

U.S. Smart Power in Southeast Asia During the Obama Administration: More Hard or Soft Power?

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Abstract

This article examines the U.S. smart power strategy employed in Southeast Asia by the Obama government. It argues that, even though under the leadership of Obama the United States claimed to pursue a new and softer approach to reengaging Southeast Asian states, the U.S. rebalancing strategy did not in fact differ much from that of the Bush administration. Evidence shows that, although the Obama administration professed to change to a smart power framework, considerably more resources were still allocated to hard power than soft power. Hence, the essence of American smart power, as conducted by President Obama, was predominantly an extension of the hard power policies of his predecessor.

Keywords: smart power, rebalancing strategy,
Southeast Asia, U.S. foreign policy

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีเป้าหมายในการศึกษายุทธศาสตร์อำนาจฉลาด (smart power) ของสหรัฐอเมริกา ซึ่งรัฐบาลโอบามานำมาใช้ในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ บทความนี้เสนอว่า แม้สหรัฐอเมริกาภายใต้การบริหารของประธานาธิบดีโอบามาจะอ้างว่าได้ใช้วิธีการใหม่และนุ่มนวลในการดำเนินนโยบายต่างประเทศเพื่อกระชับความสัมพันธ์กับประเทศในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ แต่ในความเป็นจริงยุทธศาสตร์ปรับสมดุล (rebalancing strategy) ของรัฐบาลโอบามานั้นไม่ได้มีความแตกต่างมากจากนโยบายของรัฐบาลจอร์จ ดับเบิลยู บุช หลักฐานจากการวิจัยพบว่าภายใต้กรอบนโยบายอำนาจฉลาดนั้น ทรัพยากรจำนวนมากได้ถูกจัดสรรเพื่อนำมาดำเนินนโยบายอำนาจแข็ง (hard power) มากกว่าอำนาจอ่อน (soft power) ดังนั้น อาจกล่าวได้ว่าสาระสำคัญของอำนาจฉลาด (smart power) ของสหรัฐอเมริกาภายใต้รัฐบาลโอบามา เป็นส่วนขยายของนโยบายอำนาจแข็ง (hard power) ของรัฐบาลจอร์จ ดับเบิลยู บุช

คำสำคัญ: อำนาจฉลาด, ยุทธศาสตร์ปรับสมดุล,
เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้, นโยบายต่างประเทศของสหรัฐอเมริกา

Introduction

The presidency of Barack Obama appeared to mark a shift in U.S. foreign policy from the Bush administration. Under the banners of “hope” and “change”, Obama proposed to set a new tone for U.S. foreign policy by using smart power in the Asia-Pacific region. The proposal was broadly welcomed by American people and media, especially those dissatisfied with Bush’s unilateral approaches. During his first few months in office, President Obama’s efforts in distancing himself from his predecessor’s approach to foreign policy led some political observers to believe that Obama’s new smart power strategy would be principally dominated by the use of soft power. Adding to this, during his first 100 days in office Obama received positive press feedback for moving quickly on key foreign policy agendas. Renowned CNN correspondent Christine Amanpour commended Obama for laying the ground for a new direction of U.S. foreign policy, especially in dealing with Iran and North Korea on nuclear issues, ordering a close of Guantanamo Bay detention center and pledging to end the U.S. war in Iraq (Amanpour, 2009). The Guardian also reported positively on the Obama government’s increasing engagement with Myanmar, which was regarded as a significant change from the previous government (MacAskill, 2009). However, despite such initial enthusiasm, documentary analysis shows that U.S. smart power, as employed by the Obama administration, was essentially a continuation of Bush-era hard power, without significant increase in the use of soft power resources.

What is Smart Power?

The concept of smart power was initially introduced to the International Relations (IR) community in 2003 by Joseph Nye, an American political scientist who was Assistant Secretary of Defense under the Clinton administration. The concept was broadly defined as a mix of hard and soft power. In 2007, a more comprehensive explanation of smart power was put forward in a report by the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) Commission on smart power, co-chaired by Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye. The report describes ‘smart power’ as follows:

“Smart power is neither hard nor soft—it is the skillful combination of both. Smart power means developing an integrated strategy, resource base, and tool kit to achieve American objectives, drawing on both hard and soft power. It is an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also in-

vests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions at all levels to expand American influence and establish the legitimacy of American action” (Armitage & Nye, 2007).

In other words, smart power emphasizes the necessity of matching a strong military with strong partnerships, alliances, and institutions. Smart power also consists of public diplomacy, cultural and educational exchanges, development assistance, and disaster relief (Nye, 2009). The smart power framework encourages a state to invest in both hard and soft power to ensure accomplishment of its foreign policy goals. According to its proponents, a well-crafted smart power strategy comprises clear objectives, practical implementation plans, and sufficient hard and soft power resources and recognizes that policymakers must take into account the geopolitical context of the country or region where the strategy is to be employed.

The CSIS report suggested that, in order to regain America’s positive image in the ASEAN region following the end of Bush’s presidency, the United States should develop a strategy to reengage key regional countries and institutions such as ASEAN. In this way, the U.S could promote regional peace and stability through cooperation, particularly where there were shared interests. Consequently, in 2009, the Obama government adopted some of the CSIS Commission’s recommendations as part of its official approach toward the Asia Pacific region.

Turning the Strategy into Practice:

The ‘3D’ Approach: Defense, Development, and Diplomacy

President Obama appointed Hilary Clinton as Secretary of State, with the task to oversee the formulation and implementation of smart power policy. During her testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 2009, Secretary Clinton articulated that smart power would be at the heart of American foreign policy. The smart power strategy was articulated as a ‘3D’ Framework: Defense, Development, and Diplomacy. The framework was officially introduced to the Senate Appropriations Committee (SAC) as the administration’s primary foreign policy approach,

“The foreign policy of the United States is built on the three Ds: defense, diplomacy, and development. The men and women in our armed forces perform their duties with courage and skill, putting their lives on the line time and time again on behalf of our nation. And in many regions, they serve alongside civilians from the State Department and USAID, as well as other government agencies, like USDA. We work with the military in two crucial ways. First, civilians complement and build upon our military’s efforts in conflict areas like Iraq and Afghanistan. Second, they use diplomatic and development tools to build more stable and peaceful societies, hopefully to avert or end conflict that is far less costly in lives and dollars than military actions.” — Secretary Hilary Clinton’s testimony to SAC, April 30, 2009

According to Secretary Clinton, the Obama administration intended to put its key principles into practice to solve modern transnational challenges in the 21st century and at the same time to advance American national interests overseas. She further stated that both hard and soft power resources would be integrated into the policy and that the U.S. military would play a crucial role in implementing the policy, not only in the area of security, but also in diplomacy and development.

Three key governmental agencies, namely the Department of State (DoS), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Defense (DoD) were assigned to implement the 3D policy. However, due to their differing internal planning processes, finding a common ground for these agencies to develop a unified plan was challenging. As a result, the 3D Planning Group was created to develop a guideline that would help these agencies understand each other’s roles and plans. The guideline served as a tool to unite their efforts in order to improve the effectiveness of their interventions (USAID, 2012). The essence of each ‘D’ of the framework is examined in more depth in the following sections.

Defense

President Obama’s decision to apply a smart power strategy towards the Asia Pacific demonstrated a reprioritization of Washington’s geopolitical interests, particularly in the security realm. In an attempt to reverse the perception of U.S. neglect of the region, President Obama increased the U.S. defense budget to nearly US\$700 billion in 2010 (see Figure 1), a sizable amount of which was allocated to intensifying bilateral and multilateral security cooperation in the Asia Pacific region.

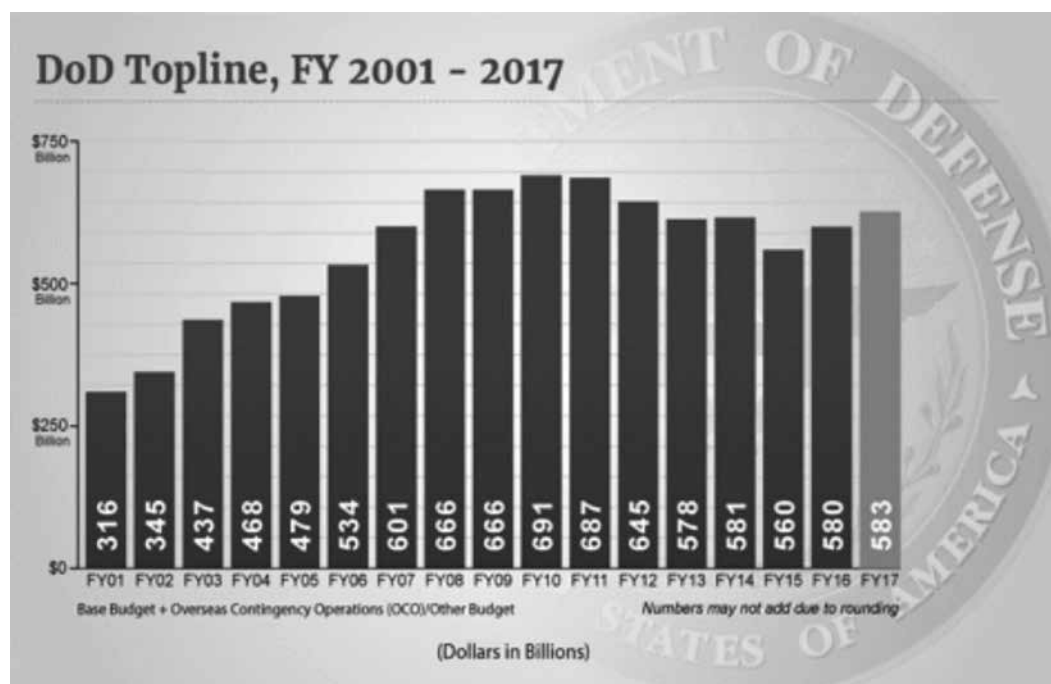


Figure 1. U.S. Defense Budget (Source: The U.S. Department of Defense)

During his remarks to the Australian Parliament in 2011, President Obama reaffirmed the United States' commitment to maintaining its military presence in the region and pledged to deploy up to 2,500 U.S. Marines to Darwin, Australia, by 2017.

“As we consider the future of our armed forces, we’ve begun a review that will identify our most important strategic interests and guide our defense priorities and spending over the coming decade. So here is what this region must know. As we end today’s wars, I have directed my national security team to make our presence and mission in the Asia Pacific a top priority. As a result, reductions in U.S. defense spending will not—I repeat, will not—come at the expense of the Asia Pacific.” (Manyin et al., 2012)

The U.S. rebalancing to Asia Pacific also meant increasing its military presence in South Asian coastal areas. Therefore, once the decade-long military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan started to wind down, the Obama administration relocated U.S. military forces and equipment to the region. Consequently, the 2012 DoD Strategic Guidance identified Asia as “a naval theater of operations”, where the U.S. military presence would be more flexible and broadly distributed, particularly in the southern part of the western Pacific (Manyin et al., 2012). The size of the U.S. overseas-based naval force in the Asia Pacific region was expected to increase from 50% to 60% of overall forces (Sutter et al, 2013). Similar to the Navy, the U.S. Air Force also planned to increase its focus in the Asia Pacific region to up to 60% of its capacities (Sutter et al, 2013).

To intensify security cooperation with its Southeast Asian friends and allies, the United States gradually increased its budget for military activities in the region (see Figure 2). Military exercises and various training programs on counterterrorism were frequently conducted in key countries including Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore.

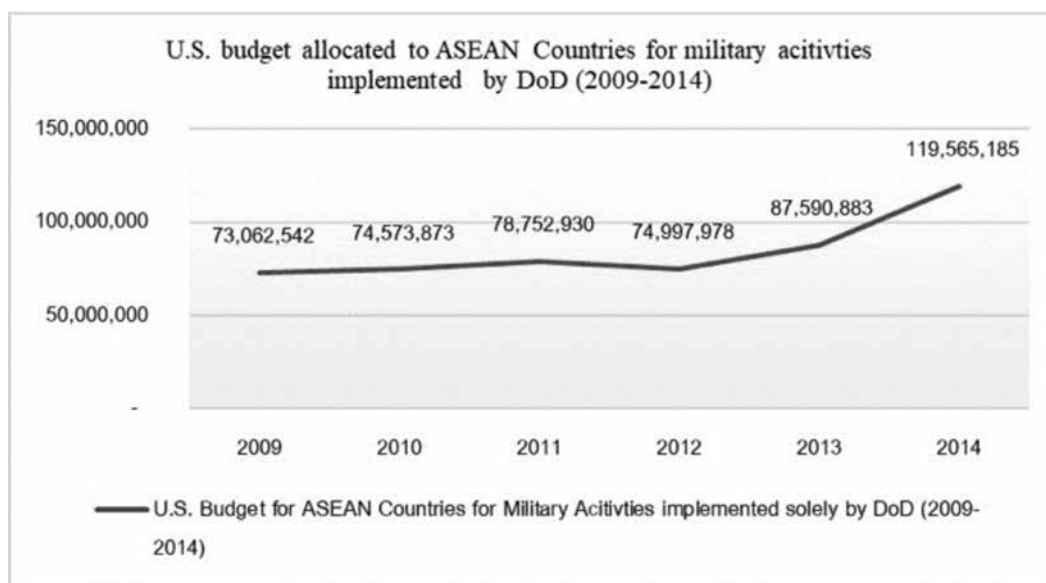


Figure 2. U.S. Budget for military activities implemented by DoD in ASEAN countries (Source: USAID)

As a result of this increased focus, relationships between the United States and key ASEAN countries began to flourish. For example, U.S.-Vietnam relations significantly improved following Secretary Clinton's visit to Hanoi in July 2010, leading to Washington and Hanoi jointly developing the 2013 U.S.-Vietnam Defense Policy Dialogue (Baviera, 2015). The Obama administration then lifted the U.S. ban on arms sales to Vietnam in 2016. Comparably, Indonesia received U.S. security assistance in developing its Maritime Surveillance System (MSS), consisting of 18 coastal surveillance stations, 11 ship-based radars, two regional and two fleet command centers in 2011 (U.S. Department of Defense, 2015). Furthermore, in 2015, President Obama granted \$11 million to Indonesia to implement capacity building programs to protect its maritime areas and natural resources. In addition, in 2012 the United States and Singapore initiated the Strategic Partnership Dialogue as a platform to strengthen partnership and development programs in the Asia Pacific (U.S. Department of State, 2016).

At the regional level, Secretary Clinton announced at the 2010 ASEAN Regional Forum in Vietnam that the United States had a national interest in freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. She urged the claimants to these waters to resolve their disputes through peaceful, diplomatic means (U.S. Department of State, 2010). In the same year, a newly developed Air-Sea Base (ASB) Concept, capable of disrupting the command, communication, and computer systems of an adversary and destroying weapon launchers, was presented as part of the Quadrennial Defense Review (Sutter et al, 2013). Observers argue that the goal of ASB, to a certain extent, was to counter China's growing anti-access/area denial or A2/AD capabilities in the Asia-Pacific, especially in the contested areas of the South China Sea (Manyin et al., 2012). On top of this, the Obama administration's involvement in the region extended to various non-traditional security areas, including Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), military medicine, and peacekeeping (Sung-han, 2015).

Development

By “development”, this article refers to the U.S. policies relevant to development issues, ranging from U.S. foreign assistance to economic cooperation in Southeast Asia.

U.S. Foreign Assistance

President Obama’s approach to development was founded on the idea that relations between the U.S. and the Asia Pacific needed to be strengthened at the state-to-state as well as people-to-people levels. Elevated as one of the core pillars of the U.S. 3D approach, development programs in the region were predominantly implemented by the Department of State (DoS) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Development initiatives and programs represent American soft power due to their focus on promoting democratic values and most U.S. development assistance programs towards Southeast Asia tended to focus on non-traditional security and democratic capacity building.

President Obama employed soft power through various diplomacy and development initiatives in targeted countries as a means to advance American democratic values. His vision on these core values was highlighted in a speech delivered in Cairo in 2009, where he stated,

“America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election. But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn’t steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. These are not just American ideas they are human rights. And that is why we will support them everywhere.” (USAID, 2016)

Consequently, the 2010 and 2015 NSS’s underlined the importance of democracy and human rights promotion, as the administration believed its national interests would be more secure when other countries respected these values (U.S. National Security Strategies, 2010 & 2015). Various U.S. government agencies worked

closely, not only with their foreign government counterparts, but also civil society, communities and citizens, to ensure free and fair electoral processes, good governance, independent judicial processes and freedom of expression (U.S. National Security Strategies, 2010 & 2015). The United States also used private diplomacy, at times in partnership with international organizations, civil society and the business sector, to advocate for human rights in some undemocratic countries, including Myanmar (U.S. National Security Strategies, 2010 & 2015).

Thus, most development assistance programs in Southeast Asia tended to focus on non-traditional security and democratic capacity building. On average, a non-strategic country received democracy and governance funds to a value of around \$5 million each year (U.S. National Security Strategies, 2010 & 2015). In June 2013, USAID launched a Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) Strategy focusing on four key strategic areas:

1. promote participatory, representative and inclusive political processes and government institutions;
2. foster greater accountability of institutions and leaders to citizens and to the law;
3. protect and promote universally recognized human rights; and
4. improve development outcomes through the integration of DRG principles and practices across USAID's development portfolio (USAID, 2016).

As an example, USAID supported participatory political processes in Cambodia. To raise awareness among voters, a hotline was established to provide them with information on candidates and voting procedures. Approximately 680,000 callers contacted the hotline between 2013-2014. As part of the preparations for the 2018 general election, the system has since been handed over to the nation's political parties (USAID, 2016). In 2012, USAID launched two TV programs, the "*Next Generation*" and "*Youth Leadership Challenge*", to engage young Cambodians on social, civic and political issues (USAID, n.d.). Furthermore, USAID assisted the country in organizing its first law conference on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual and Intersexed (LGBTI) rights, to create a platform for lawyers, students, advocates, activists, and government officials to discuss related matters.

In the Philippines, USAID emphasized improving education for children and contributed approximately \$40 million per year to the Philippine Government's fund for collaborative research and scholarships with American universities. Mean-

while, in Indonesia, the programs undertaken by USAID mainly focused on improving anti-corruption mechanisms. The Agency set up anti-corruption legal clinics at Indonesian law faculties and delivered training courses to Indonesian civil society organizations on how to monitor and report on the quality of public services, including governance, citizen rights, and education (USAID, n.d.).

The Obama administration, through USAID, worked with the Thai government to tackle a number of issues such as natural resource management, human and wildlife trafficking, resolution of political conflict and increased citizen participation in political processes (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2015). The United States also supported U.S. Peace Corps volunteers in Thailand to work with Thai communities on promotion of life skills and leadership, reproductive health, and civic engagement and volunteering (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2015). In Vietnam, USAID cooperated with other U.S. government agencies to promote participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership and improve opportunities for American businesses to access Vietnam's market. An example of a regional program representing U.S. efforts in development is the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), which was proposed in 2009. The LMI addresses developmental challenges in the areas of environment, health, education and infrastructure development in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam (Campbell & Andrews, 2013).

Economic Cooperation

The U.S. pivot to Asia Pacific was perceived as a smart and timely move to boost economic ties with emerging economies and to regain its political influence. The United States is one of the largest foreign investors and trading partners in the Philippines (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2015). In 2011, the U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Growth framework was launched to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. In addition, with the support of Secretary John Kerry, the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines worked closely with the Philippine government to address key environment, science, technology, and health issues such as finalizing its accession to the *"Ports States Measures Agreement on Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported Fishing"* (U.S. Department of States, 2016).

In Thailand, the Obama administration launched the 2011 Thai-U.S. Creative Partnership, an initiative that brought government agencies, businesses and universities together to promote new opportunities in the areas of information technology, design and arts, clean energy and green technology, health, food and agro-technology, and entrepreneurship (U.S. Department of States, 2016). More-

over, a U.S.-Thailand agreement on science and technology cooperation was signed in 2013 to increase cooperation in joint research programs and to protect intellectual property rights. In 2014, it was reported that bilateral trade between Thailand and the United States was more than US\$44 billion. In addition, foreign direct investment (FDI) from the United States to Thailand was about \$14 billion (Marwah, 2016). It was reported that the amount of annual investment from the United States into East Asia increased from \$22.5 billion in 2009 to \$41.4 billion in 2011. Moreover, from the beginning of the Obama administration, the trade in goods between the U.S. and ASEAN countries expanded by 55% and over 500,000 jobs were created in the United States (The White House, 2016).

Despite the Obama government's claim to have made soft power one of the key elements in the U.S. rebalancing strategy, Figures 3 and 4 reveal that the amount of foreign assistance budget allocated to economic and development activities in the ASEAN region was inconsistent, when compared to the budget for military assistance.

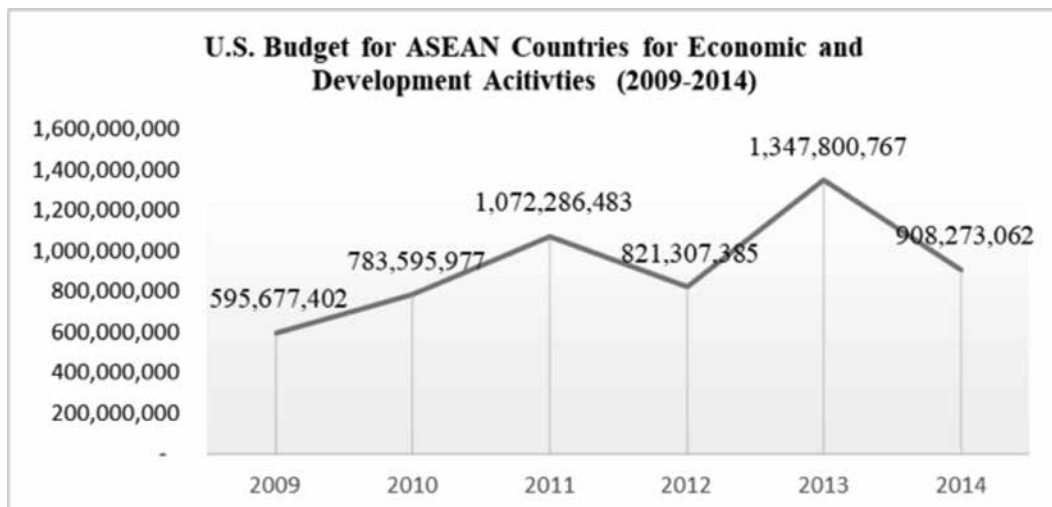


Figure 3. U.S. foreign economic and development assistance budget for ASEAN countries (Source: USAID)

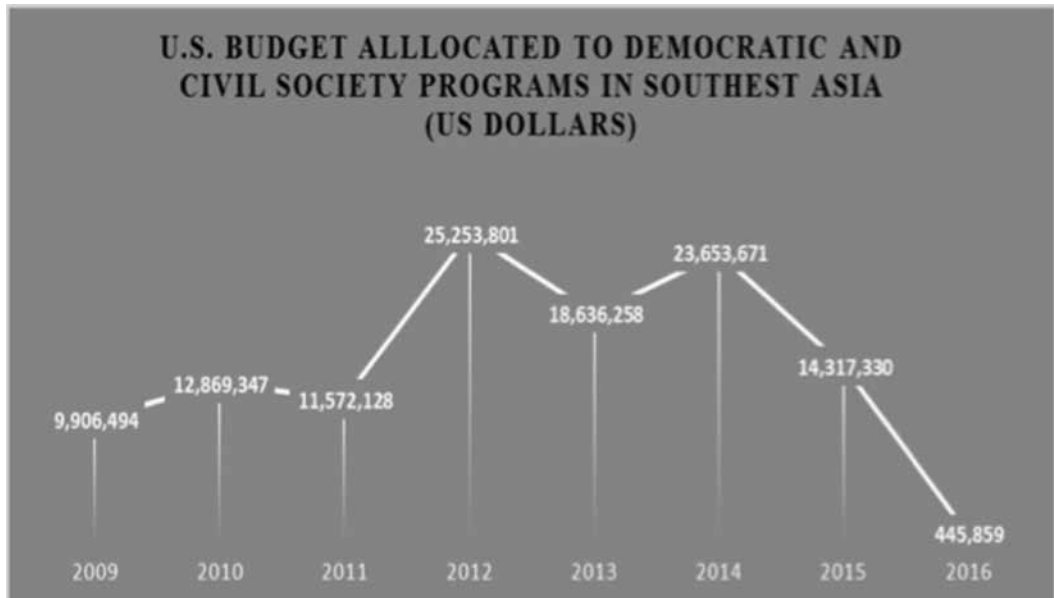


Figure 4. U.S. budget allocation for democratic and civil society program in Southeast Asia (Source: USAID)

Diplomacy

Increasing U.S. Presence in Southeast Asia

At the beginning of his presidency, President Obama elevated the importance of U.S. visibility in the region by having Secretary of State Clinton visit several countries in East Asia and the Pacific. Figure 5 reveals that Secretary of State Clinton made official visits to the region more often than either of her two predecessors, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. Correspondingly, in his first year in office, President Obama met all leaders of the ASEAN countries. Figure 6 shows that President Obama also made more official visits to the ASEAN nations than President George W. Bush.

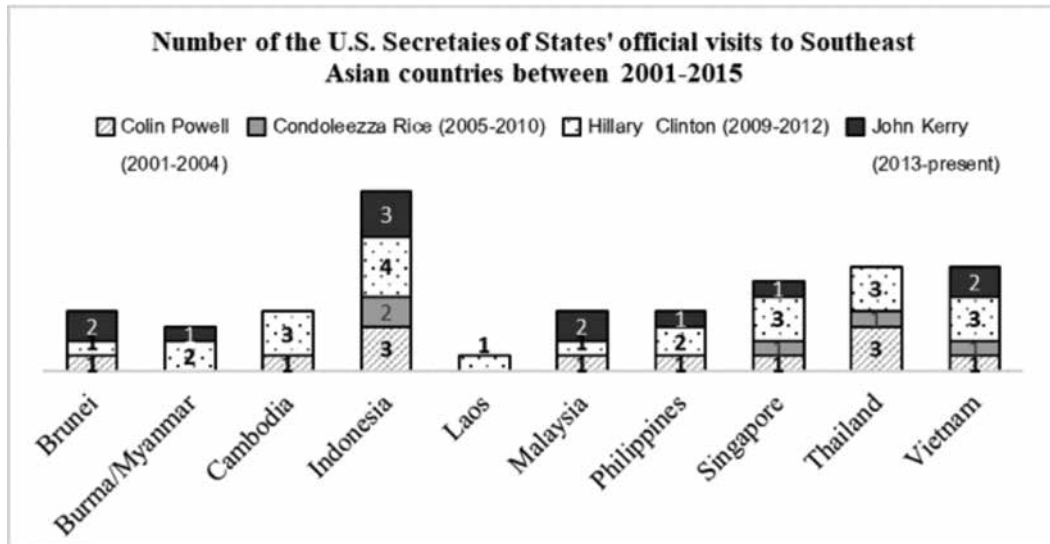


Figure 5. The Number of Official Visits made by the U.S. Secretaries of States to Southeast Asia between 2001-2016 (Source: Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, United States Department of State)

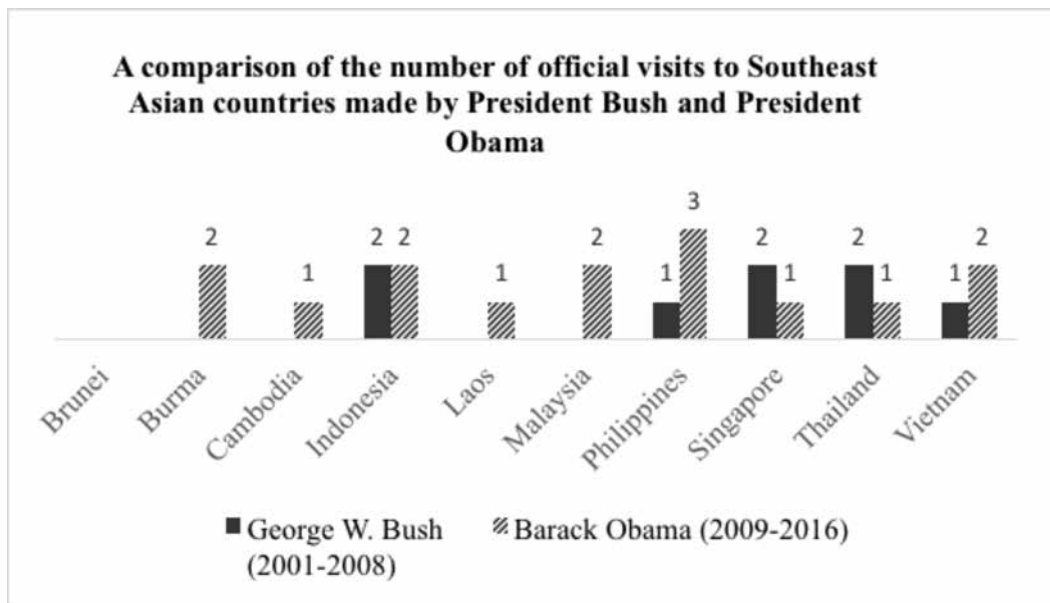


Figure 6. The Number of Official Visits made by the U.S. Presidents to Southeast Asia between 2001-2016 (Source: Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, United States Department of State)

States Department of State)

Strengthening U.S.-ASEAN Relations

At the regional level, the Obama administration further enhanced the U.S. friendship with ASEAN by signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in 2009. Since then, the United States has been a regular attendee of ASEAN regional events including the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting Plus, to discuss pressing political issues such as maritime security and non-proliferation. President Obama attended the EAS annually from 2011, except in 2013 when the U.S. Federal Government had domestic problems leading to a government shutdown.

The United States established its Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta in 2010 and appointed its first Resident Ambassador and Military Advisor/Liaison Officer to ASEAN in 2011, with the aim to increase its presence and advance American interests in the region (U.S. Mission to ASEAN, n.d.). The Obama administration also instigated the U.S.-ASEAN Summits to strengthen diplomatic ties with the countries in Southeast Asia. In total, four U.S.-ASEAN summits were held while President Obama was in office.

The first U.S.-ASEAN Summit was held in Brunei in October 2013. Secretary of State John Kerry attended the event and reassured the ASEAN member states that Southeast Asia remained a top priority for the United States.

“The partnership that we share with ASEAN remains a top priority for the Obama Administration, and the ties among our nations – I think all of you know this from the engagement that we have on individual basis with you, as well as collectively through ASEAN – that those ties have been strong for decades now. And we know that strengthening those ties on security issues, on economic issues, and more on our people-to-people relationships, are a critical part of President Obama’s rebalance to Asia. That rebalance is a commitment, it is there to stay, and will continue into the future” (U.S. Mission to ASEAN, n.d.).

The second U.S.-ASEAN summit was held in November 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. President Obama participated in the forum and emphasized the importance of the U.S.-ASEAN relationship, especially in the security, economic, and development sectors, highlighting initiatives such as the ASEAN Expanded Economic Engagement (E3), Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), etc. At the third U.S.-ASEAN Summit in Malaysia in 2015, Washington elevated the U.S.-ASEAN relationship to a strategic partnership focusing on political, security, and economic issues. The fourth U.S.-ASEAN Summit took place in September 2016 in Laos. More importantly, prior to this President Obama hosted a special U.S.-ASEAN Summit in Sunnylands, California on 15-16 February 2016, aiming to further enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and the ASEAN nations (U.S. Mission to ASEAN, n.d.).

Furthermore, Washington has supported the “Shangri-La Dialogue”, a meeting among regional defense officials held at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in Singapore on an annual basis. Taking advantage of being one of the key supporters of the dialogue, U.S. defense officials have often used the forum to put forward their security interests and policies. In June 2013, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel attended the event and reaffirmed the United States’ strong commitment to maintaining regional security through ASEAN and ASEAN-led regional bodies. Also importantly, Secretary Hagel invited ASEAN defense ministers to a meeting in Hawaii in 2014 (U.S. Mission to ASEAN, n.d.).

Promoting People-to-People Diplomacy

As part of his approach to people-to-people diplomacy, President Obama launched the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) in 2013. This program was designed to build the capacities of young leaders from the ten ASEAN countries in identifying challenges in their region and finding creative solutions to those problems. Since 2014, approximately 3,000 young Southeast Asia leaders have been trained in the program (U.S. Mission to ASEAN, n.d.). As of December 2016, according to the U.S. Mission to ASEAN, as many as 100,000 American and Southeast Asian nationals aged between 18-35 years old have participated in YSEALI. In addition, over 2,700 students were supported by the Obama administration through educational exchange programs (U.S. Mission to ASEAN, n.d.). However, when compared to previous years, Figure 7 reveals that, despite the Obama administration’s pledge to increase the use of soft power and people-to-people diplomacy, the budgets for educational and cultural exchange programs have mostly remained the same since 2011.

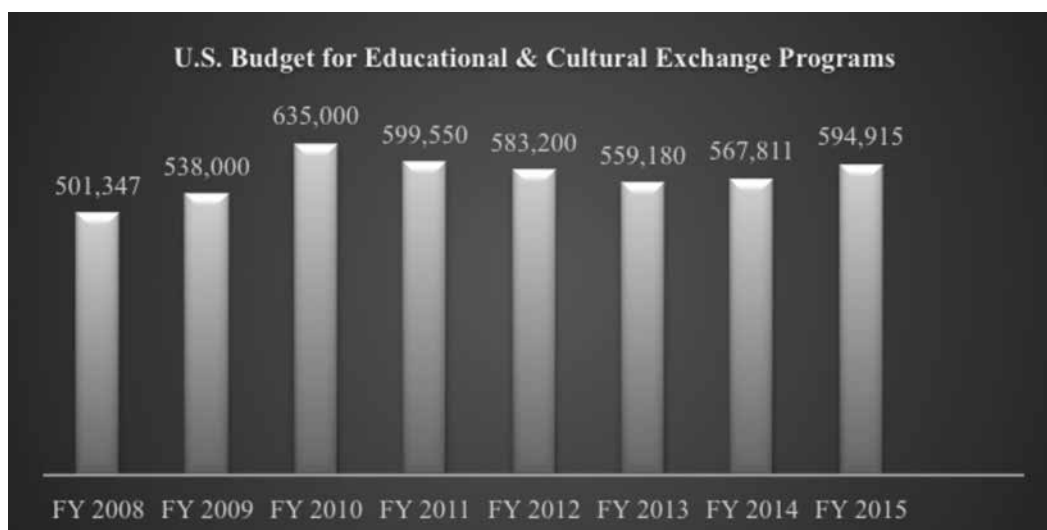


Figure 7. U.S. Budget for Educational & Cultural Exchange Programs (Source: USAID)

Overall, based on the evidence obtained through documentary analysis, the U.S. smart power strategy consisted of more hard power than soft power and continued - or in fact increased - the focus on hard power. President Obama put immense efforts in redistributing military forces and equipment to strategic locations such as Australia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam as well as building the capacity of the military forces of U.S. allies and partners. In comparison to hard power, there were far fewer resources allocated to U.S. soft power initiatives and these resources maintained similar levels to the previous administration. Even though the Obama administration declared its intention to exercise more soft power in the region and rebuild America's reputation in Asia Pacific, the most notable soft power was displayed through the official visits made by President Obama and his Secretaries across the region. In addition, most foreign development assistance and educational exchange programs were continuations of those of the Clinton and Bush administrations.

Conclusion

Under the leadership of President Obama, the U.S. smart power strategy was formulated as a 'new approach' called "3D: Defense, Development and Diplomacy". Although at the beginning of his presidency Obama asserted his intent to combine soft and hard power in U.S. foreign policy, indications of an increased use of U.S. soft power are rather limited. The most notable evidence is an increased number of official visits by President Obama and his Secretaries to the Asia Pacific during his first term. Overall, defense cooperation programs remained the core of U.S. foreign policy and between 2009-2015 the allocated defense budget largely remained the same, particularly in the Asia Pacific. In fact, the Obama administration's overall defense budget was higher than that of the Bush administration.

In conclusion, the U.S. smart power strategy in Southeast Asia has not been a balance of hard and soft power, but rather has predominantly employed hard power. The U.S. role was confined to the security realm while, by and large, failing to deliver on promises regarding increased development and economic cooperation. There was a considerably wide gap between hard power and soft power resources allocated to the region and tellingly, the United States was unable to effectively elevate diplomacy beyond increasing the number of official visits and delivering standard foreign development assistance and educational exchange programs.

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