



Pacific Forum Update

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Issues & Insights is Pacific Forum's publication series that includes special reports (SR), conference reports (CR), and working papers (WP). These in-depth analyses cover a range of topics and are published on an occasional basis. The following have been published in 2022 and are available online [here](#).

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, WP1 — Progress and Challenges to Implementing Women, Peace and Security in Southeast Asia](#) by Jennifer Howe

October 2020 marked 20 years since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), which is a cornerstone of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of its passage, this paper assesses the implementation of UNSCR 1325 across Southeast Asia. It provides an in-depth analysis of progress and challenges to realizing core WPS commitments and achieving gender equality in Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. These countries were selected because each has endured recent or ongoing conflict and instability. In addition, five of these states are members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), allowing the study to explore the institutionalization of WPS within regional forums and how this shapes national-level WPS implementation.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, WP2 — Compound Gender-Climate-Security Threats and Vulnerabilities within the Indo-Pacific](#) by Maryruth Belsey Priebe

In 2021, signs of climate change intensification were evident in unprecedented wildfires, floods, cyclones, landslides, suggesting that climate-security threats are intensifying as well. Home to several rising powers and strategic trading partners, the Indo-Pacific is a vital region for the United States, yet it is one of the most vulnerable regions in terms of climate threats. A McKinsey report states that, "Asia stands out as being more exposed to physical climate risk than other parts of the world in the absence of adaptation and mitigation." Other research has shown that Asian countries have the highest numbers of people exposed to climate hazards such as floods, droughts, and storms.

Climate change is an emerging security risk, and one that deserves greater study given the significant diversity of security and climate scenarios. In particular, the role of women as sources of climate security intelligence has been understudied. This paper aims to correct that oversight and assess which countries within the Indo-Pacific have the greatest combined gender-climate-security risk factors and

why. A detailed breakdown of data from several indices related to fragility, gender inequality, conflict, and climate change is summarized for all countries within the area covered by the US Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) in [Table 1](#). Using this data, this paper examines in greater depth Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, and Vietnam—due to their diversity in environmental conditions and political conditions—to determine their specific gender-climate-security challenges. This paper begins with an overview of a gender-climate-security framework, provides focus country assessments, examines US INDOPACOM's greatest vulnerabilities, and explores ways in which women may act as bellwethers of emerging climate-related conflicts if meaningfully and consistently consulted.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, WP3 — Feminist Peace and Security and The Other ASEAN Way](#) by Maria Tanyag

This paper aims to critically re-examine the role of the "ASEAN Way" and regional governance more broadly in promoting feminist peace and security in Southeast Asia. Expansive definition and aspirations embodied by the ASEAN Way are typically traded for a more state-centric version. The term is commonly used as a short-hand for the failures and limitations of regional governance, and rarely for its virtues. Consequently, insufficient attention has been paid to how the ASEAN Way also relates to the agency of regional networks of civil society actors who collectively serve as the permanent background to regional governance in Southeast Asia. Bringing together disparate international relations scholarship on ASEAN regionalism and the WPS agenda, this paper makes a case for the importance of recognizing this *other* and less examined aspect of ASEAN Way to arrive at a fuller account of both ASEAN regionalism and the gendered root causes of insecurity in Southeast Asia. It concludes with a recommendation to rectify knowledge gaps on the various strategies regional civil society networks employ to advance human rights and wellbeing in ASEAN including those aligned with the WPS agenda, while adapting to the enormous challenge of building and caring for a regional community perpetually beset by multiple crises..

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, WP4 — Trouble on the Rocks: US Policy in East China Sea and South China Sea Disputes](#) by Akhil Ramesh

Between 2016 and 2020, nations of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) became patently aware of the risks posed by an authoritarian state such as China controlling much of global value chains. This realization among leaders of the Quad

nations can be attributed to a general rise in populism around the globe—which ignited a debate on globalization—to the COVID-19 pandemic, China’s acts of economic coercion against Australia and aggression against India in the Galwan Valley. To prevent China from weaponizing interdependence, nations of the grouping have launched several supply chain diversification and economic security initiatives such as the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) and Economic Prosperity Network (EPN). While these initiatives are a step in the right direction, a larger reformatory initiative is needed to prevent diversification projects from becoming a flash in the pan. Shifting supply chains out of China and into India has the potential to be that much needed reformatory initiative. This exploratory study of the challenges and opportunities associated with shifting supply chains into India tests this hypothesis by examining the domestic political economy in India and the complexities of the US-India relationship.

This study observes major impediments to a supply chain diversification project. One, trade protectionism is a common feature among Indian administrations. India’s diverse political landscape has warranted coalition governments, which has prevented administrations from taking reformatory action on liberalizing the economy. Two, the US-India relationship historically had ups and downs. The two democracies even came to the brink of war in 1971, and 20 years later, the US unleashed economic sanctions on India for their nuclear tests. A concerted recalibration of the US-India relationship is required to solidify any form of economic partnership, short of an alliance.

To summarize, the Indian government should continue liberalizing its economy through the land, labor, and corporate governance reforms. The US should adopt a more conciliatory approach to India’s domestic issues to avoid fissures in the relationship. Subsequently, the US, Australia, and Japan will be able to capitalize on the opportunities the Indian economy and the Indo-Pacific economy at large present for supply chain diversification. These opportunities can be capitalized through creating a trade bloc exclusive for the Quad and establishing a wealth fund to fund investments in the wider region.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR1 — Resilient Alliance: Moving the US-Philippines Security Relations Forward](#) Edited by Jeffrey Ordaniel and Carl Baker

Authors of this volume participated in the inaugural U.S.-Philippines Next-Generation Leaders Initiative, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, through the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines. With backgrounds from academia, public policy, civil society and industry, the cohort brings rich insights on the past, present, and future of the U.S.-Philippines bilateral security relations.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR2 — US-China Mutual Vulnerability: Perspectives on the Debate](#) Edited by David Santoro

The study *US-China Mutual Vulnerability: Perspectives on the Debate* analyzes the mutual vulnerability question in US-China strategic nuclear relations. It asks whether the United States should acknowledge mutual vulnerability with China and, if so, how and under what conditions it should do so. The goal is not to give a yes-or-no answer but to provide a comprehensive examination of the issue to better understand the benefits, costs, and risks associated with various options. The study includes chapters by US, Japanese, South Korean, Australian, and Chinese scholars.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR 3 — South Korea’s Place in the Indo-Pacific: A Research Showcase for Pacific Forum’s Korea Foundation Fellows](#) Edited by Rob York

Papers by the Pacific Forum’s current and previous Korea Foundation Fellows examine pressing issues facing the Korean Peninsula in the 21st century. These include the Great Power Competition between the US and China, North Korea and nuclear security, critical new technologies, and energy security. These papers by emerging leaders in the Korean Studies field offer fresh perspectives on Korean security issues – both well-known and emerging – useful for watchers of the peninsula both inside and out of Northeast Asia.

Authors of this volume participated in the Pacific Forum’s Korea Foundation Fellowship program between 2019-2022, with the generous support of the Korea Foundation .

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[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR4 — Small Modular Reactors: The Next Phase for Nuclear Power in the Indo-Pacific?](#) Edited by David Santoro and Carl Baker

In an effort to understand the rising interest worldwide in so-called “small modular reactors” (SMRs) and their companion “floating nuclear power plants” (FNPPs), the Pacific Forum commissioned three papers on this topic. Written by Victor Nian, the first paper unpacks SMR/FNPP technologies and discusses their applicability in the Indo-Pacific. The second paper, authored by Jor-Shan Choi, examines the safety, security, and safeguards (i.e., the “3S”) considerations associated with SMRs/FNPPs. Finally, penned by Miles Pomper, Ferenc Dalnoki Veress, Dan Zhukov, and Sanjana Gogna, the third paper addresses the potential geopolitical implications of SMR/FNPP deployments in the Indo-Pacific. By looking at these three areas – the technology, the 3S considerations, and geopolitics – the papers seek to provide a comprehensive, albeit preliminary, analysis of the SMR/FNPP question in the Indo-Pacific.

Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR5 — US-Singapore: Advancing Technological Collaboration and Innovation in Southeast Asia Edited by Mark Bryan Manantan

In this special publication, authors were encouraged to reflect on what stronger US and Singapore cooperation looks like in concrete policy terms amid ongoing geopolitical volatility. Beyond the technical and geopolitical perspectives, the contributions in this edited volume emphasize the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration and sustainability for an enduring US-Singapore strategic partnership.

Issues & Insights Vol. 22, WP6 — Chinese Cyber Nationalism During the Pandemic: A Discourse Analysis of Zhihu by Talkeetna Saiget

The COVID-19 global pandemic has elicited a rise in cyber nationalism in China, as the world's most populous nation outperformed the "scientifically" advanced western nations in the handling of the crisis. Chinese netizens on social messaging platform Zhihu cite upsurging cases of COVID-19 and death tolls in western countries as evidence of China's zero-COVID strategy success, and have generated a new trend of Chinese cyber nationalism. Within this new trend, positive perceptions of western countries and their ideologies declined greatly. As previous studies have predicted, Chinese netizens are becoming more and more disappointed in western countries and "have no choice but to side with China." This has also prompted China to be more confident in challenging the global narrative and seeking to guide the international order on COVID-related issues amid the China-US rivalry and thus facilitating a strong emotion of "China against the West." However, this strong surge of emotion does not accurately translate into support of Chinese President Xi Jinping's zero-COVID-19 policy.

Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR6 — AUKUS: A Look Back at The First Analyses Edited by David Santoro and Rob York

Announced just over a year ago on Sept. 15, 2021, the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) security partnership promised work on two interrelated lines of effort between the three allies. One entailed providing Australia with a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability. The other involved cooperation on developing and providing joint advanced military capabilities to promote security and stability in the region, including in cyber, artificial intelligence and autonomy, quantum technologies, undersea capabilities, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic systems, electronic warfare, and information sharing.

AUKUS sent shockwaves across the Indo-Pacific and beyond. Some praised the new partnership, explaining that it would tighten the US hub-and-spokes alliance system and stand as a powerful deterrent to China's new assertiveness in the region. Others³/₄with the People's Republic of China in the lead³/₄were

much less enthusiastic, even outright critical, insisting that it would create unnecessary tensions, possibly leading to arms races or crises, and undermine nonproliferation norms and rules. France was also deeply upset because AUKUS immediately led to Australia's cancellation of a French-Australian submarine deal, without notice.

In the days, weeks, and months that followed the AUKUS announcement, the Pacific Forum published, via its *PacNet Commentary* series, several preliminary analyses on the trilateral partnership, each reflecting a specific national perspective from throughout the Indo-Pacific and beyond. One year later, and as implementation of the AUKUS partnership remains ongoing, we have compiled these analyses into a Pacific Forum *Issues & Insights* volume.

Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR7 — Abe Shinzo: In Memoriam Edited by Rob York

Since Abe's shocking assassination on July 8, the Pacific Forum has sought to ensure that the fullness of this legacy is remembered, and as such used our PacNet series to explain his impact from a variety of perspectives. In doing so, we reached out to many old friends whose names are familiar to the Pacific Forum's long-time readers. In PacNet #37, Brad Glosserman, Pacific Forum's senior advisor and my co-editor at *Comparative Connections*, identifies the specific attributes of Abe's—specifically his strongly held opinions and behind-the-scenes advocacy—that made it possible for him to be this institutional builder and to restore Japan's role on the foreign policy stage. In PacNet #36 Stephen Nagy of the International Christian University in Tokyo provides a comprehensive overview of Abe the diplomat, including his successful managing of relations with the PRC, which were actually at a low point *before* his lengthy stint as PM. In PacNet #39 Kei Koga of Nanyang Technological University demonstrates how under Abe, Japan countered the PRC's growing influence in Southeast Asian countries through sustained engagement, winning their trust despite their unwillingness to match his hawkishness toward Beijing. Furthermore, in PacNet #43 Jagannath Panda of ISDP, Sweden explains how Abe's dealings with India paved the way for the latter's increased engagement with the outside world, including through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. In PacNet #40, I note that Abe's tireless engagement with American presidents across changes in parties has made good relations with Tokyo that rarest of things in US politics: an area of bipartisan agreement that looks unlikely to change, regardless of the outcome of the 2024 election.

The Pacific Forum also reached beyond its regular contributors' list to acquire new perspectives. Shihoko Goto of the Wilson Center details Abe's prescient vision for the defense of Taiwan, something the US would gradually awaken to. Jada Frasier—an MA student in Asian Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service that we believe policy professionals will be hearing from more and more in the future—explains how despite causing tensions in the Japan-South Korea relationship, Abe also deserves credit

for increasing the two East Asian democracies' opportunities for security cooperation through his emphasis on minilateral groupings.

Now that Japan has laid the former prime minister to rest last week, those who remember the darker side of his leadership will find grounds to do so, and some of those criticisms will be warranted. Abe, however, left a legacy far beyond those unpleasanties, especially if, as was the case with Churchill, his country and the international community rise to the challenge they presently face.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR8 — Next Steps for the US-China Strategic Nuclear Relationship](#) Edited by David Santoro

Conducted with the generous support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, this study seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of strategic nuclear issues of significance to the bilateral relationship to pinpoint the challenges to, and opportunities for, improving the current state of affairs between Washington and Beijing. The study, in other words, aims to propose an assessment of key issues and, insofar as possible, solutions or mitigation measures to address US-China strategic nuclear problems, including those that are seemingly intractable. It is motivated by the idea that even (or perhaps especially) when stark pessimism dominates, it is essential to be clear about what is in “the realm of the possible” to improve the situation, and to act on it.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, SR9 — An Alliance Renewed? Future-proofing US-Japan Security Relations](#) Edited by Christopher Lamont and Jeffrey Ordaniel

Authors of this volume participated in the inaugural U.S.-Japan Next-Generation Leaders Initiative, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, through the U.S. Embassy Tokyo. With backgrounds from academia, government, military and industry, the cohort brings rich insights on the past, present, and future of the U.S.-Japan bilateral security relations.

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[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, WP7 — Rising from the Ashes: The Future of Arms Control](#) by Victor Mizin and Yue Yuan

This paper employs a comparative approach to provide an initial comprehensive analysis of the political interactions, contemporary nuclear policies, and military strategies and capabilities of China, Russia, and the United States in the context of the unstable international security landscape. At a time when the global arms control regime is teetering on the

brink of disintegration, the authors aim to offer practical and feasible policy recommendations for remodeling the arms control regime from the Chinese and Russian perspectives. The authors stress the need to revive “traditional” arms control and advocate the search for ways to control emerging military technologies. This paper endeavors to present a two-pronged vision proposed by representatives of two major global players.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, CR1 – Getting Past Constraints: Deepening US Security Relations with Vietnam and Indonesia](#) by Jeffrey Ordaniel and Carl Baker

Pacific Forum reconvened two Track 2 dialogues with Vietnam and Indonesia in August 2022 to help identify ways the United States and its two Southeast Asian partners can work together to enhance bilateral cooperation on security issues of shared concern. Functional cooperation between Washington and its two Southeast Asian partners has considerably advanced in the past ten years, but differing strategic considerations still handicap some aspects of these relationships. The two security dialogues emphasized these findings, among other takeaways.

[Issues & Insights Vol. 22, CR2 – US-Taiwan Deterrence and Defense Dialogue: Responding to Increased Chinese Aggressiveness](#) by Ralph Cossa

Taiwan is already under attack by the People's Republic of China (PRC) politically, economically, psychologically, and militarily—the latter through more aggressive Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) gray zone military operations short of actual direct conflict. This multidimensional threat requires a multidimensional response in ways that complement and enhance military deterrence. PRC behavior represents a global problem that demands a global response.

PRC pressure on Taiwan has increased considerably over the past year, even before Beijing used the visit by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as an excuse to further ramp up pressure. The August 2022 PLA military exercise around Taiwan appears aimed at further creating a “new normal” that could reduce warning times should Beijing invade. However, such PRC actions are not “normal.” They are unilateral, destabilizing, and, in some instances, illegal changes to the status quo. Such Chinese pressure tactics, combined with the “wake up call” provided by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have sensitized the citizens and governments of Taiwan, the United States, and the international community to the growing possibility—if not probability—of a PRC invasion and have increased public perceptions about the need and willingness to defend Taiwan democracy.

The PRC's nuclear build-up is also a great cause of concern. This concern is driven not by the threat of nuclear war (given US nuclear superiority) but by the possibility of nuclear

blackmail aimed at discouraging Washington from getting involved in a Taiwan confrontation. Taiwanese are concerned about crisis escalation (especially to the nuclear level) but worry more about the PRC deterring the United States.

The United States, working closely with allies and other like-minded states, should be more proactive and less reactive in responding to increased PRC aggressive behavior. With the US Department of Defense (DoD) in the lead, the US Government needs to better assess Chinese strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis Taiwan with an eye toward countering strengths and exploiting weaknesses, while also examining ways to broaden the challenge along multiple fronts in cooperation with various allies and partners. Think tanks can and should supplement this analysis.

While continued strong support for Ukraine is important to demonstrate Western resolve and prevent more Russian territorial gains, the PRC remains the “pacing threat” and thus should remain the focus of US national security policy and defense procurement strategy.