

PILIPINAS CONFERENCE:

**Ensuring Peace and Stability
through Strategic Partnerships**

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Ensuring Peace and Stability through Strategic Partnerships

I. The Premise

- US-China strategic competition
- The players

II. The Challenge

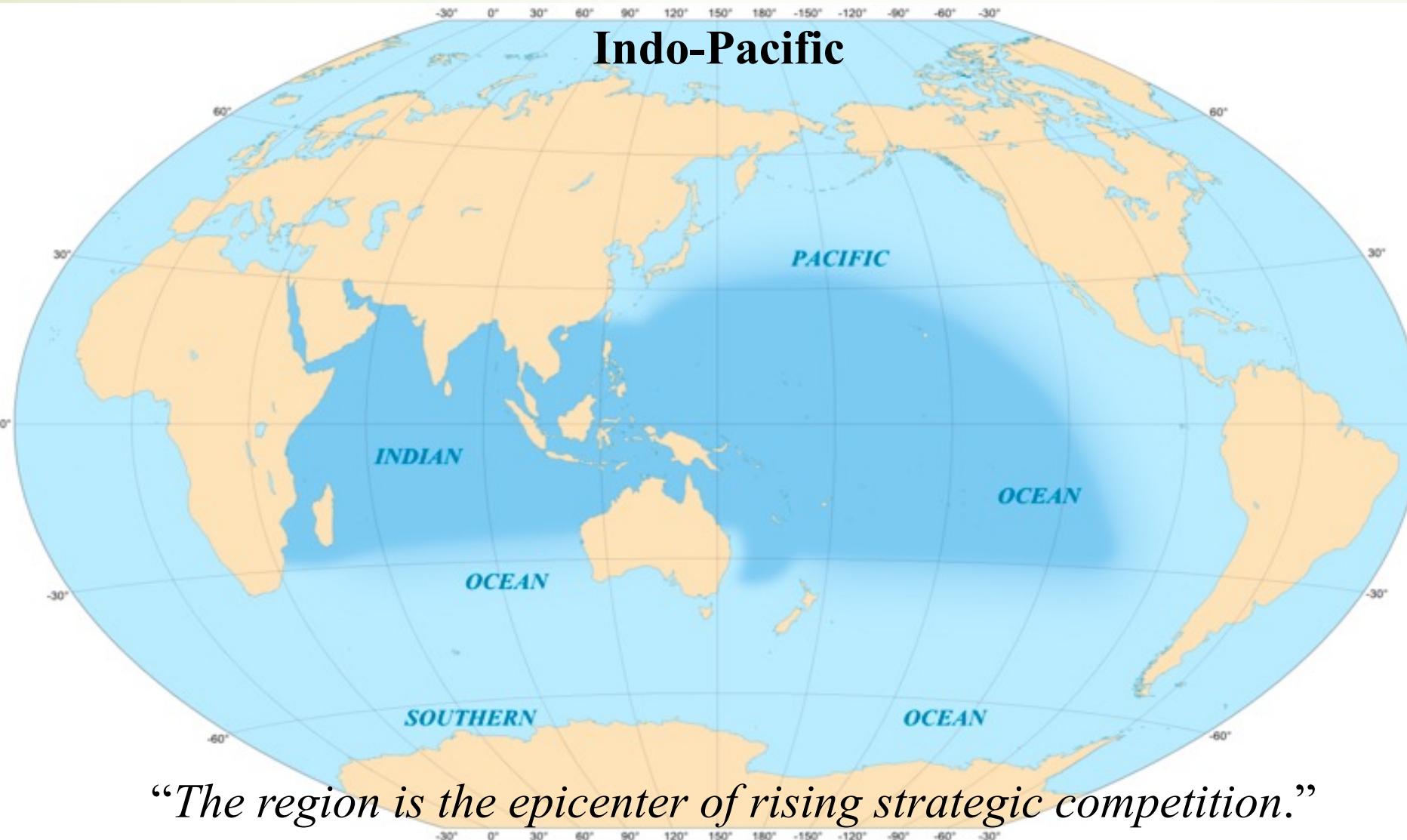
- China's growing assertiveness
- Ramifications for the Philippines

III. Opportunities

- Enhancing Philippine-US alliance
- Expanding strategic partnerships

³ The premise:

US-China strategic competition



Situation in the Indopacific

- US-led liberal order and open economic regime
- Backed by the US' overwhelming power-projection capability
- Rise of China as an economic powerhouse and a naval player
- China is challenging US-led liberal order
- Territorial disputes between nations have figured prominently in the geopolitical landscape

The premise: The rivals

USA

- Vision: Free & open Indo-Pacific
- Intent: Maintain global leadership
- Ideology: Democracy
- World's Only Superpower
- US-led World Order
- Number 1 Economy in the World
- Has the strongest military in the world
- Spread Around the World – network of bases and access around the world
- Maintains a network of alliances
- Belatedly rebalanced to the Indo-Pacific
- US NSS now identifies CN as a competitor

China

- Vision: Middle Kingdom
- Intent: Displace US' global leadership
- Ideology: Communism / “Socialism w/ Chinese Characteristics”
- Rising World Power
- Challenging the current world order
- Second Biggest Economy
- Rapidly modernizing its military with the aim of surpassing the US
- Coming out of an inward-looking policy and a perceived containment
- In an aggressive westward expansion

The premise: The other players

❖ Middle Powers

- **India**

- Involved in a territorial dispute with CN
- Along China's axis of advance
- Inward-looking policy now has to change
- Has traditional ties with Russia but is now moving closer to the US

- **South Korea**

- Its geographic location is close to China
- Ongoing conflict with North Korea, a CN ally, is limiting its options
- A US treaty ally
- Relations with Japan is shaky

Australia

- Its defense perimeter is now threatened by China
- Has robust economic ties with China but now subject to China's pressure
- Remains to be a staunch US ally
- Assertive new Defense Strategy w/ increased defense spending

- **Japan**

- Has territorial dispute w/ CH in the Senkakus
- Concerned of the Sea lanes which has direct implications on their energy, security and economy
- A strong US treaty ally
- Defense spending now at unprecedented level

The premise: The other players

❖ ASEAN

- ASEAN centrality remains to be the norm in the region
- Can its cohesiveness hold amidst outside influence?
- Will it remain relevant?

❖ Quad and AUKUS

- Presents a counter balance to China
- How will they relate with ASEAN?

❖ European Powers +

- UK, France, Germany, EU + Canada

The challenge: China's growing assertiveness

- Heightened tension has generated a growing sense of uncertainty
- China's increased military activity
 - China's military activity is deliberate, part of a grand plan
 - China is determined to implement it's plans when the timing and opportunity presents itself

The challenge: China's growing assertiveness

▪ Consequences

Increased wariness of China's intent and behavior

The emergence of the Quad &AUKUS

Territorial disputes are heating up and have become flashpoints



The US pivot to Asia to defend its interests

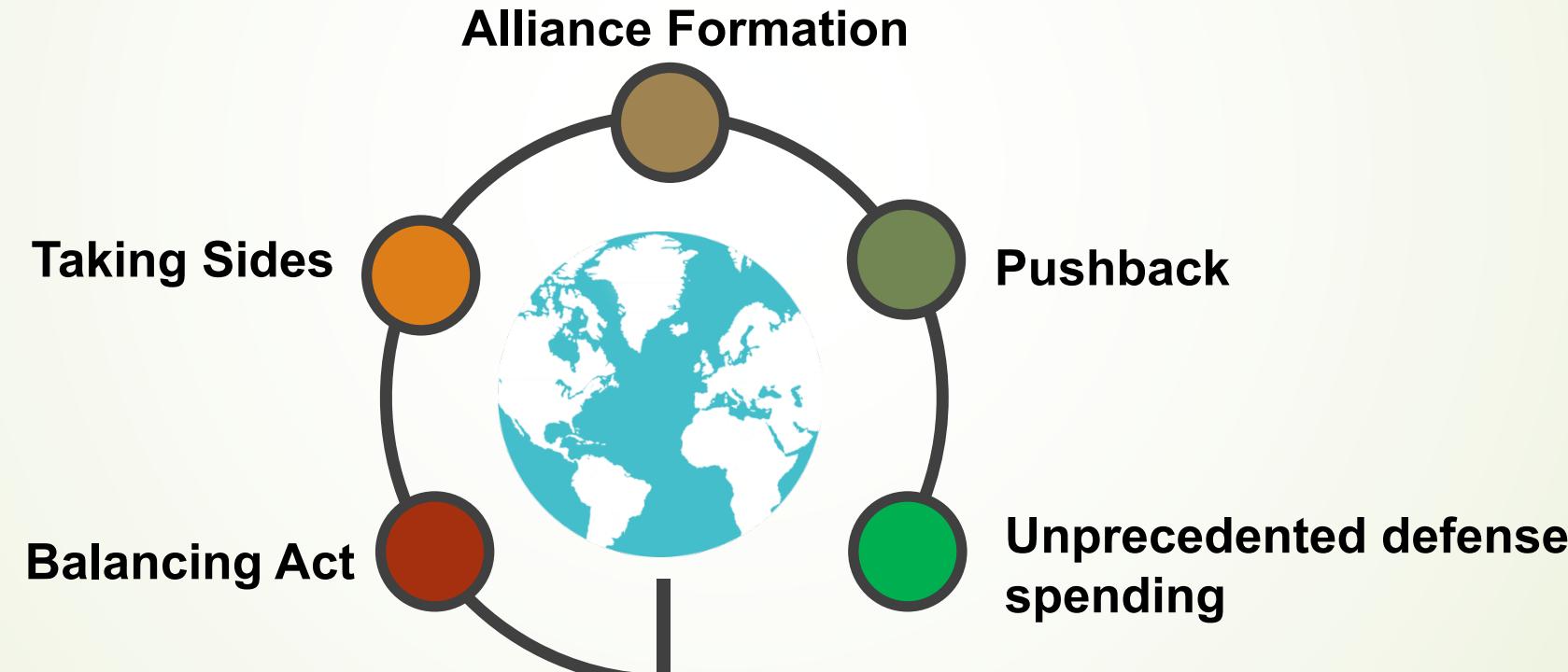
Involvement of European powers

COVID 19 has further heightened tension as China takes advantage of the situation

9 The challenge:

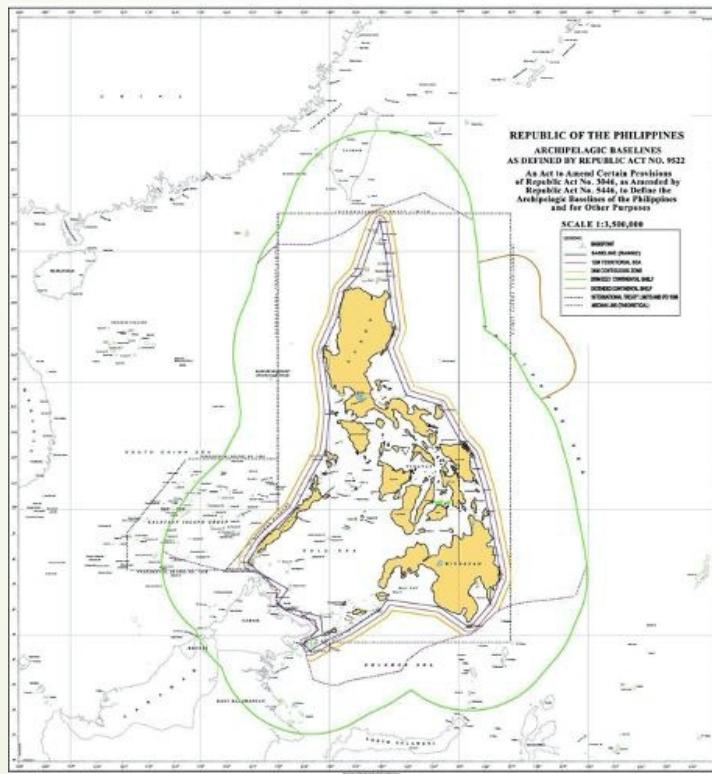
China's growing assertiveness

- How countries are reacting



The challenge: Ramifications for the Philippines

- A US-CN confrontation will inevitably involve the PH
 - The Philippines has a MDT with the US
 - Philippines is a key terrain in the midst of the geopolitical rivalry
- CN territorial hegemony directly affects the PH
 - China has seized and militarized features in the SCS and WPS
 - China's aggressive actions have resulted into transgression of PH sovereignty and sovereign rights in the WPS
 - China's militarization now poses a direct threat to the Philippine archipelago
 - China is employing grayzone strategy vs the PH



Opportunities:

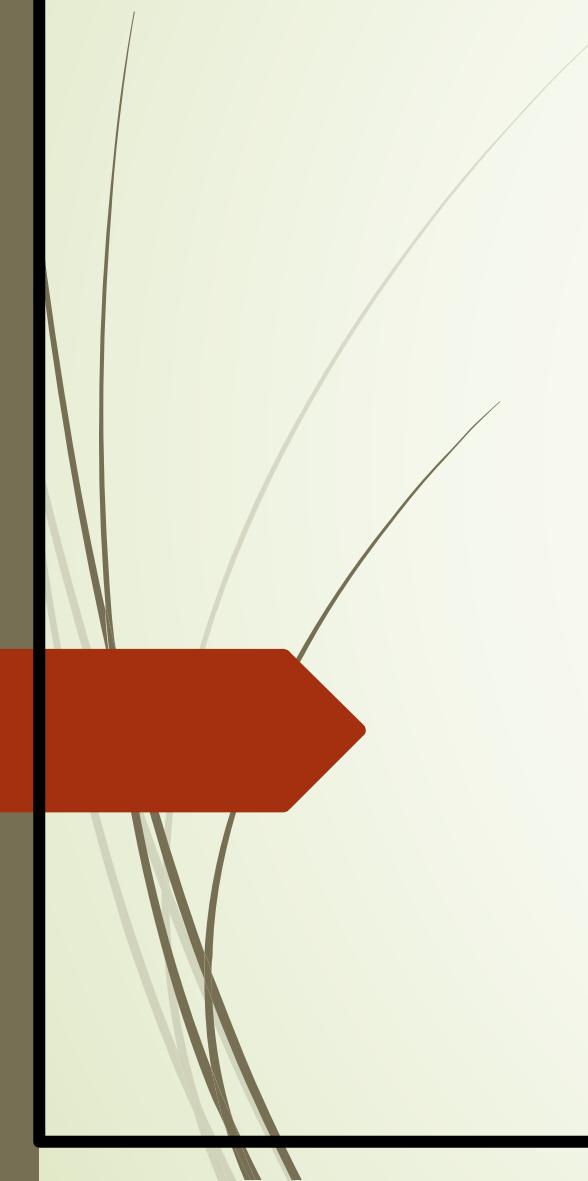
Enhancing PH-US alliance

- The value of PH-US alliance
 - At the strategic level: Serves PH national interest
 - At the operational level: Cornerstone of deterrence
- Favorable prospects
 - Shift in US policy
 - Filipino favorable view towards US
 - Change in administration
- What needs to be done
 - Strengthen cohesiveness of alliance
 - Improve alliance management
 - Be a more responsible alliance partner
 - Make alliance more responsive to Gray Zone challenges
 - Shape US policy

Opportunities: Expanding* strategic partnerships

*Strengthening existing; exploring others

- The value of expanding strategic partnerships
 - To advance a multilateral approach
 - To enhance deterrence
- Favorable prospects
 - There is now a growing realization of the threat that China presents
 - The Arbitral Ruling and the moral and legal high ground
- What needs to be done
 - Not conceding the moral and legal high ground
 - Be a more responsible member of international community
 - Consistency of policies



Thank you!

Let's have a conversation. Questions?