

Preventing the Philippines from Pivoting toward China: The Role of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance



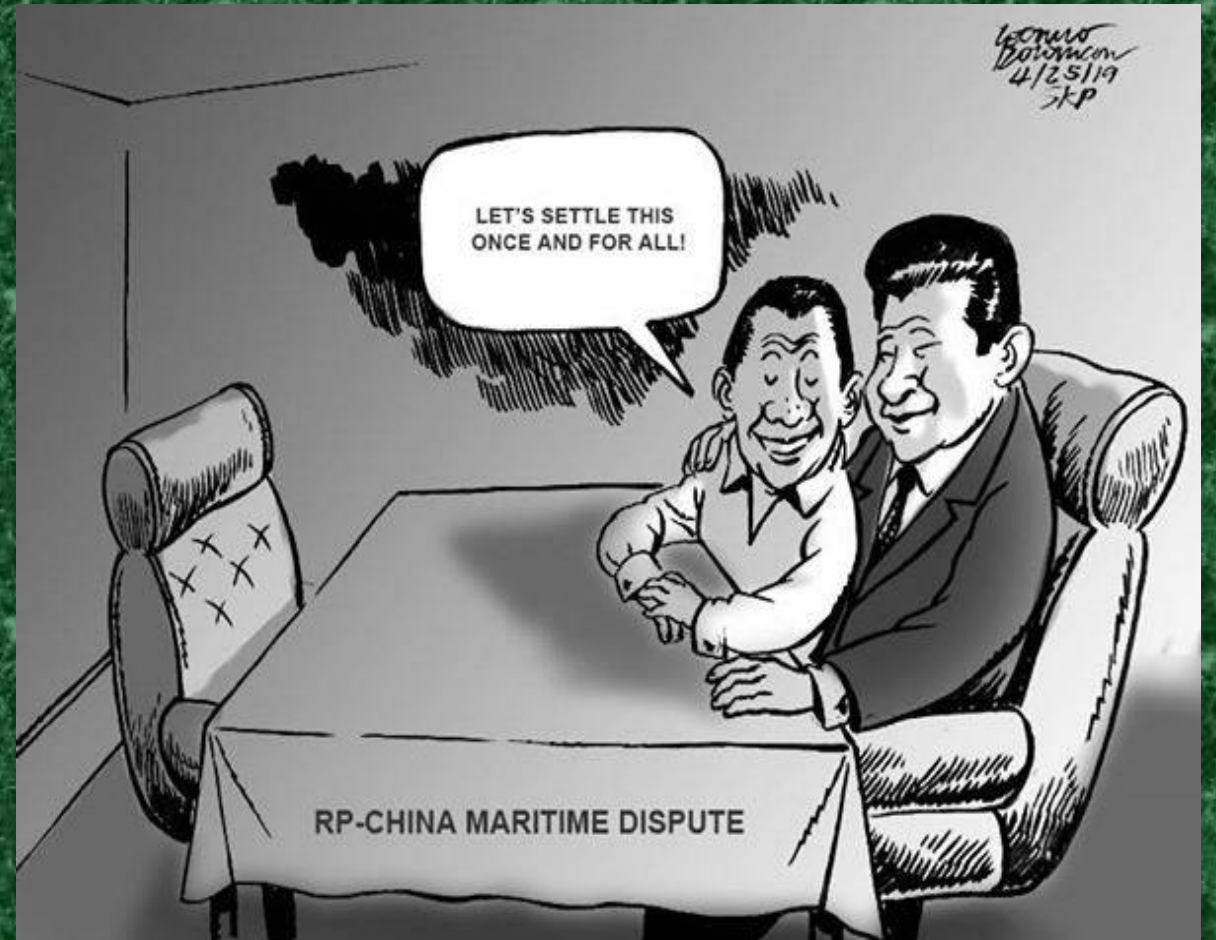
Philippines, US, Japan kick off MTA Sama Sama

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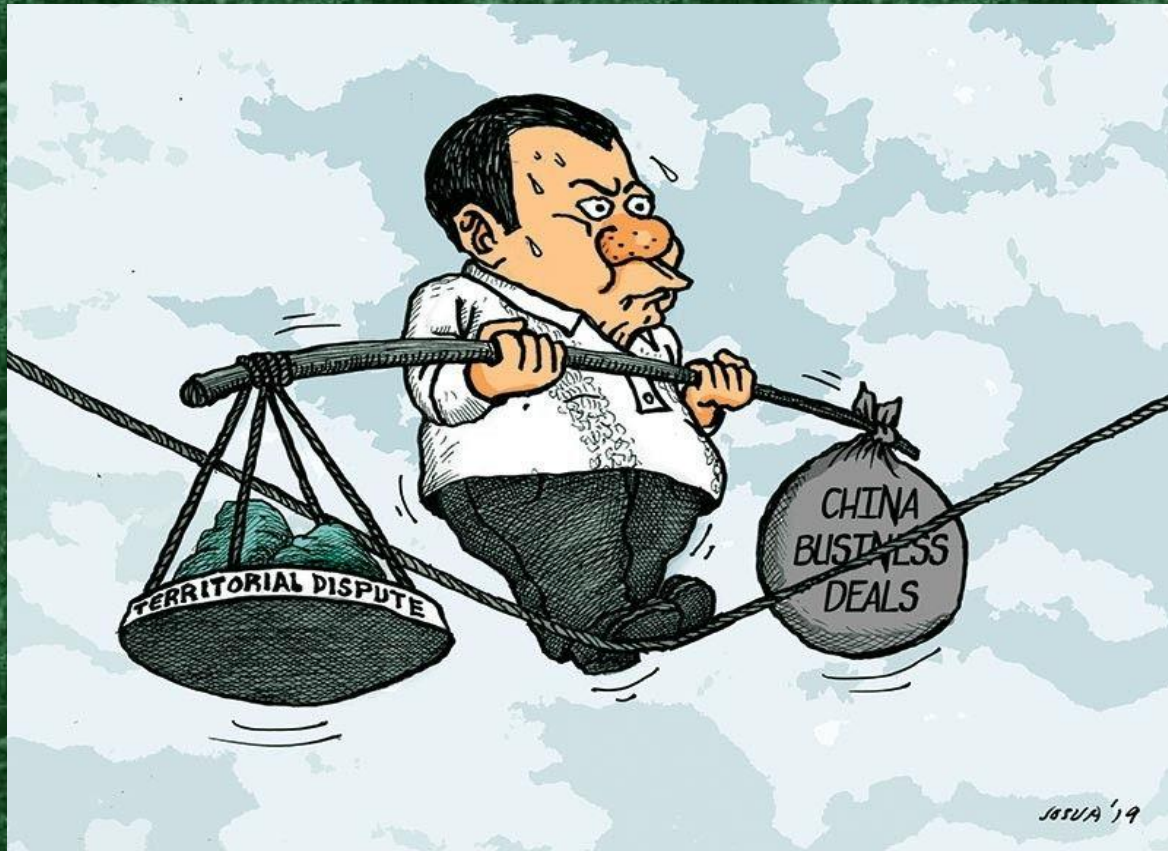
The Value of Fostering Cooperation among Like-Minded-States in Philippine Foreign Policy, January 5, 2023, 9:00-11:00 AM

Introduction

In the early part of his term in 2016, then-President Rodrigo Duterte pursued an appeasement policy toward China.



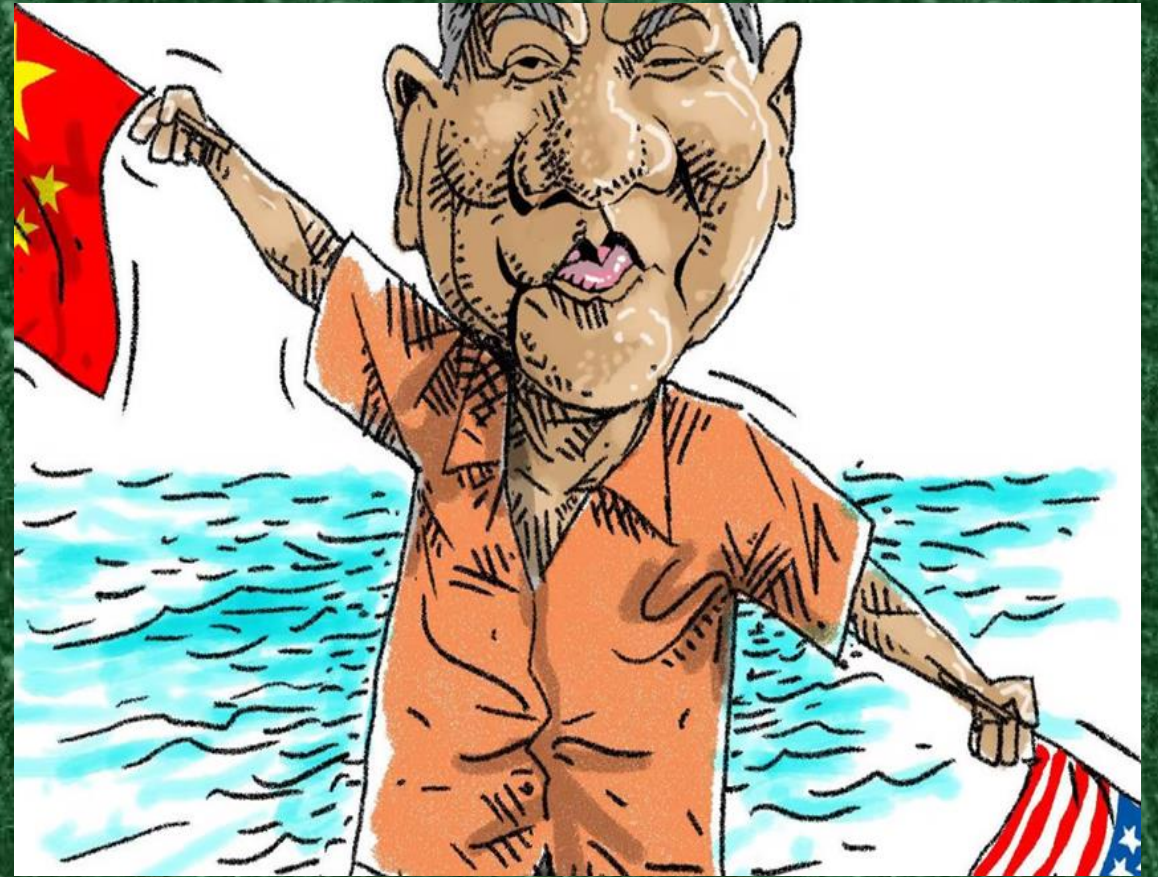
Introduction



- For the Duterte Administration, it was imperative to maintain an equilibrium between ensuring the country's external security and addressing domestic concerns, particularly with economic development.

Introduction

- This diplomatic strategy was predicated on a calculation that the Philippines' better option is to foster economic interdependence with China and ease the tension and risks of an outright armed confrontation in the contested waters.



Introduction

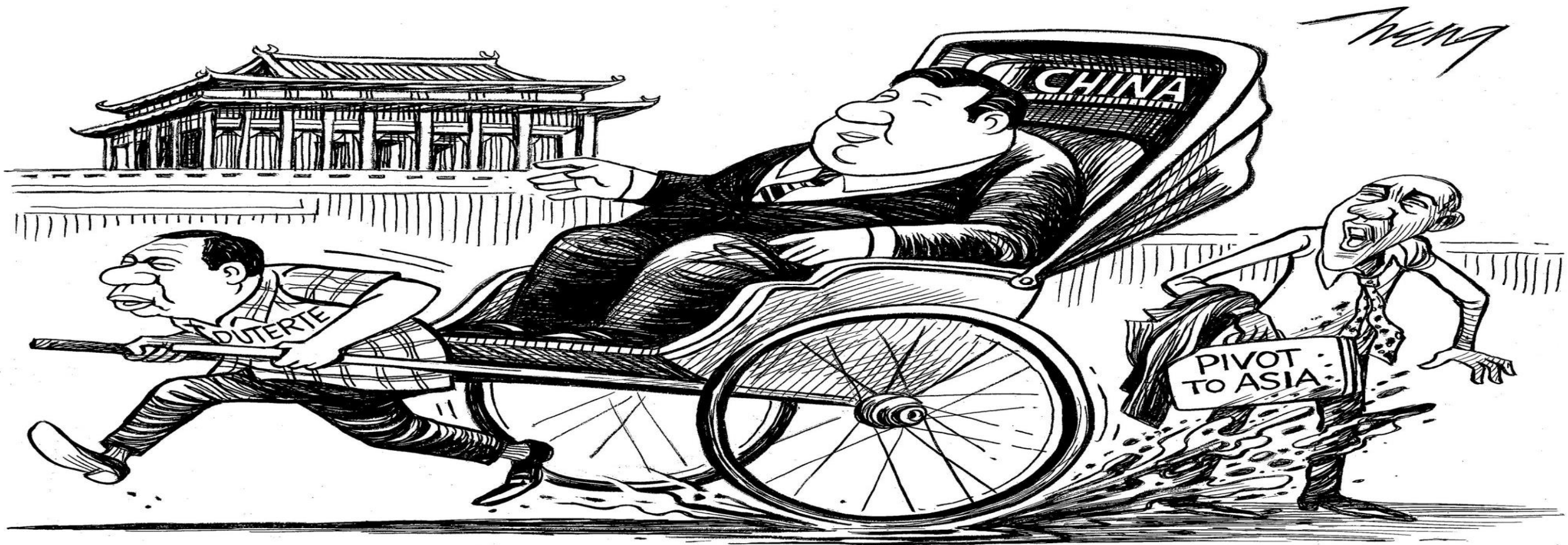


- The Philippines' appeasement strategy required downplaying the contentious issues generated by the South China Sea dispute.

Introduction

- And it also required agreeing with China's preferred means of resolving the territorial row through the bilateral consultative mechanism and joint development.

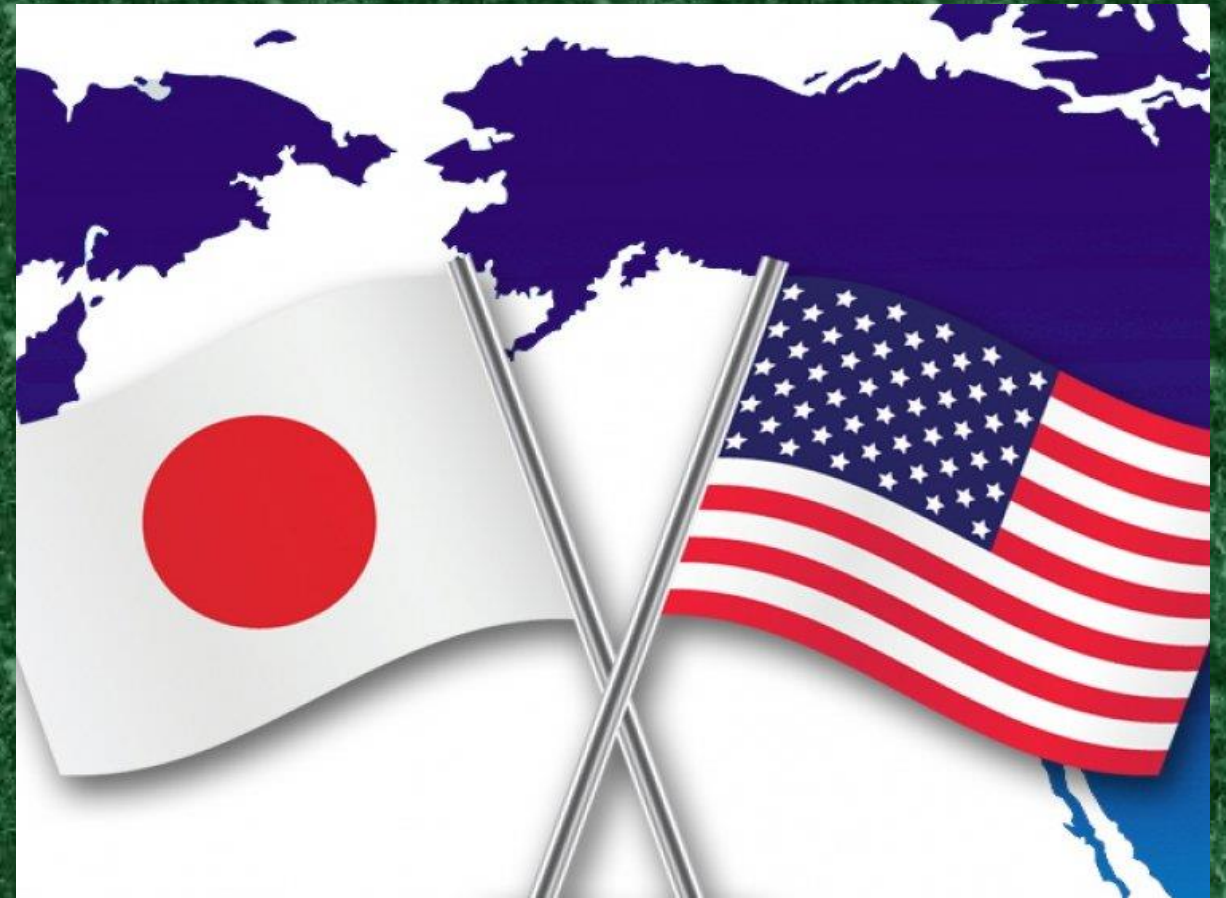




President Duterte downgraded Philippine-U.S. security arrangements and gave more weight to Philippine-China economic ties.

Introduction

- This development alarmed the U.S., the Philippines' only formal treaty ally, and Japan, an important Philippine security partner.



Introduction

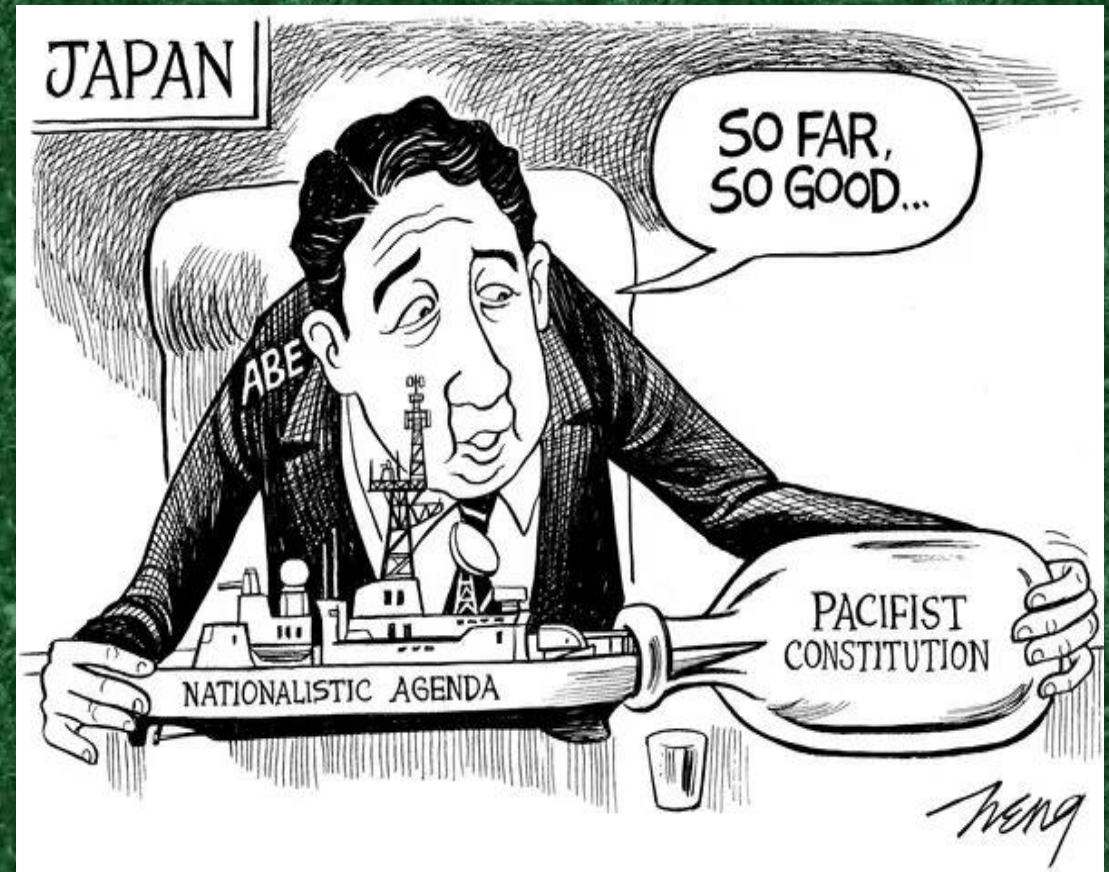


South China Morning Post

Washington and Tokyo share common interests with the Philippines especially in maritime security to ensure that the Western Pacific remains secure and accessible in the face of China's maritime expansion.

Introduction

- The late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pushed for continued maritime cooperation with the Philippines, even as former President Duterte backed out from most military exercises between U.S. and Philippine armed services





This presentation examines the joint and coordinated U.S. and Japanese moves to buttress their security relationships with the Philippines from 2016 to 2021, as it assesses how their efforts have thwarted the Duterte Administration's appeasement policy toward China.

The San Francisco System of Bilateral Alliances: A Focus on the U.S.-Japan Security Relations



The San Francisco System of Bilateral Alliances: A Focus on the U.S.-Japan Security Relations

Alliances are formal or informal forms of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states. they are intended to augment each member-state's power, security, and/or influence.



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Although alliances vary enormously, the essential element in a meaningful alliance is a commitment for mutual support against an external actor or a third party.



In the early 1950s, the U.S. forged security treaties separately with the Philippines and Japan before and during the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which became part of the San Francisco hub-and-spokes system of bilateral alliances.

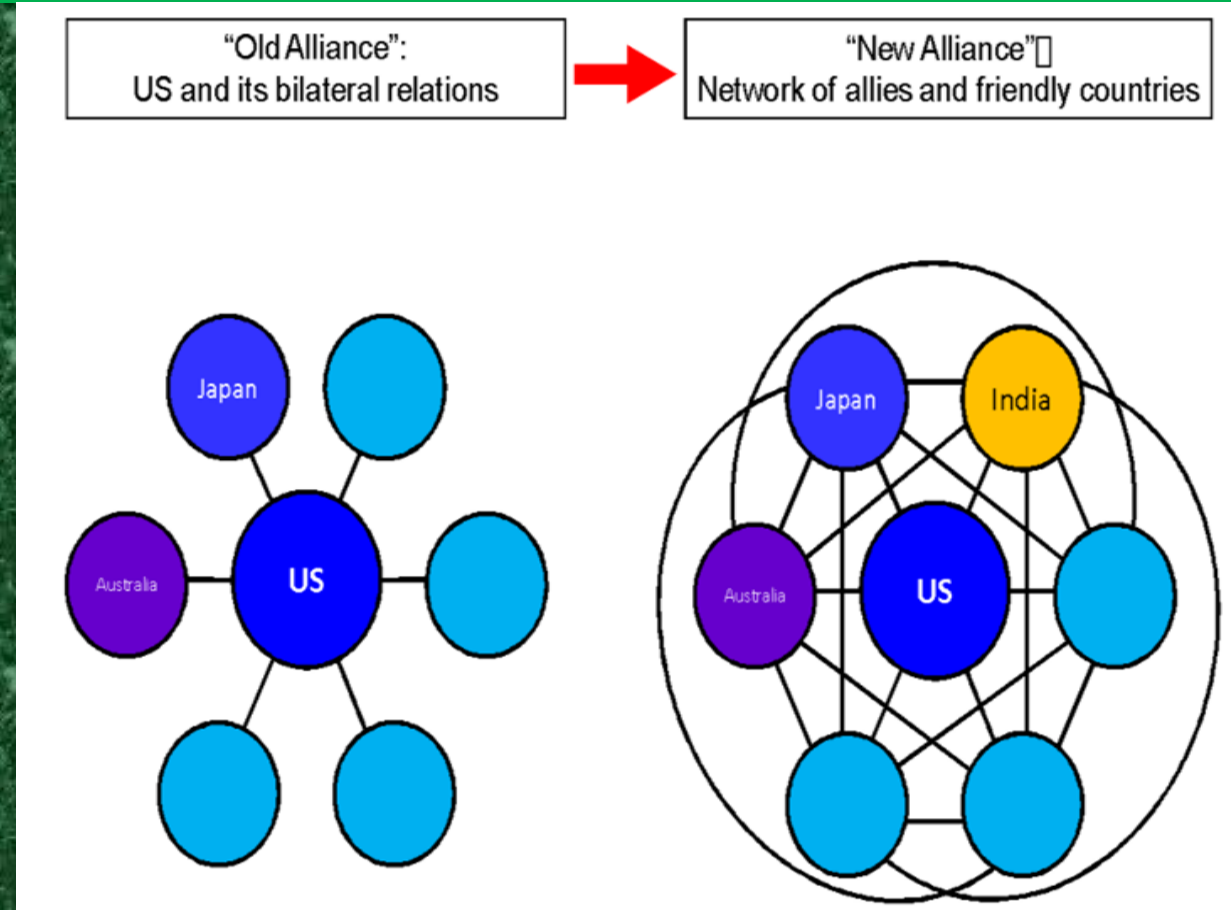
The San Francisco System of Bilateral Alliances: A Focus on the U.S.-Japan Security Relations



- Through much of the Cold War era, bilateralism was the dominant mode of security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region; as the leading and predominant institutional manifestation took the form of the U.S.-led San Francisco system otherwise known as the hub-and-spokes system of bilateral alliances.

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Since 2011, the U.S. alliance structure has been evolving from the Cold War bilateral hub-and-spokes construct toward a more open architecture that includes increased cooperation between U.S. allies and active efforts to engage other regional security partners.



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- The U.S.-Japan alliance is regarded as the cornerstone of Japanese foreign policy and the linchpin of U.S. strategic posture in the Asia-Pacific region.

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While the text of the 1961 U.S.-Japan Security Treaty has remained unchanged, the U.S.-Japan alliance has undergone several modifications over six decades amidst regional security challenges in the region, and domestic political developments.



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- **The U.S. and Japan have accelerated their cooperation with a third regional partner resulting in an informal trilateral relationship.**

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This form of security collaboration of like-minded allies is viewed as a seen as an extension of the hub-and-spokes system and a counterpoint to an emergent China in the larger context of an evolving regional security configuration.



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Examples of informal trilateral relationships include the U.S.-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Security Dialogue that ensures the three countries' military readiness in the face of unpredictable and belligerent North Korea.; the U.S. and Japan's close with Australia to safeguard the security of the Western Pacific;

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- and combined efforts of Japan and the U.S. to boost the Philippines' naval/civilian maritime capabilities relative to the South China Sea dispute.



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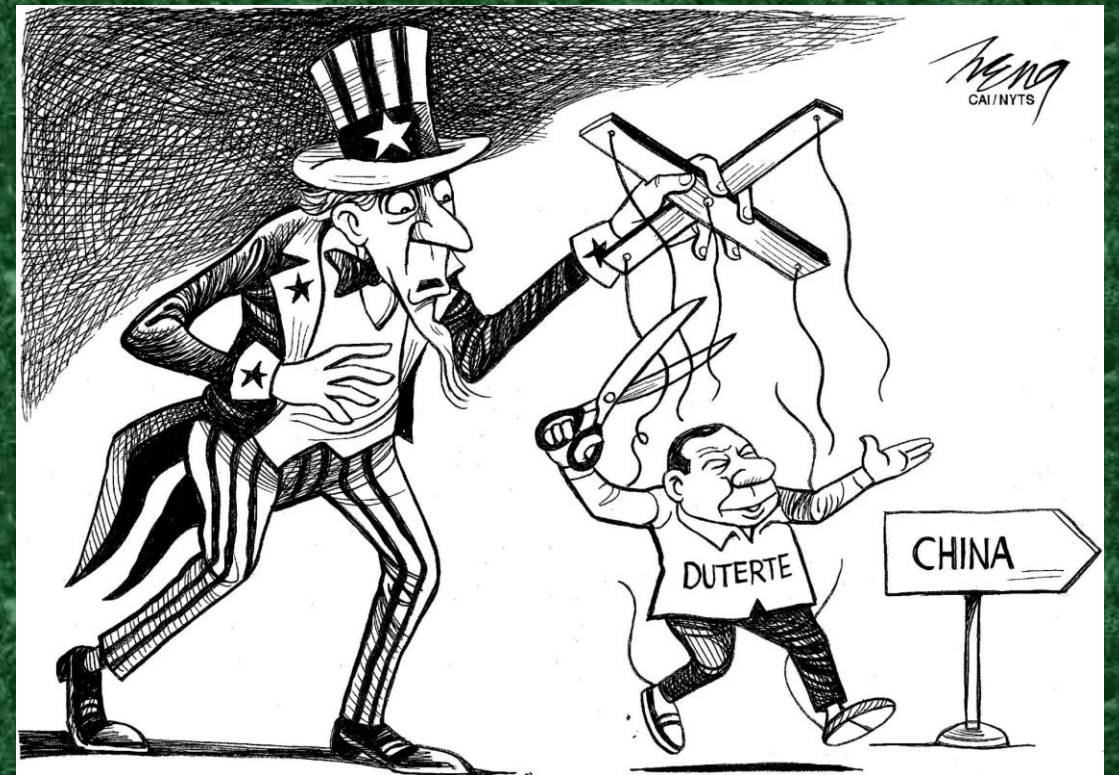
- Tokyo and Washington's motive in developing the Philippines' naval capabilities is to counter the growing Chinese sea power that thwarts the U.S. Navy's ability capabilities to protect the vital sea lanes of trade and communication in the South China Sea.

The Duterte Administration's Appeasement Policy



The Duterte Administration's Appeasement Policy

Then President Duterte implied that his policy toward the alliance, and to the U.S. in general would do a 180-degree turn; he did this by contradicting the previous administration's balancing policy, he sought rapprochement with China.



The Duterte Administration's Appeasement Policy



President Duterte picked China for his first official visit outside the ASEAN member states.

The Duterte Administration's Appeasement Policy

- During the visit, President Xi Jinping stressed to President Duterte to cooperate and coordinate their development strategies and cooperate within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).



The Duterte Administration's Appeasement Policy



- President Duterte ignored the continuing Chinese island-building activities in the South China Sea; as he was lured by the Chinese promise of trade concessions, grants, loans, and investments.

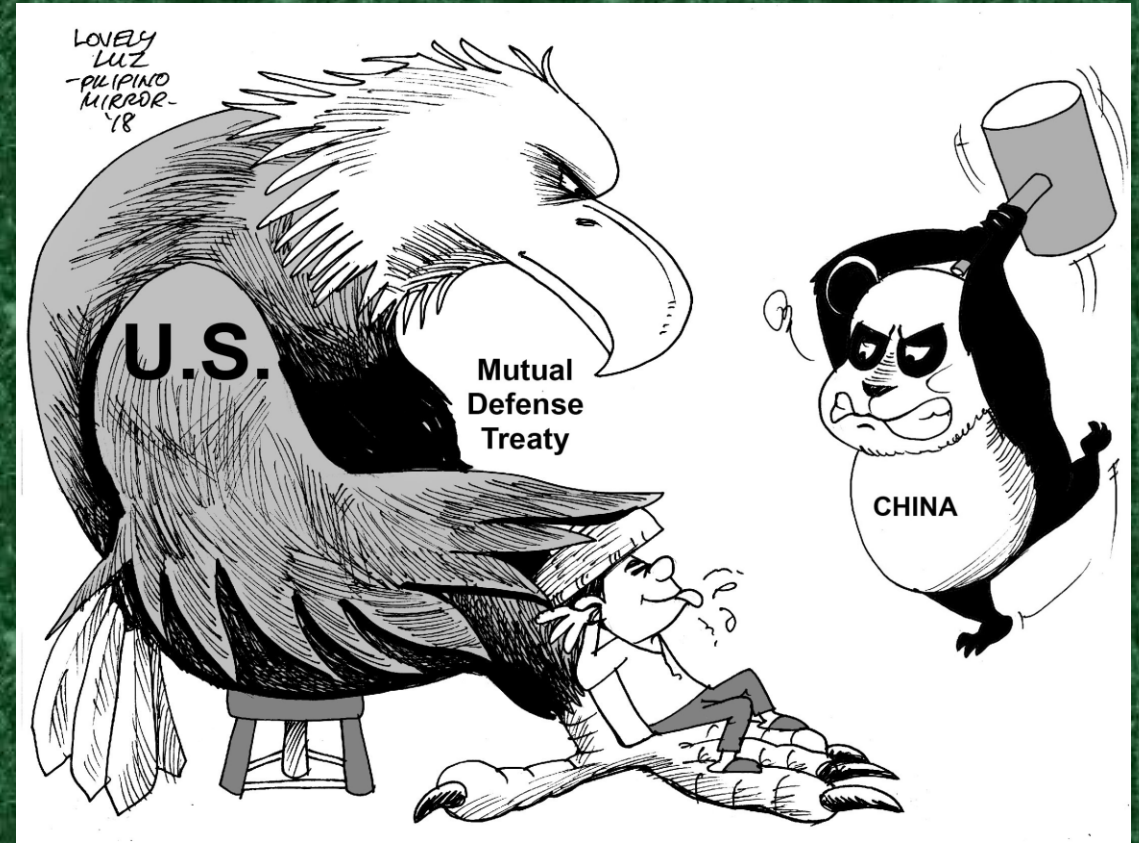
Responding to the Appeasement Policy: The U.S. Policy of Strategic Patience

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Responding to the Appeasement Policy: The U.S. Policy of Strategic Patience

- The two countries became formal treaty allies with the signing of the 1951 R.P.-U.S. Mutual Défense Treaty (MDT).



Responding to the Appeasement Policy: The U.S. Policy of Strategic Patience



- The U.S. decided to go along with the Philippines' proposal to shift the alliance's orientation from territorial defense to counter-terrorism, humanitarian, civic action, and engineering operations.

Responding to the Appeasement Policy: The U.S. Policy of Strategic Patience

U.S. policymakers stretched their patience and focused on the two allies' long-term interests based on imposing a cost to Chinese military expansionism in the South China Sea.



Responding to the Appeasement Policy: The U.S. Policy of Strategic Patience



The U.S. never withheld security assistance to the Philippines and lost its influence on the Philippine military:

Responding to the Appeasement Policy: The U.S. Policy of Strategic Patience

- Rather, the U.S. continued the task of fostering shared interests with the Philippines in counter-terrorism; providing essential military equipment through the Maritime Security Initiative (MAI); and specifying in clear and specific terms the U.S. treaty commitments to the Philippines.



Responding to the Appeasement Policy: Enhancing Philippine-Japan Security Partnership

**EUGENE E.
BACASMAS**
THE PHILIPPINE STAR
WED., OCT. 26, 2005



Responding to the Appeasement Policy: Enhancing Philippine-Japan Security Partnership

- Philippine-Japan Security Partnership is based on a June 2015 joint declaration entitled on “A Strengthened Strategic Partnership for Advancing the Shared Principles and Goals for Peace, Security, and Growth in the Region and beyond.”



Responding to the Appeasement Policy: Enhancing Philippine-Japan Security Partnership



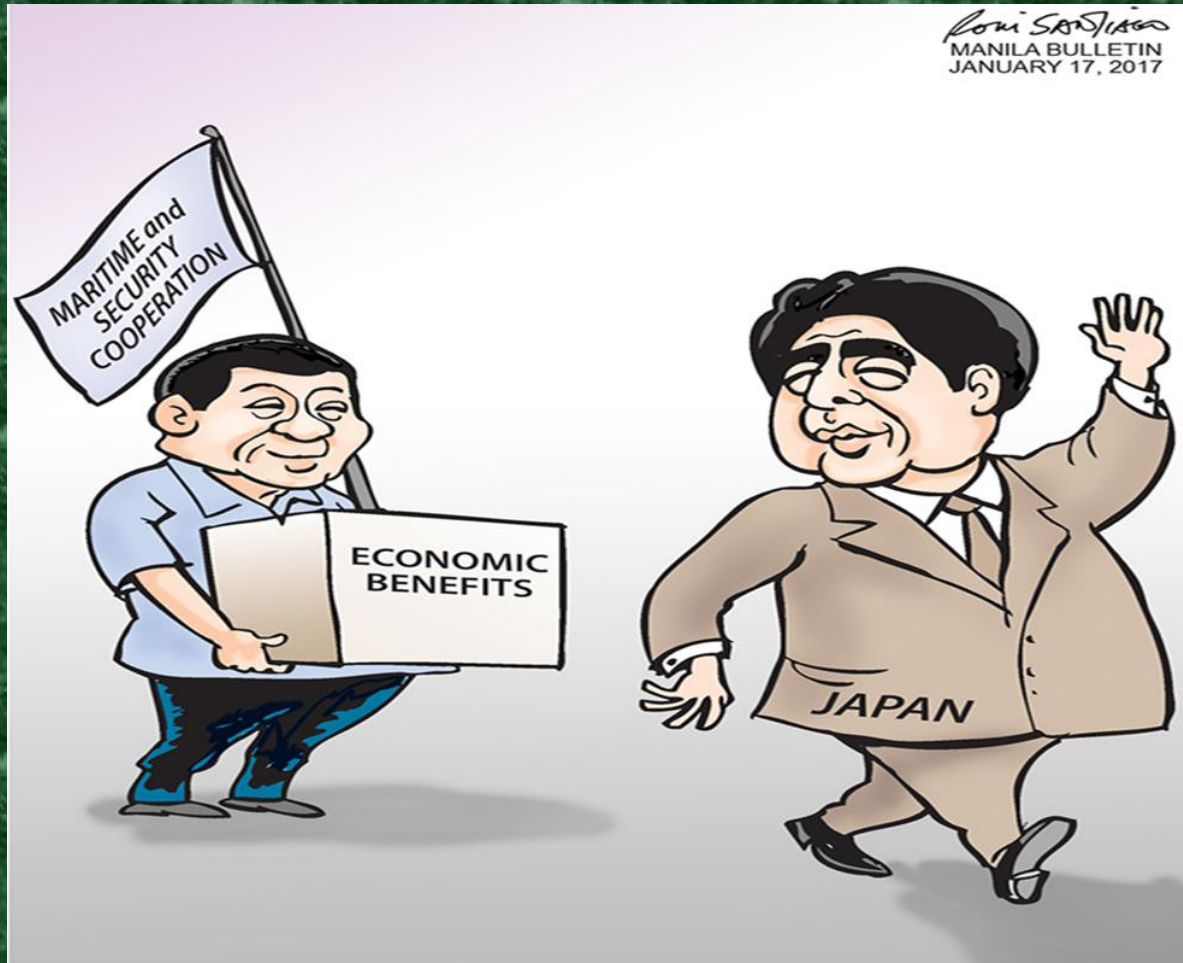
- The communique encapsulated the Filipino and Japanese commitment to the safety and security of the South China Sea and condemnation of China's unilateral moves to change the status quo in the disputed waters including the construction of artificial islands and military outposts on the land features.

Responding to the Appeasement Policy: Enhancing Philippine-Japan Security Partnership

- Japan was concerned that the prospects of forming a common association with the Philippines that adheres to a rules-based regional order, freedom of navigation, and support for America's role as East Asia's strategic off-shore balancer would be thwarted by President Duterte's increasingly independent foreign and strategic posture vis-à-vis the U.S. and its other Asian allies.



Responding to the Appeasement Policy: Enhancing Philippine-Japan Security Partnership



- The late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe engaged President Duterte to convince him to allow Japan to help the Philippines improve its maritime security through the provision of coast guard vessels and naval reconnaissance aircraft to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Philippine Navy (PN).

Averting a Total Pivot to China: The Role of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance



Averting a Total Pivot to China: The Role of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance

- The U.S. and Japan, through their respective security ties, were able to strengthen the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.



Averting a Total Pivot to China: The Role of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance



- The AFP is one of the important institutions in Philippine society that has been very critical of President Duterte's pivot to China.

Averting a Total Pivot to China: The Role of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance

- The distrust of China runs deep in Philippine society, particularly in military circles, where Beijing's motives are viewed through the lens of the chronic territorial dispute in the South China Sea.



Averting a Total Pivot to China: The Role of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance



- The AFP capitalized on American and Japanese security assistance in the Philippines' vigorous response to the presence of 200 Chinese fishing vessels in the Whitsun Reef stand-off.

Conclusion



Conclusion

- Washington and Tokyo demonstrated patience and persistence in dealing with the initially pro-China administration of President Duterte.



Conclusion



- Both the U.S. and Japan share mutual interests with the Philippines—another treaty ally—particularly in their security concerns in the South China Sea.

Conclusion

- In the face of the Duterte Administration's early efforts to appease, the U.S. and Japan, cooperate closely and resolutely with the Philippine military to ensure that the sea lanes of the Western Pacific remain safe, open, and secure.



Thank you
very much
for your
attention!

