed forces, the relief effort provided an unprecedented window into Japan’s military operations, highlighting Tokyo’s military capabilities and showcasing the strength of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Simultaneously, the mission also revealed operational shortcomings that the

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<sup>90</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, *Special Feature: Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake* (Tokyo: Japan Ministry of Defense, 2011), 3; Andrew Feickert and Emma Chanlett-Avery, *Japan 2011 Earthquake: U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Response* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2011), 1.

Ministry of Defense would work to rectify in subsequent years.<sup>91</sup> China and Russia reportedly paid close attention to Japanese recovery efforts, possibly allowing them to identify SDF skills and capabilities to balance against.

### *Showcasing Capabilities*

The Ministry of Defense began mobilizing forces within minutes of the initial tremors. Tokyo quickly activated an emergency headquarters and dispatched surveillance aircraft to assess damage, demonstrating its ability to rapidly call up and deploy forces for contingency operations.<sup>92</sup> By the end of the day, Japan had mobilized 8,400 troops for relief efforts and initiated plans for a far larger call-up of forces. Forty-eight hours later, the Ministry of Defense had mobilized more than 50,000 personnel from across Japan and began deploying them to regions hardest hit by the quake and tsunami.<sup>93</sup> Tokyo also conducted the first-ever mobilization of its reserve forces since their establishment in 1954, calling up more than 2,500 reservists to assist with relief operations.<sup>94</sup> At the peak of post-3/11 operations, nearly fifty-percent of total SDF manpower was mobilized.<sup>95</sup> While the rapid call-up and sustainment of personnel was critical for relief efforts, speedy mobilization is also a necessity for effective combat operations.

The earthquake relief mission also demonstrated Japan's ability to conduct joint operations and execute command and control during contingencies, competencies that are essential for more traditional combat operations. The Ministry of Defense established the Joint Disaster Response Task Force three days after the earthquake to direct ground, maritime, and air forces assigned to relief operations and to coordinate the response to the Fukushima meltdown.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Yuki Tatsumi, *Great Eastern Japan Earthquake: Lessons Learned* (Washington, D.C.: Stimson, 2012), 21–34.

<sup>92</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, *Special Feature: Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake*, 2.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 2–3.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 2; International Institute for Strategic Studies, “Japan,” *The Military Balance* 111 (2011): 245.

<sup>96</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, *Special Feature: Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake*, 3.

This was Japan's first operational joint task force, and represented a significant advance in Tokyo's joint capabilities. Although Japanese military services had previously deployed alongside each to Iraq and the Horn of Africa, these missions typically involved small numbers of personnel from just two services.<sup>97</sup> The earthquake relief efforts involved far more personnel and showcased a deeper integration of leadership and personnel with members of air, maritime, and ground forces under a joint command structure.

Japan's Joint Task Force was supported by nearly 24,000 American military personnel operating 189 aircraft and 24 U.S. Navy vessels, including a carrier strike group and elements of a Marine Expeditionary Unit.<sup>98</sup> Washington's Operation Tomodachi transported Japan SDF personnel and equipment, helped reopen airfields, conducted reconnaissance and damage assessments, and delivered millions of pounds of relief supplies. To streamline operations, Japan and the United States relied heavily on liaison officers embedded at military headquarters and onboard ships. For instance, a Japanese general was posted at the headquarters of U.S. Forces in Japan (USFJ), while the Deputy USFJ Commander worked at Japan SDF Headquarters.<sup>99</sup> Liaison officers were also deployed at lower echelons of command, helping with coordination between U.S. and Japanese forces.<sup>100</sup> Although the mission suffered from several communication, information sharing, and integration challenges, Operation Tomodachi showcased the interoperability of Japanese and American forces that would likely play a decisive role in any future combat operations in the region.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Tatsumi, *Great Eastern Japan Earthquake: Lessons Learned*, 21–22.

<sup>98</sup> Feickert and Chanlett-Avery, *Japan 2011 Earthquake: U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Response*, 6.

<sup>99</sup> Richard J Samuels, *3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 98.

<sup>100</sup> Jennifer Moroney et al., *Lessons from Department of Defense Disaster Relief Efforts in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2013), 98.

<sup>101</sup> Tatsumi, *Great Eastern Japan Earthquake: Lessons Learned*; Samuels, *3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan*, 103–7.

Japanese officials and citizens widely considered Operation Tomodachi – the largest bilateral mission in the history of the U.S.-Japan alliance – to be an indicator of Washington’s commitment to defending Japan.<sup>102</sup> Former Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, for instance, suggested that large-scale American participation in relief efforts demonstrated Washington’s solidarity with Tokyo as the United States was under no formal treaty obligation to assist Japan in the event of natural disasters. Thus, Operation Tomodachi represented a “valuable element in the future rebuilding and deepening” of the alliance.<sup>103</sup> Many Japanese policymakers even viewed the large-scale U.S. participation in post-earthquake relief efforts as having a deterrent effect on Japan’s potential rivals.<sup>104</sup> Although some analysts have questioned whether relief efforts truly strengthened the U.S.-Japan alliance, the perceived strength of Washington’s commitment to Tokyo and ability to interoperate with Japanese forces may have stoked concerns in Beijing, Moscow, and Pyongyang.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to highlighting alliance solidarity and Tokyo’s ability to rapidly mobilize forces, 3/11 relief efforts showcased several specific capabilities and assets – airborne ISR, airfield operations, and Japan’s airlift assets and helicopter carriers – that would be critical during combat operations. These capabilities delivered information to decision-makers, opened airfields for the subsequent landing of personnel and supplies, and extended the reach of Japan’s military forces.

Aerial reconnaissance played a key role in conducting damage assessments, monitoring conditions at the Fukushima reactor, and identifying areas where aid was most urgently needed. Both the SDF and U.S. military began launching aircraft to gather information shortly after the

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<sup>102</sup> Samuels, *3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan*, 82.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>104</sup> Moroney et al., *Lessons from Department of Defense Disaster Relief Efforts in the Asia-Pacific Region*, 100.

<sup>105</sup> Samuels, *3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan*, 103–7.

earthquake. One day after the earthquake, U.S. Navy P-3 Orion patrol planes based at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa conducted the first American aerial reconnaissance missions along the Japanese coastline. The P-3 missions surveyed ports and airfields to locate embarkation sites, assessed Japanese lines of communication, and provided imagery that helped amphibious landing forces resupply islands not accessible by land.<sup>106</sup> Subsequent missions flown by U.S. Air Force RQ-4 Global Hawk remotely piloted aircraft and high altitude U-2 reconnaissance jets operating from bases in Guam and South Korea provided over 3,000 images to U.S. and Japanese agencies that identified passable roads, located survivors, and provided updates on the status on the Fukushima reactor.<sup>107</sup> The same aircraft that provided information to drive relief efforts are routinely used to collect information on potential rivals and have supported combat operations in Libya, Afghanistan, and Iraq.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, reconnaissance tasks carried out during 3/11 relief efforts – like identifying amphibious landing sites or pinpointing small groups of people – are the same type of reconnaissance requirements that might be needed during combat operations, such as a conflict over contested territory in the East China Sea.

Relief efforts also illustrated the ability of American and Japanese forces to rapidly establish control of airfields and ports, missions that enable the delivery of personnel and supplies in both MOOTW and combat situations. The same U.S. Air Force and Navy units tasked to reopen tsunami-damaged ports and aviation facilities after 3/11 have wartime missions that include combat harbor clearance and “deploying undetected into hostile combat and austere

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<sup>106</sup> U.S. Air Force, *Team Kadena & Operation Tomodachi (Friend) 11 March-13 April 2011* (18th Wing History Office, 2012), 10–11.

<sup>107</sup> Seth Robson, “Global Hawk Invaluable After Japan Disasters,” *Stars and Stripes*, September 12, 2011; Hodge, “U.S. Military Deploys Drones Above Fukushima, Libya.”

<sup>108</sup> Hodge, “U.S. Military Deploys Drones Above Fukushima, Libya”; U.S. Air Force, “RQ-4 Global Hawk Fact Sheet”; Gordon Lubold, “Pentagon to Sharply Expand U.S. Drone Flights Over Next Four Years,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2015.

environments to establish assault zones or airfields.”<sup>109</sup> Once reconnaissance identified earthquake-damaged airports that could be used for relief efforts, U.S. Air Force special operations teams working with Japanese personnel cleared runways of debris, established air traffic control, and reopened airports and air bases to aircraft delivering personnel and supplies.<sup>110</sup> In one case, a Japanese and American team cleared a debris-covered 5,000-foot segment of runway at Sendai International Airport in three hours, allowing the airport – which had suffered significant tsunami damage – to become a logistics hub for the relief operation.<sup>111</sup> Navy Mobile Diving and Salvage Units, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Teams, and Underwater Construction Teams also worked alongside Japanese personnel to clear debris and damaged vessels from ports and harbors along Japan’s eastern coast, helping to restart operations at these facilities.<sup>112</sup>

Post-3/11 recovery operations also showcased Japanese military assets by allowing the SDF to deploy several mobility systems that enabled the rapid deployment of forces, demonstrating a general asset useful in both MOOTW and combat settings. Although the United States provided significant airlift and sealift support, Japan relied heavily on its small fleet of KC-767, C-130H, and C-1 transport aircraft along with maritime assets like hovercraft landing ships to move supplies and personnel.<sup>113</sup> Japan’s military operates a far smaller number of transport aircraft and ships than its potential adversaries, but the use of these systems during

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<sup>109</sup> U.S. Air Force, “Combat Controllers Fact Sheet,” *AF.mil*, August 18, 2010, <http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/FactSheets/Display/tabid/224/Article/104592/combat-controllers.aspx>; U.S. Navy, “Command History: Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit,” *U.S. Fleet Forces*, January 28, 2011, <http://www.public.navy.mil/necc/mdsu2/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>.

<sup>110</sup> Gregory Ball, “Fact Sheet: Operation TOMODACHI” (Air Force Historical Studies Office, n.d.).

<sup>111</sup> Rob Toth, “Operation Kaitakusha Pathfinder,” *Air Commando Journal* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 36–43.

<sup>112</sup> Ryan Zielonka, *Chronology of Operation Tomodachi* (Seattle, WA: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2011), 12.

<sup>113</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, *Special Feature: Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake*, 6.

relief efforts highlighted the potential for the SDF to use its lift assets during contingency operations in nearby flashpoints like the Senkakus.

Japan's relief operations also involved its *Hyuga*-class helicopter destroyer, which at the time, was the largest ship to serve in the Japanese fleet since the end of World War II. The *Hyuga* – which was commissioned two years before the 3/11 earthquake – is capable of carrying up to 11 helicopters and is equipped with a 195-meter long flight deck where four helicopters can simultaneously take off or land.<sup>114</sup> During post-3/11 operations, the SDF used the *Hyuga* as an afloat command center and a refueling and relay station for Japanese and U.S. helicopters involved in transport and search and rescue operations.<sup>115</sup> Because of its ability to launch aircraft from points beyond Japan's shores, some analysts described the *Hyuga* as providing Japan's first power projection capability since 1945. Indeed, Japan deployed a *Hyuga*-class ship to the South China Sea to participate in naval exercises with the Philippine Navy in early 2016, challenging Beijing's maritime claims in the region.<sup>116</sup> The power projection capabilities offered by ships like the *Hyuga* are particularly threatening to potential rivals since flattop ships like helicopter and aircraft carriers are traditionally viewed as offensive assets. Indeed, China has criticized Japan for developing and deploying helicopter carriers, which some Chinese commentators have referred to as “aircraft carriers in disguise” that threaten regional stability.<sup>117</sup>

### *Lessons Learned*

Japan's 3/11 relief efforts yielded lessons that helped the SDF prepare for a range of future missions including both MOOTW and traditional combat deployments. To be sure,

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<sup>114</sup> “Helicopter Carrier Commissioned,” *The Japan Times*, March 19, 2009.

<sup>115</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, *Special Feature: Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake*, 9.

<sup>116</sup> Karthick Arvinth, “Japan Challenges Chinese Maritime Claims by Sending Warship to Philippines,” *International Business Times*, April 27, 2016.

<sup>117</sup> Zhaokun Wang, “Tokyo Unveils New Carrier,” *Global Times*, August 7, 2013, [http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/802056.shtml#\\_UgF19ZI3tsk](http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/802056.shtml#_UgF19ZI3tsk).

carrying out operations in a contested environment subject to adversary attacks is far more challenging than conducting peacetime humanitarian relief efforts, but the real-world employment of the SDF and its integration with American forces allowed Tokyo to identify both best practices and operational shortcomings. Lessons learned dealing with troop deployments, joint operations, and alliance interoperability were incorporated into Japanese military planning and alliance exercises, allowing these competencies to be refined for potential use in future contingencies.<sup>118</sup> At the same time, limitations unmasked during the relief mission led the Ministry of Defense to launch modernization efforts to ensure Japan's military was equipped to face future security challenges.

Post-3/11 relief operations exposed SDF capability shortcomings in two primary areas: ISR and logistics.<sup>119</sup> The SDF did not have sufficient ISR assets to adequately monitor the Fukushima reactor and conduct damage assessments of other earthquake-affected areas.<sup>120</sup> As a result, the U.S. military conducted a sizeable share of ISR operations during the relief efforts. Although the U.S. provision of ISR support demonstrated the alliance's ability to gather and share intelligence during contingency operations, Japan's shortage of ISR assets – specifically unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with long loiter times – led the Ministry of Defense to step up its development and acquisition of UAV capabilities.<sup>121</sup> In the years following 3/11, the Japanese government sought to acquire a variety of UAVs including the American-built RQ-4 Global Hawk, which the United States had used to great effect during earthquake recovery efforts.<sup>122</sup> In addition to their use in MOOTW situations, these assets could be used to conduct reconnaissance

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<sup>118</sup> Samuels, *3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan*, 108; Moroney et al., *Lessons from Department of Defense Disaster Relief Efforts in the Asia-Pacific Region*, 104.

<sup>119</sup> Tatsumi, *Great Eastern Japan Earthquake: Lessons Learned*, 23–26; Moroney et al., *Lessons from Department of Defense Disaster Relief Efforts in the Asia-Pacific Region*, 100–102.

<sup>120</sup> Tatsumi, *Great Eastern Japan Earthquake: Lessons Learned*, 24.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with Japanese Ministry of Defense Research and Development Official, July 2016.

<sup>122</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, “Government of Japan RQ-4 Block 30(I) Global Hawk Remotely Piloted Aircraft” (Defense Security Cooperation Agency, November 20, 2015).

operations near contested maritime and territorial claims, a move that Beijing would almost certainly view as adversely impacting its security and seek to counter.<sup>123</sup>

The operation also highlighted several shortcomings in the SDF's logistics capabilities. Senior Japanese officers specifically pinpointed the lack of maritime transport systems and amphibious capabilities as a key challenge.<sup>124</sup> SDF ground forces were often unable to pass over damaged roads and Japan maintained only a small fleet of airlift and sealift assets. As a result, the SDF was forced to rely largely on the United States for sea and air transport.<sup>125</sup> Although the operation demonstrated that Japan could conduct small-scale mobility operations, limitations in lift capacity led policymakers to question whether Japan would be able to support large contingency deployments without Washington's assistance.

Japan's Ministry of Defense attempted to leverage the wave of post-3/11 public support for the SDF to secure funding for mobility assets that would help address the shortcomings identified during the relief mission.<sup>126</sup> For instance, Japan's five-year defense program announced in 2013 included outlays to acquire 52 amphibious vehicles and 17 Osprey aircraft, military assets that are often associated with combat operations.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, the 2013 defense budget authorized the acquisition of amphibious vehicles for "deployments of units from the sea in order to respond to illegal activities and invasions of islands, as well as for disaster relief activities in and out of Japan."<sup>128</sup> One Japanese legislator explicitly highlighted the ability of these systems to conduct both MOOTW and combat operations by suggesting that amphibious

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<sup>123</sup> UAV operations around the Senkakus is already contentious, with Beijing and Tokyo issuing warning against the other's UAV operations. See, Daniel Schearf, "Japan, China Territorial Tensions Rising Over Unmanned Drones," *Voice of America*, October 31, 2013.

<sup>124</sup> Naoyuki Taura, "JSDF's Logistics Capability: Lessons Learned From 3/11" (Stimson Center, March 16, 2012), 9.

<sup>125</sup> Tatsumi, *Great Eastern Japan Earthquake: Lessons Learned*, 25.

<sup>126</sup> Samuels, *3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan*, 93.

<sup>127</sup> Jun Iiyama, "Ospreys, Drones on Japan's Defense Wish List," *Nikkei Asian Review*, December 14, 2013.

<sup>128</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, "Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: Overview of FY2013 Budget" (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, January 2013), 5.

ships would allow the SDF to “solve both disaster response and China problems at the same time.”<sup>129</sup>

### *Balancing by Rivals*

The post-earthquake relief operations provided China and Russia with a rare window to observe Japan’s military capabilities. Shortly after the earthquake, a Chinese State Oceanic Administration patrol helicopter reportedly flew in close proximity to a Japanese Maritime SDF destroyer in the East China Sea, leading Tokyo to lodge a diplomatic protest to Beijing.<sup>130</sup> Russian military aircraft also reportedly approached Japanese airspace in the days after the earthquake.<sup>131</sup> One member of Japan’s House of Councilors who had previously commanded Japanese forces in Iraq suggested that Russian and Chinese probing of air and sea defenses during the crisis allowed these potential adversaries to collect information about how Japanese forces operated with their American allies.<sup>132</sup> To be sure, Beijing also deployed a 15-member rescue team to northeastern Japan and offered \$4.57 million in material aid including blankets and tents. China also offered to deploy its PLA Navy *Peace Ark* hospital ship and PLA robots designed to handle nuclear accidents, but Tokyo declined these offers to avoid accepting Chinese military assistance.<sup>133</sup>

Chinese and Russian intelligence operations likely contributed to both short and long term escalatory dynamics. While short-term escalation is limited, intelligence collection can prompt intercepts of reconnaissance aircraft or heated diplomatic exchanges. In the longer term, information gleaned by watching Japanese and American forces conducting relief efforts and

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<sup>129</sup> Samuels, *3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan*, 101.

<sup>130</sup> Hai Lu, “China Denies Helicopter Flying Too close to Japanese Destroyer,” *Xinhua*, March 31, 2011.

<sup>131</sup> “Russia, China Make Provocative Approaches Near Japanese Airspace,” *Sankei Shimbun*, April 1, 2011.

<sup>132</sup> Samuels, *3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan*, 83.

<sup>133</sup> Will Clem, “Japan Rejects PLA Offer of Robots to Handle Disaster at Nuclear Plant,” *South China Morning Post*, April 16, 2011.

observing Japan's post-3/11 defense modernization efforts almost certainly informed Chinese and Russian defense planning. Understanding a potential rival's tactics, equipment capabilities, and alliance operations provides the intelligence collecting state with valuable information that can shape targeting strategies, refine tactics, or inform future acquisitions plans.

Japan's decision to boost its amphibious operations and ISR capabilities – in part due to lessons learned during 3/11 relief efforts – may have played a role in shaping Beijing's modernization in these areas. Because systems like airlift assets and amphibious ships can be used during both MOOTW and combat operations, Chinese officials and commentators have criticized Japan's post-3/11 acquisitions as evidence of Tokyo's aggressive intentions. A Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson condemned Japan's 2013 decision to acquire RQ-4 reconnaissance aircraft and amphibious ships, arguing that Tokyo's actions “us[ed] the pretext of safeguarding Japan's own national security and regional peace for its military expansion.”<sup>134</sup> In recent years, China has stepped up its own development of remotely piloted reconnaissance aircraft and has continued to modernize its fleet of amphibious warfare ships, suggesting it is balancing against Japan's military expansion.<sup>135</sup> To be sure, several factors influence a state's military planning, but a Chinese think tank closely affiliated with the government has cited Beijing's weak MOOTW capabilities vis-à-vis potential rivals as justification for Chinese military modernization efforts, and recent Chinese defense white papers have described the important role of MOOTW in future defense planning.<sup>136</sup> Although identifying a clear causal link between MOOTW operations and security competition would require unfettered access to senior

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<sup>134</sup> Xuequan Mu, “Chinese Military Lashes Out at Japanese Defense Documents,” *Xinhua*, December 21, 2013.

<sup>135</sup> For an overview of recent Chinese modernization efforts see, “Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2015” (U.S. Department of Defense, May 8, 2015).

<sup>136</sup> Xiangyang Chen, “Seize the Opportunity to Build up China's Capacity to Protect Overseas Interests,” *China-US Focus*, March 21, 2014, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/seize-the-opportunity-to-build-up-chinas-capacity-to-protect-overseas-interests>; Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, “The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces” (Beijing, China: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, April 2013).

policymakers, openly available evidence in the 3/11 case suggests that MOOTW can intensify security dilemma dynamics between rival states.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article sheds light on an increasingly policy-relevant question: can seemingly benign military operations other than war exacerbate security dilemmas? The analysis tentatively suggests that the security dilemma can indeed be intensified not only by a state's defensive measures, but also by participation in a range of MOOTW activities. The latter are increasingly common features in the modern security environment, and governments and think tanks often tout the operations as means to promote cooperation and regional stability. Like the traditional security dilemma – in which a state can increase its vulnerability by either failing to take defensive actions or for taking them – failure to participate in a MOOTW can leave a state susceptible to reputational costs, while participation can increase vulnerability by inadvertently intensifying security competition, even if the mission has no malign intent.

MOOTW can create a “doubly dangerous” world of security competition when the operations demonstrate military capabilities that can support both MOOTW and offensive action, and when MOOTW participation postures a state's forces in a manner that makes offensive activity easier. States are inherently concerned with protecting their own interests and cannot overlook the possibility that their rivals may one day use the capabilities showcased during non-combat operations to carry out offensive missions. States that feel that the capabilities revealed during MOOTW decrease their security vis-à-vis a rival may take steps to counter these perceived threats. The risk of such balancing behavior can be particularly severe when MOOTW involve rising powers eager to demonstrate their military prowess. A hoop test conducted using

process tracing of Japan's post-3/11 relief efforts suggests that security dilemma dynamics are at play in contemporary MOOTW.

Despite these risks, governments, think tanks, and academics routinely suggest that multinational MOOTW participation enhances transparency and cooperation between rivals. However, given the potential for these seemingly benign missions to worsen security competition with potentially destabilizing long-term consequences, policymakers ought to reconsider their decisions regarding MOOTW participation.

The risk of security dilemmas need not discourage states from participating in operations designed to enhance regional stability, protect citizens, or provide humanitarian relief. Indeed, the international community expects states – particularly those with sufficient economic and military resources – to carry out these tasks. Eschewing these responsibilities in favor of national security strategies that focus solely on promoting a state's self-interests and ignore non-traditional security threats would almost certainly leave the world less stable. Failing to peacekeep or deliver humanitarian assistance, for instance, could lead to the expansion of ungoverned spaces, the spread of diseases, and upticks in maritime piracy.

So what can policymakers do to respond to these non-traditional threats, while mitigating the likelihood of MOOTW security dilemmas? Continued MOOTW participation and cooperation with both allies and potential rivals on MOOTW exercises and operations can yield significant dividends. Events such as bilateral U.S-China disaster relief exercises not only help prepare for real world contingencies, but can also enhance relations between rival states by building rapport between militaries; establishing and facilitating lines of communication between states at the tactical, operational, and strategic level; and socializing states to international norms

and standards of operations.<sup>137</sup> These benefits can have a stabilizing effect that can help control escalatory dynamics during future periods of heightened tension.

Policymakers and military planners, however, have the task of designing MOOTW that minimize the likelihood of security competition. While it may be impossible to eliminate balancing behavior entirely, states may be able to take steps to reduce the chances of escalatory spirals. First, states might avoid deploying unnecessarily advanced military assets on MOOTW, and instead employ the least advanced asset capable of safely carrying out the mission. To be sure, military leaders want to ensure their forces are adequately equipped to meet mission objectives or may seek to test or intentionally reveal new capabilities, but must realize that deploying these advanced systems may intensify security dilemma dynamics. Second, states should consider launching their MOOTW under the auspices of international organizations. While competition can still arise in these cases, multilateral operations foster transparency and may help overcome some of the uncertainty surrounding motives for MOOTW participation. Further, multilateral operations may reduce the perception that MOOTW participation is an impure public good that benefits one actor more than others. By participating in collective decision-making and operations, each contributor has the opportunity to shape the planning process and benefit from the operation.

Scholars and policy analysts have an important role in helping policymakers identify the types of MOOTW operations and military capabilities that are most likely to exacerbate security competition. This study represents only an initial test of the MOOTW security dilemma and draws from a recent case in East Asia. Further research might apply the security dilemma logic to a broader range of cases that exhibit greater temporal and geographic variation. Doing so will

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<sup>137</sup> For an example of a recent bilateral exercise, see: Angela E. Kershner, “Disaster Management Exchange 2015 Concludes in China,” *U.S. Army*, January 26, 2015, [http://www.army.mil/article/141698/Disaster\\_Management\\_Exchange\\_2015\\_concludes\\_in\\_China](http://www.army.mil/article/141698/Disaster_Management_Exchange_2015_concludes_in_China).

provide better understanding of the mechanisms that drive MOOTW security dilemmas and test the generalizability of this study's findings. Although MOOTW have the potential to inadvertently exacerbate long-term security competition, they are a fixture in the modern security environment and play an important role in enhancing regional and global stability. While it may be overly optimistic to eliminate security dilemma dynamics from MOOTW, finding how to minimize these dynamics will help foster a more stable and secure world.