Southeast Asia-US Relations: Hegemony or Hierarchy?

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In current International Relations literature, hegemony and hierarchy describe two possible types of international rule. At the theoretical level, their existence makes two presuppositions: first, that they operate independently from each other; and second, that a set of actors experience only one type of rule (that is, hegemony or hierarchy). But what happens when more than one type of rule seems to prevail over the same set of actors? In an attempt to answer this question, this article examines Southeast Asia-US relations in the post-9/11 period and argues that it is possible for international orders to coexist. While the "war on terror" depicted the centrality of the United States, it subsequently became apparent that Washington could only guarantee its place in the hierarchy if it projected itself as a benign hegemon. The article concludes that the existence of multiple types of international rule is a demonstration of the ongoing efforts of states towards building and maintaining deeper relations with each other.

Keywords: United States, Southeast Asia, ASEAN, hegemony, hierarchy.

At first glance, international relations seem to be mostly about the interactions between and among states. While this proposition does seem to carry significant weight, it glosses over other interfaces that take place in the international arena, such as transnational activities that involve actors other than states (e.g., non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations). More problematically, it obscures the asymmetric character of the actors that prompt such

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interactions. To be sure, scholars have already addressed the issue of the inequality of states and the types of international rule that result from such uneven relations. Muthiah Alagappa proposes a typology with anarchy and world government at opposite ends of the spectrum; in between lie what he calls the instrumental, normative-contractual and solidarist orders.[1] Barry Buzan posits the idea of superpower overlay in the context of regional security complexes to describe how the presence of external Great Powers conditions, and to a certain extent hampers, local security dynamics.[2] Employing the English School, Adam Watson uses the image of a pendulum to describe how international society "swings" between centralization and independence, or how it "tightens" or "loosens" over time.[3] Similarly, Ole Waever examines international relations as concentric circles consisting of — from the innermost to the outermost circle — direct rule, dominion, hegemony, and independent states and other imperial structures.[4]

This being the case, the subject of international orders still raises several questions. First, from where do these types of rule come? Constructivists suggest that they arise from the language games-rules logic of Nicholas Onuf.[5] This "paradigm of rule" is founded on the intersubjectivity of social relations, which is to say that actors, by virtue of their language (understood here as both verbal and textual), construct the rules of their interactions that through time and practice become "institutionalized" as a type of rule or international order. In Onuf's analysis, these "institutionalized" orders may take the form of hegemony or hierarchy.

Hegemony is reminiscent of the early Cold War era in Eastern Europe when "… the position of the ranking state is so overwhelming that it can dispense with the chain of command and cast directive-rules in a benign form as mere suggestions, and still have its rule effectuated".[6] Hierarchy, meanwhile, may be understood as a more stringent version of hegemony in the sense that the threat of or the use of force plays a significant role. Since the arrangement of units in a hierarchic relationship is likened to a bureaucracy, i.e., the bottom rung is accountable to the one above it, it thus follows that dominant actors may exact "punishment" from subordinates should the latter deviate from the wishes of the former.[7] Furthermore, one may also argue that the distinction between hegemony and hierarchy centres on the question of legitimacy. In a hegemonic rule, the dominant actor's position is accepted by subordinates with little or no question, and is thus considered "legitimate". Conversely, hierarchy implies that subordinates are not yet convinced of the

legitimacy of the dominant actor's rule, which may explain why they sometimes challenge or display "deviant" behaviour towards the more powerful state. Consequently, the dominant actor's recourse to the threat of or the use of force is both an indication of its lack of legitimacy (i.e., its inability to keep its subordinates under control), as well as a desire to achieve it (because the monopoly of the use of force conveys that it is able to consolidate its position above its subordinates).

A second question that may be raised in regard to the existence of different types of rule in the international system is about how they are maintained. The Constructivist logic is germane: scholars loyal to using language as a method of analysis would argue that which language games, and ergo, which type of rule, become salient depend on how states that are parties to an interaction acknowledge or reject the veracity of the "games" they play.[8] The third question relates to how types of rule transform from one to another. Rather than argue that changes are due to exogenous factors, Constructivists conceive that variations in actors' language or rhetoric allow for the transformation of the rules of their interaction, and consequently, the institutionalized makeup of their relations.

How they came to be, how they are maintained, and how they can change are important issues, but these questions have a twofold presupposition: that only one type of rule is possible for any set of actors, and allowing for the fact that a rule can change, the demise of one is independent from, rather than inextricably linked to, the beginnings of another. Thus, the abovementioned issues raise another question: what happens to international relations when more than one type of rule seem to prevail over the same set of actors at the same time? It is argued in this article that multiple types of rule can and do coexist. In particular, it is advanced here that the relations between Southeast Asian countries and the United States in the post-9/11 era signify the intimate linkages between hegemonic and hierarchic rule. Insofar as the "war on terror" is concerned, the oscillating movement between, on the one hand, America's projection and insistence of the values it upholds, and on the other, Southeast Asian states' accommodation, negotiation, and thereafter resistance, depicts two things. First, that the United States is clear on the hierarchy necessary to carry out the "war on terror" implies that it would be on the topmost rung and that sanctions would be meted out should secondary powers veer away from this course of action. This threat of sanctions or the use of force that underlay US discourse was most clearly articulated in US President George W.

Bush's "either you are with us or against us" statements. Yet, and this is the second matter, the hierarchic order was enfeebled by worldwide resistance, obliging the United States to fortify the righteousness of its fight against terrorism by applying hegemonic strategies, i.e., by appealing to the world that values such as freedom and justice were at stake, and that offensive strategies were better than defensive strategies. Thus, by appealing to the sympathy of its allies, America in this instance was projecting a hegemonic type of rule. In other words, in order for the United States to ensure its place in the hierarchy, it had to resort to projecting itself as a benign hegemon. A good indication that American hegemony was successfully deployed is the improved relations between the United States and Southeast Asian nations in the post-9/11 era. Moreover, by the time US President Barack Obama came to power, Southeast Asian states had strengthened their efforts to work towards community building, while the United States expressed a desire to participate in various regional multilateral forums, presumably to address the potential threats that Myanmar, North Korea and possibly even China could pose. A case in point is America's accession to ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in July 2009.

This article begins by exploring the concepts of hegemony and hierarchy before moving on to examine Southeast Asia-US relations post-9/11. As will be demonstrated, such relations portray the workings of two types of rule. The value of this endeavour lies in both policy and academic levels. With regard to the former, recognizing the nature of relations allows actors to direct — or redirect — their policies towards the role they each have to or want to play. The behaviour embodied in their policies towards each other therefore make more sense in recognition of the context of their relations. In terms of the academic value of this exercise, acknowledging the existence of multiple types of international rule exhibits the ongoing efforts of states towards building and maintaining deeper relations with each other. Ultimately, therefore, this hints at the active role that actors — be they major, medium or small powers — play in international relations.

Hegemony and Hierarchy in Theory

Hegemony in International Relations theory has two variants: on the one hand is the hegemonic stability theory, while the other variant uses Gramscian notions.[9] The hegemonic stability theory espouses the dominance of a Great Power to provide stability,

maintain rules of interstate relations and offer collective goods.[10] Essentially a Liberal conceptualization of order that is rooted in the experiences of the Great Depression in the 1930s, International Political Economy scholars maintain that a hegemon is needed to ensure an open market for surpluses in primary products, and ergo, a hegemon is necessary to avoid or resolve economic crises. In this regard, hegemons create institutional structures or regimes to maintain economic order, and thus in the process provide collective goods to other members of the system, reduce transaction costs and increase certainty.[11] In short, hegemony is a situation wherein a Great Power provides public goods through the establishment of regimes, while the other members of the system enjoy the benefits of being free riders. In the words of Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, a hegemonic system operates "when one state is powerful enough to maintain essential rules governing interstate relations, and [is] willing to do so".[12] The hegemonic stability theory also owes much to the Realist tradition in International Relations, particularly in the logic of the rise and fall of hegemons, as well as the manifestation of an international system that swings from equilibrium to disequilibrium and back again.[13] The tragedy is that hegemons plant the seeds of their own destruction by creating opportunities for rising powers to challenge them: as hegemons create regimes for the purpose of providing international stability, it paradoxically enables rising powers to enjoy the benefits of these arrangements, thereby allowing them to amass power and capabilities that can be used to topple the incumbent hegemon. When such disequilibrium takes place, the options open to the hegemon are either to increase its resources or reduce its costs. If it can do neither, a hegemonic war ensues in which a new hegemon emerges.[14]

In the Gramscian tradition, hegemony takes a consensual form: it is a structure of dominance rather than the preponderance of material power. Moreover, this structure is sustained through the acceptance of the members of the system of the hegemon's ideology and institutions, to the point that these "values and understandings are relatively stable and unquestioned. They appear to most actors as the natural order."[15] This dovetails with John Agnew's conceptualization of hegemony: "It is the result of the self-mobilization of people around the world into practices, routines, and outlooks that they not only accept but think of as their own."[16] As an exemplar, Agnew emphasizes that the "genius" of American hegemony lay in its ability "to enroll others in its exercise".[17] In this sense, hegemony may be argued to have reached the status of a legitimated rule.

In contrast, hierarchy is a type of rule where, arguably, legitimacy is not yet fully consolidated. This is seen in cases where the dominant power needs to constantly demonstrate its monopoly of the use of force. Scholars who recognize the value of hierarchy in international relations usually make use of a continuum, with anarchy at the opposite end. Katja Weber offers her version of a continuum of "bindingness" in cooperative security arrangements: the more binding an arrangement is, the higher its level of hierarchy.[18] Thus, she makes a continuum ranging from informal alliances to formal alliances to confederations. David A. Lake pursues a similar line: with anarchy and hierarchy at opposite ends of the spectrum, what lies in between are alliances, spheres of influence, protectorates and informal empires.[19] Similarly, Jack Donnelly identifies ten models of hierarchic orders, which may be classified along three lines: multiple independencies, single preponderant states and transnational communities.[20] Under multiple independencies, hierarchic orders may occur through the operation of the balance of power, protection/ guarantee, concerts and collective security. Under single preponderant states, a hegemony, dominion or empire is possible. Finally, under transnational communities, pluralistic, common and amalgamated security communities are also known to be bulwarks of hierarchy.

However scholars plot hierarchy, its basic parameters remain the same. In terms of actors, there must be a dominant power and the requisite secondary or subordinate states.[21] These states have shared expectations or intersubjective understandings about the roles each of them must play in the relationship.[22] Apart from the actors involved and the roles they play, another premise of hierarchy has to do with the means of effecting rule. In particular, this entails the threat or the use of force. As David Kang explains, "Rejection of the hierarchy brings conflict as the dominant power intervenes to re-establish the hierarchic order."[23] Although Alexander Wendt and Daniel Freidheim avoid the word "force", they do employ the concept of intervention.[24] In particular, they argue that in order for the dominant power to legitimize its rule, it can manufacture consent through overt coercion, the provision of security assistance, the deployment of hegemonic ideology, the institution of sovereignty (if necessary) and the support of outside powers. Similarly, Carlos Escude discusses the use of force or intervention through sanction-linkages. He emphasizes that sanction-linkages related to peace and security "tend to be unidirectional, from the strong to the weak. Strong states tend to be the 'initiator states' of sanction-linkages, whereas weak states will tend to be the 'target states' of such

linkages."[25] In short, the threat or the use of force, interventions, or sanction-linkages should the secondary powers challenge the dominant state, is what differentiates the workings of hierarchy from that of hegemony. This is primarily because hierarchy is an "authority relationship" where one has the "authority to command" and the other has an "obligation to obey".[26]

The concepts of hegemony and hierarchy are especially important because they describe at least two possible ways of ordering international relations. In theory, they are said to operate independently from each other, and the character of historical and contemporary relations between states may be characterized exclusively by one or the other type of rule. In practice, however, it is possible to glean even from just one particular time period the functioning of more than one type of rule in international relations. To demonstrate this, the article now turns to Southeast Asia-US relations in the post-9/11 period.

Hierarchy and Hegemony in Practices

In order to demonstrate the coexistence of two types of rule in Southeast Asia-US relations in the post-9/11 era, the following section highlights how American insistence on a hierarchic order was initially met by Southeast Asia's acquiescence via the securitization of terrorism, and thereafter resistance to the strict parameters of US-led rule. In response to this resistance, the United States projected an image of benign hegemony in order to guarantee its place in the hierarchic rule *vis-à-vis* the Southeast Asian states. Interestingly, the deployment of American hegemony was successful, as demonstrated by reinvigorated US-Southeast Asia bilateral relations. These actions, therefore, support the argument that the operation of one type of rule is dependent on the deployment of another. Types of rule are thus mutually reinforcing. Hence, the coexistence of international types of rule is indeed possible.

Hierarchy

The American post-9/11 rhetoric and its insistence on a hierarchic rule, rested on three themes: that the values of freedom and justice were at stake, that righteous violence was justified and that the necessity of going to war had been thrust upon America. A few days after the September 11 attacks, US President George W. Bush stated:

> Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done. … On September 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. … All of this was brought upon us in a single day, and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack. … This is not, however, just America's fight, and what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.[27]

References to "freedom" and "justice" were reiterated several times during the opening stages of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, but this time the focus was on ensuring that Afghans be "liberated" from the scourge of terrorism. President Bush noted how the people of Afghanistan, particularly mothers and daughters, had been freed from "barbaric behaviour" and he noted the "joy" of "what it means for our country and our alliance to free people".[28] In September 2002, the US released its National Security Strategy, otherwise known as the Bush Doctrine, which upheld the pursuit of "freedom" in foreign policy as the foundation for resisting terrorism. Hence, what the US appeared to be doing was convincing the international community of the correctness, if not the universality, of its fight.

With freedom and justice at stake, US rhetoric also demonstrated the righteousness of exacting violence. In a news briefing, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld stated, "I guess I'm kind of old-fashioned. I'm inclined to think that if you're going to cock it, you throw it, and you don't talk about it a lot. So my instinct is that what you do, you should go about your business and do what you think you have to do."[29] In a similar vein, President Bush issued the following statement: "Anybody who harbors a terrorist needs to fear the United States and the rest of the free world. Anybody who houses a terrorist, encourages terrorism will be held accountable."[30] More pointedly, he warned:

> … people have just got to understand that we've got to fight those who are willing to kill. As you can tell from my language, terrorists who take innocent life must be treated as coldblooded [*sic*] killers, because that's what they are. And we will continue to work with our friends who understand that, to bring people to justice, so we don't go to funerals and lay wreaths, so we don't commemorate anniversaries of the brutal slaughter of innocent people in the

> name of a religion … with any attempt to instil fear. That's all they're trying to do. They want us to crumple and go away, so they can then spread their false ideology based upon hate. And America's ideology is based upon compassion and decency and justice. And I look forward to making that case.[31]

As Dalby observes, the language of "righteous violence" thus "[structured] the dominant narratives and the political justifications for action".[32] In media discussions and official statements, war was projected as the only option, and to suggest otherwise would have been considered unpatriotic.[33] This had the inevitable implication in regard to the positioning of other states in the fight against terrorism. Implicitly, such positioning put the United States at the helm, while the rest of the so-called free world was far behind. The hierarchic order was thus formed: the US led, while its allies acted in a supporting role. This hierarchic type of rule was substantiated further by the presence of sanctions should any ally deviate from the US course. This was clear in Bush's either-or statements: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."[34] US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz reiterated the underlying threat when he remarked in a news briefing that America's allies would inevitably be asked to choose sides: "We're going to be coming to each one of them, I'm sure, with a variety of different requests. Some of those are being developed, many more we're going to develop as we proceed. And I think so far we've seen indications from a wide variety of sources that people will step up when asked. And believe me, they will be asked."[35] The threat of the use of coercion was therefore very explicit as no state, at least in Southeast Asia, would want to be known as a terrorist haven, much less to incur the wrath of a superpower.

Thus, despite suggestions that the fight for freedom and justice was "universal", the "war on terror" would be led primarily by the United States. This hierarchy was reflected in official discourses: "History has called on America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight."[36] The Bush Doctrine specified more clearly the leading role of the US as it advocated pre-emption and unilateralism:

> Today, humanity holds in its hands the opportunity to further freedom's triumph over all these foes. The United States welcomes

> our responsibility to lead in this great mission. … The U.S.
> national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American
> internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our
> national interests. … While the United States will constantly
> strive to enlist the support of the international community, we
> will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right
> of self defense [*sic*] by acting preemptively against such terrorists,
> to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our
> country.[37]

These statements indicated that the United States did not actively
seek war, but that the duty had been thrust upon it, leaving it
without a choice but to take up arms against terrorism. Combined
together, these themes (freedom and justice, righteous violence,
and the necessity of going to war that was thrust upon the US)
outlined the stance of the United States that was presented to the
international community. How this was received in Southeast Asia
was, however, subject to certain qualifications.

Southeast Asian countries' immediate response to the 9/11
attacks was, to use Barry Buzan's concept, to securitize the threat
posed by Muslim extremist groups in the region. Countries such
as Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines made the connection
between poverty and Islamic extremism.[38] And in order to dissociate
themselves from the notion of being a hotbed of extremist groups,
Southeast Asian states acted quickly. As the first foreign leader to
visit the United States after 9/11, Indonesian President Megawati
Sukarnoputri condemned the attacks as "barbaric and indiscriminate".[39]
The Philippine government was more explicit in providing all-out
support to the United States. The Philippines' position was that it
would "back the American response by allowing their armed forces,
airports, seaports and military bases to be used, if needed, in the
campaign to hunt down terrorists and to punish those who harbour
them".[40] In a visit to Washington in November 2001, President Gloria
Arroyo reiterated the importance of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty
with the United States, the cornerstone of the US-Philippine alliance.
She highlighted that the alliance, while reinvigorated by the fight
against terrorism, was not confined to the realm of security, but also
had an important economic dimension as the United States remained
one of the Philippines' largest trade and investment partners. US-
Malaysia relations hinged on the Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism,
Demining and Related Programs assistance from America, as well
as Malaysian participation in the US Customs Service's Container
Security Initiative and in efforts to curb money laundering and other

transnational crimes.[41] Thailand, however, was somewhat cautious in supporting the "war on terror". In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai said that he would "like to see the United States obtain clear-cut evidence from a thorough investigation before starting any military operations".[42] This circumspection was warranted by the fear of not inciting unrest in Thailand's Muslim-majority provinces in the far south of the country.[43] Nevertheless, Thailand quickly fell into line with the US by signing counter-terrorism conventions and by sending personnel to Afghanistan and Iraq to participate in post-conflict reconstruction efforts.[44]

The Bali bombings in October 2002 vindicated previous reports regarding the threat posed by Islamic extremist groups in the region. Ironically, however, the heightened threat of terrorism following the Bali bombings increased anti-American sentiment in the region to the point that the campaign against terrorism soon found little resonance within Southeast Asia, particularly since many Muslims in the region saw US military action in Afghanistan and Iraq as an attack against Islam.

Following the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore criticized aspects of America's counter-terrorism campaign. The Indonesian government reportedly referred to US actions as "an act of aggression" and called on the United Nations to intervene.[45] While Malaysia generally cooperated with American efforts, anti-Western rhetoric became more pronounced following the invasion of Iraq. Former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad condemned US actions as the "wanton killing of Muslims".[46] As mentioned previously, Arroyo was one of the first Southeast Asian leaders to lend full support to the "war on terror". Domestically therefore, she was seen as a staunch supporter of America. But when the Pentagon announced in February 2003 that it would deploy 3,000 combat troops to the Philippines as part of the Balikatan 02-01 exercise, there was a nationalist outcry and her popularity declined steeply. Later, the United States withdrew its announcement.[47] In his opening address to the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2004, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong spoke of rising anti-American sentiment, and that "Washington's pro-Israel policies in the Middle East are part of the problem."[48]

Hierarchy, at least in theory, involves the principal state's monopoly of the threat or the use of force should secondary powers veer from the path set by the principal state. In the case of the United States and Southeast Asia, such was also apparent, particularly in

Washington's thinly veiled threat implied in "either you are with us or against us" statements. The threat or the use of force in conceptions of hierarchy is the idea that such threats are required because legitimacy in a hierarchic rule is not yet consolidated. Thus, American insistence on a hierarchic order that inevitably places it on the top rung of the ladder proved unsustainable in Southeast Asia, if the abovementioned opposition of some states in the region were any indication. In order to sustain the campaign against terrorism, the United States realized that it needed to resort to other means; hence, the shift towards hegemony.

Hegemony

Arguably, American projection of a hegemonic rule began at the very onset of the anti-terrorism campaign. As discussed previously, the recourse to ideas, such as that freedom and justice were at stake and that violence was justified, was the basis of American hegemony in the post-9/11 era. Those ideas and values were one way in which the United States was enlisting others in its preferred international order. Furthermore, these were translated into tangible means via economic and military assistance. Indonesia and the Philippines provide two cases in point.

President Bush made the following pledges to Indonesia: $130 million in bilateral aid, and $10 million to provide police training. In terms of trade, the US Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), and the US Trade and Development Agency promised to infuse $400 million into Indonesia's oil and gas sector. Moreover, President Bush also stated that Indonesia would have an additional $100 million in benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). In terms of military aid, Bush promised to work with Congress to allot $400,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) aid for the armed forces.[49] The US also praised Indonesia for capturing Azhari Husin in November 2005, whose bombs had been used in a number of terrorist incidents.[50] In the same year, the US lifted its arms embargo against Indonesia.[51]

The US-Indonesia rapprochement was further fortified with the election of President Barack Obama in November 2008. Indonesian perceptions of Obama were generally positive: not only had Obama spent part of his childhood in Indonesia, but "an America that would elect the son of a Muslim immigrant from Africa is an America most Indonesians were willing to give a second look".[52]

Against this backdrop, Indonesia worked towards the lifting of the ban on the US military's contact with the Indonesian military's special forces, *Kopassus*, which was achieved in 2010. The lifting of this ban resulted in the full normalization of military relations between the two countries. It likewise "sent a signal to Indonesia that the US seeks a partnership for the future unencumbered by the legacy of the past".[53]

As with Indonesia, the Philippines also received a large amount of aid from the United States. To promote trade between the two countries, President Bush promised to ask Congress to provide the Philippines an estimated $1 billion in benefits under the GSP. The US Department of Agriculture would also give $150 million to support the modernization of Philippine agriculture and fisheries.[54] Bush likewise announced that he would seek $29 million for poverty alleviation in the Philippines, and that OPIC would extend a $200 million line of credit for private sector investment, particularly in the housing sector. The Philippine military, however, received the most substantial support: a tenfold increase in Foreign Military Financing from $1.9 million to $19 million for 2002; $10 million in goods and/or services to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines; and an additional $10 million for counter-terrorism and law enforcement assistance. In security assistance alone, the total offered and/or delivered was expected to amount to $100 million for 2001–02. On top of this, the Bush administration committed to infuse $38 million in the Mindanao Assistance Package, including $825,000 in educational and cultural exchanges.[55]

As noted earlier, the presence of US military personnel in the Philippines was initially contentious. Opponents argued that permitting US troops to fight radical groups in the south would not only violate the Constitution but would also provoke unrest among the Muslim population.[56] Nevertheless, in 2002, US soldiers were allowed into the country to "assess" military operations against the Abu Sayaaf Group (ASG). This move was also part of the Balikatan 02-1 exercise where US troop deployment totalled 660 personnel.[57] By 2003, the components of post-9/11 cooperation between the United States and the Philippines included combined military exercises, military assistance, access agreements and politico-military consultations.[58] This "revitalized alliance" was further strengthened when Washington designated the Philippines as a Major Non-NATO Ally in 2003.[59] In April 2006, the US signed a new arrangement with the Philippines designed to address non-

traditional security threats, including terrorism, known as the Security Engagement Board.

The new Obama administration infused new life in its relations with Southeast Asia. Speaking in Thailand in July 2009, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was quick to emphasize, "… on behalf of our country and the Obama administration, I want to send a very clear message that the United States is back, that we are fully engaged and committed to our relationships in Southeast Asia. …"[60] In 2009, the US acceded to ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). The reasons for US accession ranged from a commitment to engage Southeast Asia, to meeting the TAC accession requirement that was required in order to join the East Asia Summit.[61] The US State Department noted: "The speed at which the United States worked together with ASEAN members to realize U.S. accession to the Treaty highlights our re-energized involvement in Southeast Asia, as well as the close mutual ties sought by ASEAN and the United States. U.S. accession is a symbol of the United States' desire to engage more deeply and effectively with ASEAN on regional and global priorities."[62] The US also indicated that it wanted ASEAN to be a "partner".[63] Interestingly, US rhetoric concerning its relations with Southeast Asia came at a time when Myanmar seemed to be receiving "materials" from North Korea, which could directly or indirectly aid Naypyidaw's attempts to pursue its nuclear capabilities.[64] Reports indicate that a North Korean ship carrying illicit cargo was on its way to Myanmar.[65] In this regard, the US radically shifted its policy towards Myanmar. The Obama administration announced in late 2009 that while it would maintain economic and financial sanctions against Myanmar, it would engage the country in talks.[66]

The "China factor" has also played a role in America's re-engagement with Southeast Asia. Since the mid-1990s, the US pursued a "hands off" approach to the South China Sea dispute. However, in light of assertive Chinese actions after 2007 — such as putting pressure on foreign, including US, energy companies not to undertake exploration work off the Vietnamese coast — at the ASEAN Regional Forum summit in July 2010 US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton indicated that Washington was willing to facilitate talks on implementing the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.[67] Security concerns aside, however, the much improved relationship between the US and Southeast Asia reflect both sides' desire to boost trade, investment, educational and social links.[68]

Conclusion

In the theoretical section above, it was noted that hierarchy entailed the monopoly of the threat or the use of force by the principal state because the legitimacy of such a rule is not yet fully consolidated. This is in direct opposition to hegemony, where legitimacy is effectuated and secondary states therefore are mobilized, albeit with some negotiation, to follow the hegemon. In Southeast Asia-US relations, we can deduce from the above discussion that immediately after 9/11, the United States simultaneously deployed two types of rule: hierarchy and hegemony. The fact that the United States was emphatic in its binary logic in the aftermath of 9/11 meant a recourse to hierarchy, as Bush's either-you're-with-us-or-against-us statements implied the threat or the use of coercion against its allies. Almost concurrently, the United States' projection of itself as a benign hegemon was for garnering support for its campaign against terrorism. Furthermore, this was a function of fortifying and guaranteeing its place in the hierarchy in terms of the "war on terror". That US efforts in creating a hegemonic order paid off via the restoration or revitalization of relations with Southeast Asia indicates the successful deployment of hegemony. In short, and given the theoretical tenets in the previous section, one can posit that the United States has indeed reached the level of a legitimated hegemonic rule in Southeast Asia. However, one must also understand that this hegemony was only consolidated via recourse to hierarchy. In the same manner, the United States' place in the hierarchy was guaranteed (and hence, arguably, a hierarchic order is also effected), only by employing hegemony. In sum, hierarchy and hegemony are inextricably linked to each other. Their coexistence is possible because one type of rule's effective deployment is propped up by recourse to the other.

NOTES

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